



June 26 & 27: Facing Death

Overview

Everyday life is filled with the challenges of relationships, kids, finances and job stress. Sometimes we may feel like giving up and quitting. But the Bible encourages us to never quit in the Christian life. As we continue our journey through *2 Corinthians*, we will learn how we can move beyond just surviving to really thriving!



Take a second look ... Sermon Summary

Death is one of the few human dilemmas that technology cannot resolve. But in *2 Corinthians 5*, Paul discusses the subject of death from God's vantage point. The Bible calls death the last enemy to be defeated. In this passage, Paul talks about how it will be defeated and what happens when we die. These principles can help us face death with confidence.

1. **Be Realistic: Our present existence is increasingly difficult.** *2 Corinthians 5:1, 4*

The longer we live in this world, the less attraction this world has and the more attraction the next world has. Twice in this passage, in verses 1 and 4, Paul compares our lives to a tent. *2 Corinthians 5:1, ...if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed...*

Two words that describe a tent are:

- *Insecure*
- *Uncomfortable*

2 Corinthians 5:4, ...while we are in this tent, we groan... Life is increasingly uncomfortable, so this world holds less attraction for us.

2. **Be Informed: Understand what happens when we die.** *2 Corinthians 5:3, 9-10*

A series of events takes place when we die. There will be:

- A departure from the *body*. *2 Timothy 4:6*
- Presence with the *Lord*. *2 Corinthians 5:8*
- A glorified *body*. *1 Thessalonians 4:13-16*
- The *judgment*. *2 Corinthians 5:10*
- A perfect *existence* for eternity. *John 14:2-3*

3. **Be Hopeful: Eagerly anticipate eternal life.** *2 Corinthians 5:1, 2, 4, 5, 8*

The longer we live as Christians, the more attraction heaven should have for us. Notice how many times Paul anticipates heaven in this section: *Verse 2, ...longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling. Verse 4, ...to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling ... Verse 5, ...guaranteeing what is to come. Verse 8, ...would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.*

Four words that should make us long for heaven:

- *Permanence*

In heaven we will *have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands (Verse 1).*

- *Perfection*

There will be no sin there to wound or scar. God will wipe away every tear, no more pain or sorrow, no mourning or death ... all those former things will pass away.

- *People*

There will be no alienation there. There will be joyous scenes in heaven when husbands and wives, grandparents and parents and children and friends who haven't seen each other for years all embrace and celebrate.

- *Praise*

There will be no barriers to our relationship with Jesus.

4. **Be Confident: Your salvation in Christ is guaranteed** *2 Corinthians 5:1, 5-8*

Notice how confident Paul is in this passage: *Verse 1, ...we know... we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven...*

How can we be sure? *Verse 5, Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

2 Corinthians 5:6-7, ⁶Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. ⁷We live by faith, not by sight.

To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. We can be assured of that if we've given our lives to Jesus Christ.



Take it to the source ... Bible Study

Introductory question: If you could have just one sentence written on your tombstone what would it be? Why?

Read 2 Timothy 4:6, 2 Corinthians 5:8, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16, 2 Corinthians 5:9-10 and John 14:2-3.

1. What is your response to any or all of these aspects of death for the Christian?
2. Why is it important to have a good understanding of what will happen when we die? How can it be a source of assurance and encouragement?
3. What is your concept of the presence of God? What do you imagine it will be like to be in the actual presence of God? What words immediately come to your mind?
4. How does the thought of standing before Christ to accept your reward for this life's work make you feel? What are some ways that you can make sure you are living in order to please God?
5. What might be included in your description of physical or moral perfection? How does that fit with your concept of heaven?
6. What does spiritual perfection look like for you? How does that fit with your concept of heaven?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-8.

1. Would you say that you live with an anticipation of heaven? Why or why not?
2. What about heaven causes you to look forward to it with a sense of eagerness? What causes you anxiety?
3. What practical things can you do to gain a greater sense of heaven as your home?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 and Romans 6:4-6.

1. What do you think is the basis of Paul's confidence when he is talking about ultimately being with God?
2. Can you say that you have a sense of certainty when you think about your eternal destiny? Why or why not?
3. How does the symbolism of water baptism give us a sense of certainty when it comes to resurrection from the dead?
4. What spiritual practices or habits could help you gain a greater sense of certainty about your relationship with God and His eternal plan for you?



Take it home ... Practical Applications

This week take some time each day to consider the reality of heaven.

- Consider what it will mean to be in the eternal presence of God. What can you do to make His presence a consistent part of your daily life now?
- Reflect on what it will mean to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. What can you do to make sure that you are doing work that will survive? (Reconsider *1 Corinthians 3:13-15*.)
- Spend some time in prayer thanking God for the work of Christ, and for the fact that your certainty of eternal life is based on the perfection of His sacrifice for your sin.



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All Bible references are from the New International Version unless otherwise stated.

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