

More Beyond!
2 Corinthians 5:9-10
Part 4

When Spain extended her conquests and controlled both sides of the Mediterranean at the Straights of Gibraltar (also known as the “Pillars of Hercules”), her coins pictured the Pillars framing a scroll inscribed with the Latin words—“NE(E) PLU(U)S ULTRA(A) or in other words “No more beyond.”

The Pillars, in the minds of the Spanish and nearly everybody else, gated the end of the earth. But then an Italian named Columbus, sailing under the flag of Spain, discovered the “New World,” which inevitably led Spain to strike the negative “NE(E)” from her coins, leaving the words “PLU(U)S ULTRA(A)”—MORE BEYOND!

This changed perspective reflected in the coinage of Spain started a revolution in world culture, global economy, and geopolitics.

And in a similar way the lives of those who embrace Christ as their Lord and Savior should also unleash a revolutionary dynamic in respect to themselves when they, through faith in Christ, change their spiritual worldview from “NO MORE BEYOND” to “MORE BEYOND.”

This point, I believe, has been made abundantly clear to us in our ongoing study of **2 Corinthians** and more specifically **2 Corinthian 5:1-10**.

In this passage Paul is continuing to defend himself against the charge that his boldness in proclaiming the gospel, and the truths related to the gospel, had been excessive and had crossed a line of propriety that he should not have crossed.

Paul, in defending himself against this charge in **2 Corinthians 5:1-10**, is once again explaining to his readers and to us why his boldness was not at all inappropriate but very consistent with him being a true follower of Christ.

And this brings us back to our study of **2 Corinthians 5:1-10** and to the question that we are seeking to answer. And what is that question?

How did Paul's confidence in the glorious future that awaited him beyond the grave express itself in the here and now? First of all, Paul's confidence expressed itself internally in terms of what he felt.

In other words, Paul's confidence in the glorious future that awaited him beyond the grave expressed itself through an intense longing (2 Corinthians 5:1-5). We saw this intense longing in **2 Corinthians 5:1-5**.

So now let us now read **2 Corinthians 5:1-5** and see if this is not so. And what do these verses say? They say this. **“For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2) For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, (3) inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. (4) For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. (5) Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.”**

If we have accepted Christ as our Lord and Savior then we need to understand this very basic truth: that even if we die or in other words even if our earthly tent is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens or in other words an immortal, imperishable body awaiting us in glory. And if we understand this truth and have embraced this truth it should produce in us a deep personal longing or groaning, as we through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us as a pledge, are reminded of this great truth and the certainty of it.

So, what is the very first thing, the very first unseen thing, that Paul mentioned in **2 Corinthians 5:1-10** that awaited him beyond the grave that helped explain his boldness? The very first thing was the future reception of an immortal, imperishable body, a belief so strong that it created within him a deep personal longing to be clothed with that body. But that was not the only way that Paul's confidence in the glorious future that awaited him beyond the grave expressed itself.

Paul's confidence in the glorious future that awaited him beyond the grave expressed itself in unflinching courage (2 Corinthians 5:6-8). This is what we learned last week from **2 Corinthians 5:6-8**.

So now let me read for you **2 Corinthians 5:6-8** and see if this is not so. And what do these verses say? They say this. **“Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—(7) for we walk by faith, not by sight—(8) we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.”**

If we have accepted Christ as our Lord and Savior then we need to understand not only the very basic truth, that even if we die or in other words even if our earthly tent is torn down we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, but we also need to understand that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, and if we understand these things and are in fact walking in the Spirit or in other words continuously in the state of being filled with the Spirit we will not only, in the here and now, experience the deep longing that we talked about in **verses 1-5** but also the unflinching courage that we talked about in **verses 6-8**, hopefully contributing to our ongoing bold proclamation of the gospel.

But we are still not done. There is still another way Paul’s confidence in the glorious future that awaited him beyond the grave expressed itself. And what was that?

Paul’s confidence in the glorious future that awaited him beyond the grave expressed itself in his ambition to live a life pleasing to the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:9-10).

Let me now read for you **2 Corinthians 5:9-10** and see if this is not so. And what do these verses say? They say this. **“Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. (10) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”** So did Paul’s confidence in the glorious future that awaited him beyond the grave express itself in his ambition to live a life pleasing to the Lord? And the answer of course would be yes!

His ambition, based in his confidence of the future glory that awaited him beyond the grave, was to live a life pleasing to the Lord whether he was at home or absent. Isn’t that what the verse says?

So, what did Paul mean by that phrase “**at home or absent?**” In **2 Corinthians 5:6** Paul spoke of being at “**home**” in the body and “**absent**” from the Lord. In **2 Corinthians 5:8** he spoke of being “**absent**” from the body and at “**home**” with the Lord. In other words, when Paul said his ambition was to live a life pleasing to the Lord whether absent or present, he was simply communicating whether he was on earth in his body or in heaven with the Lord that his ambition was always to please the Lord.

So, what reason did Paul give to his readers and to us for this particular ambition, or in other words his strong desire to live his life as pleasing to the Lord whether at home or absent?

Paul could have given us a number of different very valid reasons. But here in this text, as Paul continues to focus on the glorious future that was awaiting him beyond the grave, he chose to provide us a reason that I believe many professing Christians perhaps would want to ignore. And what might that reason be?

Let us me now read for you **2 Corinthians 5:10**. And what does it say? It says this. “**For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**”

The reason that Paul gave for his ambition to live a life always pleasing to the Lord was because he knew that beyond the grave he would have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). Now let us take a closer look at this verse.

Notice how the verse begins. It begins with the words, “**For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.**”

The strong terms “**must**” and “**all**” stress the inevitability and comprehensiveness of this particular event described in **2 Corinthians 5:10**. In other words, if we are in fact a true born again Christian, we will appear before Christ’s judgment seat.

Will this even include Paul? Absolutely! There will be no exceptions. Every true born again disciple of Christ will appear before Christ’s judgment seat.

What did Paul say? He said, **“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.”**

And what will be the purpose for our appearance before the judgment seat of Christ? Let us continue to read the verse. And what does it say? It says this. **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body.”** So, what will be the purpose for our appearance before the judgment seat of Christ?

We will appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each of us might be recompensed for the deeds we have done in the our bodies (2 Corinthians 5:10). So, what exactly does the word “recompensed” mean?

The word “recompensed” (KOMIZO) means “to receive back what is due,” whether punishment for a criminal or a reward for one to be honored. Wow!

One day beyond the grave, most likely at the resurrection when we receive our immortal and imperishable bodies, we will find ourselves standing before Christ’s judgment seat for the purpose of being recompensed or receiving back from Him what we are due in terms of the deeds we have done in our bodies. Isn’t that what the verse says. Absolutely! This is what the verse says.

Will this include everything that we have done in our bodies? Of course it will! It will include every thought, word, and action whether “good” or “bad.”

So let us go back to the **verse 10** one more time and see if this is not so. And what does it say? It says this. **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”**

So will Christ at His judgment seat, as He seeks to determine how we should be recompensed, be only sifting through the good stuff of our lives or will He also be sifting through the bad stuff as well? He will be sifting through both. Isn’t that what the verse says? Of course it is!

Christ, at His judgment seat, will examine everything we have done in our bodies, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10). But now having said this it is very important that we do not become confused about something that is very important.

So let me now ask you this question. If we are in fact one day going to appear before Christ's judgment seat to be recompensed for what we have done in our bodies, whether good or bad, does this mean that we might find ourselves condemned?

Even though the works we have done in our bodies, whether good or bad, will be judged at Christ's judgment seat, we will not find ourselves condemned (Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24).

And this is something that must be understood. Every sin of every believer has already been judged at the cross of Christ. What does **2 Corinthians 5:21** tell us? This is what it tells us. **"He [God] made Him [Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."** What does **Galatians 3:13** tell us? This is what it tells us. **"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us."** What does **1 Peter 2:24** tell us? This is what it tells us. **"And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed."**

The bottom line is this: once we exercise faith in Christ and become joined to Him through the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit, we will never ever have to fear condemnation. Period! And this includes that future point in time when we as the followers of Christ find ourselves at His judgment seat.

If there is any doubt about this let me read for you another passage in **1 Corinthians 3:12-15** that is referring to same event. And what does this passage say? It says this. **"Now if any man builds on the foundation [in this context that would be Christ] with gold, silver, precious stones [that would be the good deeds done in the body], wood, hay, straw [that would be the bad things done in the body], (13) each man's work [the good deeds and the bad deeds done in the body] will become evident; for the day [the day we appear before the judgment seat of Christ] will show it because it is to be revealed with fire [the fire of Christ's judgment], and the fire itself**

will test the quality of each man's work. (14) If any man's work which he has built on it remains [the good deeds done for Christ in the strength of Christ, in other words the very deeds that would be pleasing to Christ], **he will receive a reward. (15) If any man's work is burned up** [the bad deeds that are not done for Christ and in the strength of Christ, in other words the very deeds that would be displeasing to Christ], **he will suffer loss;** [but then what does it say? It says this] **but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."**

Though the purpose of the judgment seat of Christ is to recompense believers for the deeds done in the body, whether good or bad, the outcome will not be one of condemnation but rather one of reward (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).

So if this is true, that the judgment seat of Christ is not about condemnation but rather about reward, then how should those who are seeking to live their lives in a manner pleasing to Him view that future day? They should view that future day with optimism and excitement. And why is that? They should view that future day with optimism and excitement because they are not only in the present maximizing their opportunities to experience the abiding presence of Christ and the outpouring of His grace each and every day, but they are also storing up for themselves eternal reward that will be poured out upon them at the judgment seat of Christ.

But now let me ask you another question. If it is true, that the judgment seat of Christ is not about condemnation but rather about reward, then how should those professing believers who are struggling to live a life pleasing to Him view that future day?

Should they view that day with optimism and excitement? No! They should view that day with a sense of dread knowing they, in their self-centered and self-serving lifestyles, are squandering not only their opportunities to experience the abiding presence of Christ and the outpouring of His grace, but that they are also squandering opportunities to store up for themselves eternal reward for themselves to the glory of God. What a miserable place to be!

This is not where Paul wanted to be! This is not where I want to be! And hopefully this is not where you want to be! Therefore knowing that we all

must appear before the judgment seat of Christ to be recompensed for the deeds done in our bodies, whether good or bad, let us commit ourselves, like Paul, to live our lives as pleasing to Christ.

There was a time prior to receiving Christ as our Lord and Savior that we were focused totally and completely on the stuff of this world, living as if that was all there was. But then we, by the grace of God, accepted Christ as our Lord and Savior making it possible for us to look beyond the stuff of this world to the glorious future that is awaiting us beyond the grave; such as the immortal imperishable body that we will receive at the time of our resurrection; such as our entrance into the physical presence of Christ at the moment of our death; and such as our appearance before the judgment seat of Christ. And as we are able, by the grace of God, to look at these things and other things as well that are yet awaiting us beyond the grave, it will allow us to loosen our grip on this world and the stuff of this world.

May God give us the grace to focus on the glorious future that is awaiting us beyond the grave so that we might be able to live a life more pleasing to Him.