

SetUp

- Memorial Day weekend || expected to teach to 2-3 people.
 - Not a big crisis for me
 - I usually have an existential crisis every couple of years. Self-reflection / introspect.
- Back in 2005 (or so) I had a minor existential crisis.

Story: I was at work one day, after some weeks of long hours. (I was working on a particularly challenging plastic injection molded part) A bit exhausted I am praying in a conversational prayer and this ominous purpose of life just fills my head. I am pretty dedicated and proud of my work that can keep me going in times of frustration and it sort of just drops out from under me.

I am making plastic parts – and those parts will just get used then into a landfill.

I worked for a DOD contracting company – we made gizmos for the Special Forces to just see if they might like to use them. And they never really did.

One contract we made 7 small systems and sent it to the appropriate authority.

A year later on a visit to their facility there we the seven boxes unopened under the contract manager's desk

What am I doing? Why am I working so hard at this?

How in Sam Hill does this have anything to do with the Kingdom of God?

Then I started surveying my entire life and asking these questions about it.

Have any of you had these realizations?

- In a way Paul addresses this in the second letter to the Corinthians.
 - Yes, in a sense each person will have their own personalized response to purpose and meaning.
 - But (2 Cor 5) gives us a broader, more holistic view for Christians.
- We are going to take the next two-weeks and revisit to 2 Corinthian.
 - I say “revisit” because we went through the entire book of 2 Corinthians as our summer study in 2014?
 - Anyone remember that?

PRAY

- Even though the teaching will be out of chapter 5, it really needs to start in chapter 4.
 - Because Paul here has a defines our identity as humans from the point of creation
 - He paints this absolute resounding imagery from Genesis
- Honestly it is challenging to try and understand ones purpose without accepting ones identity.
 - No better place to start than with a human identity from the view point of creation.

2Cor 4:6-7 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” [[REF Gen 1] Gods power, His wisdom, His truth – illumination in every sense]] [God] has shone in our hearts to give the **light** of the knowledge of the **glory** of God in the face of Jesus Christ. **7** But we have **this treasure** in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

- Right from the top: **Gen 1:3**, “And God said, ‘Let there be light’” – Gods first command in creation.
- *Fiat Lux* – has anyone head that term.
 - Latin vulgate [*for the crowd*] (405 AD): Jerome
 - let it be done || Light

- Now we are not talking about turning a cars head light on here. [Headlights]
 - We are talking about a command that creates.
 - God spoke, and **it was**.
 - ❖ Divine wisdom manifested as words -- His words to creation
- Light = Creation || H1961 (hâyâh) **to be** H216 ('ôr) **illumination** – in every sense.
- **Gen 1:1**; In the beginning God created...**1:3** Let there be light, and there was light.
- This light is much more than the visual illumination
- We are in a time of science. We tend to think very literally.
 - The original language allows much more than a literal illuminating light.
 - Try to imagine – there was nothing – and there was ... light ... well...everything.
 - ❖ God launches creation.
 - ❖ It is (in a way) God –His wisdom His truth projected into creation.
 - Made manifest, in a sense – **now accessible** outside Himself (outside the trinity).
- Paul’s is saying, this isn’t about himself. He serves Jesus out of the power of *fiat lux* (hayah ore)
 - The power and glory of God shining through Jesus.
 - And the very next verse infers us as well, it should **not** be about ourselves, it is about serving Jesus out of the power of *fiat lux*
 - **2Cor 4:7** But **we** have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.
- A crazy idea. It is paradoxical
 - There can’t be a more opposite set.
- Dirt – and earthen vessel containing this power beyond imagination.
- We are merely a clay pot.
- Fragile pottery - holding **THE** power that created the cosmos.
 - Temporal holding Eternal, Corporeal holding the Spiritual,
 - We are the intersection between spiritual and physical.
 - ❖ The content is what is amazing, but there is a beauty to holding it in a simple container
 - ❖ *We too often like to over glorifying the container ...*
- Just to remind you the question at hand, this existential crisis I mentioned.
 - It is very important to understand the assumptions you are standing on
 - That is why I wanted to start there in ch.4.
 - ❖ Looking at this question with humanity as Gods creation leads you much differently than if you looked at it with god as a human construct leads you to a very different place than construct.
 - ❖ The latter has much more dismal ends.
- Then, as we get into chapter 5, Paul gives us the full view of this “jar full of stars”
- I should say, “Tent of light” in cooperation with his next teaching.
 - I am going to read the whole section of teaching for today so you can get the full flow of it.
 - Then I we will come back and look closer at purpose for Paul’s wording. (**2 Cor 5:1-10**)

- 2 Cor 5:1-10** For we know that if the tent that is our **earthly home** is destroyed, we have a **building from God**, a house not made with hands, **eternal** in the heavens.
- 2** For **in this tent we groan**, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling,
- 3** if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked.
- 4** For while we are still in this tent, **we groan**, being burdened-not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.
- 5** He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us THE Spirit as a guarantee.
- 6** So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord,
- 7** for we walk by faith, not by sight.
- 8** Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and **at home** with the Lord.
- 9** So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to **please him**.
- 10** For we must **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Historical

- It would be good to know a little about the context of this letter.
 - The historian Strabos (who died right around the birth of Christ) wrote of the great temple of Athena in Corinth. He said that something around 1000 temple prostitutes would come into the city in the evening to ... “collect” on temple “offerings”
 - ❖ A gem of a city. Beautiful – on the Mediterranean Sea: Filled with the most wonderful goods from around the world – great tourist shopping: Rich in culture and personality. [Corinth]
 - ❖ Location and trade route.
 - ❖ So often with prosperity usually comes deep depravity.
 - They had some struggles with living licentiously lacking some moral discipline.
 - ❖ Paul’s first letter addressed some of that.
 - As always there is a mixture of responses.
 - ❖ Some corrected their ways and focused on Paul’s teaching
 - ❖ Some criticized Paul and challenged his teaching.
 - Which is a big part of the subject of 2 Corinthians
 - Paul is defending his teaching and ministry.
 - It seems fairly clear that the challenge came from **Gnostic thinking**.
 - ❖ Recognizing that humans are this intersection between material and spirit. They taught that the material cannot influence the spiritual.
 - ❖ And so what one does in the body does not affect the spirit nor after-life.
- This might seem a little absurd for modern day thinking, but things have not changed that much.
- Gnosticism just takes on different forms in the Modern day; (nothing new under the sun)
 - Universalism: We have such a loving God all are saved regardless of the life they have led.
 - Unitarianism: Relaxing any dogmatic doctrine such as sin, views on the nature of God (trinity) – sterilizing religion and allowing a “Unity” to humanity to celebrate our spirituality.
 - Many western take on eastern religions: Live without desire, remove the emotions that cause harm and transcend to be one with the universe. Absorbing your individuality. We are all one.
 - None of these are very sound when scrutinized, but they are all attempts to address the spiritual side of being human without having address certain disciplines (physical or otherwise).
- With that in mind let’s look at the first verses again.

2 Cor 5:1-2 For we know that if the tent that is our **earthly home** is destroyed, we have a **building from God**, a house not made with hands, **eternal** in the heavens.

2 For **in this tent we groan**, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling,

TENT

- Paul affirms the physical and a spiritual here.
- But he ups the ante (so to say)
 - The Gnostics discard the physical in the afterlife.
 - Paul says we will have something greater.
 - ❖ Turn in the tent for a building from God
 - Our corruptible bodies -- replaced with eternal bodies.
- BTW: Paul uses this tent analogy because when he was with the people of Corinth that was his vocation, making and repairing tents. Many people traveled to Corinth for the isthmian games, only rivaled by the Olympic Games in Athens.
 - They would buy up tents to stay on the outskirts of the city during the event.
 - So they could relate with this analogy. Tents are very temporary.
- *Story about Crystal Lk backpacking (2 nights): First night snow dripping through tent.* [Valley]
 - *Either be challenged – (possible danger or be free of worry) (protected and comfortable)* [Peak]
 - ❖ After folding up my tent I trekked into the heavenly valley.
 - ❖ And of course this is what it looked like in the valley. [Trail]
 - The flaw of an earthly tent. [Tent]
- Paul uses this analogy to *emphasize* our physical deterioration.
 - “For **in this tent we groan**” (he says in v.2). Like reaching down and touching our toes, we groan.
 - Not just because it is hard to touch out toes now, but also because the burdens of this life.

God’s Process | Preparing us

- So, you may think, “Let’s go, now.” Discard this cumbersome tent and move on up ... (Jefferson’s)
- BUT - Listen to what Paul had to say in the last chapter”

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is **wasting away** [dripping, leaking, I can’t stay in it any longer], our inner self is being **renewed** day by day. [So... there is this process going on]

17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, **18** as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.
- He is saying, even though this is challenging and a burden it is renewing us.
 - It is a process of refining.
 - Your inner self is being **renewed** day by day (**2 Cor 4:16**)
 - A process of; wisdom, patience, educating us, trust, faith.
 - ❖ *(God can miraculously endow you with these traits, but ... That is not usual operandum)*
 - ❖ *Why not? – look at Solomon*
 - *(Our will to submit to His will cannot be forced – it would not then be our will)*
 - This process is preparing us for glory beyond comparison

- Remember this is God’s process, not ours.
 - This is not something that is rushed, it is something that requires time – God’s time.
 - Which is greatly different than our time.
- Our bodies are not our own – God created it (Genesis), God created you and everything you encounter.
 - In **Philippians 1:21**, Paul in a sense debates this same question (Hamlet’s question) To be or not to be

To be, or not to be, that is the question:
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to **suffer**
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
 And by opposing end them. To die—to sleep,
 No more; and by a sleep to say we end
 The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to.

- Is it better to be alive or to be dead?
- Well Paul says it this way – just as eloquent and deep. But a much different perspective.

Phil 1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

- To live is Christ – interesting language. Expecting a more common preposition. “is”
 - I would expect, “To live is **in** Christ”, “To live is **about** Christ”. <<>> To live **is** Christ <<>>
 - Almost like it is a statement of existence. Not just a quality, but a description of essence.
 - This plant is green, the sky is blue, the sun is bright. <<>> To live **is** Christ! <<>>
- Paul desires is certainly to depart and be with Christ, come on, he has had a tough go at it.
 - As a matter of fact he lists some of the details in **CH. 11**
 - ❖ In prison, beaten near death, 5x39 whips, 3xbeaten w/ rods, stoned (we think to death) 3x shipwrecked adrift at sea a day and night, robbers, betrayed, exposure ...
 - ❖ “Have you yet bled for your faith?” – asks the author of Hebrews.
 - Paul is happy to be done with these trials.
 - ❖ Remember what he said in **CH 4:17**?
 - ❖ ..this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,
 - But realizes that he is to remain, to continue, to serve Christ here.
 - ❖ To serve others and tell of the good news of Christ.
 - For, life is Christ.

- He puts it this way in **Galatians 2:20**

Gal 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

- So though we desire to shed this old leaky tent and go live in a mansion – but– there is a reason we are in the tent right now. There is a purpose to this tent.

2 Cor 5:2-4 For **in this tent we groan**, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, [But then Paul goes on with some strange language] if indeed by putting it on [the heavenly dwelling] we may not be found naked.

4 For while we are still in this tent, **we groan**, being burdened-not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

Clothed

- Let's address this weird language about being naked.
 - Maybe we need to get HR involved.
 - I think this is Genesis imagery again:
 - **Gen 3:10** “[Adam said] I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself”
 - I would like to suggest, with 20/20 hindsight, this is more than being just physically naked.
 - He had now become aware of sin, the original sin, prior to this they were “naked and unashamed” (**Gen 2:25**)
Now...they (we) are in fear of the sin that lurks there-in.
 - I think Paul is continuing this imagery from Genesis.
 - *Fiat Lux*, “let there be light” – to – *Felix culpa*, “the blessed fall”
 - St. Augustine (3rd – 4th Cent.) Coined the term:
 - Literal translation is “*Happy Fault*”
 - ❖ “For God judged it better to **bring** good out of evil than not to permit **any** evil to exist.”
 - I see our human lives as a complicated story of “the emperors has no clothes”
 - ❖ Instead of addressing the real problem (the sin)(metaphorical nakedness): nakedness isn't the sin
 - ❖ We try to ignore the sin *to receive back honor* and *remove the shame*
 - ❖ Instead of admitting the shame and sin are inseparable
 - Paul is really saying, you can't separate **you** from your **soul**.
 - You are **body** and **soul**. – what sins are in the flesh are in the soul.
 - ❖ The spirit is **not** left w/ out a body. The body influences the soul.

If indeed we put on this heavenly body we will **not** be found naked – we will be **further clothed** – ...
so that the mortal is swallowed up by life.
 - It is the completion of Gen 3, God redeeming what has been lost.
 - ❖ God made the first sacrifice to cover our shame. Covering Adam and Eve with animal skin
 - ❖ But now he has made the last sacrifice to drape us in glory: what did Paul call it in **4:17**
 - an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison :
 - Greek: (eternal weight) || *Perpetual abundance*
 - So we have this picture of who we are: earthly tent – burdened, imperfect, flawed – broken from Genesis.
 - In a process of being renewed built up in the spiritual – God making provisions to redeem this brokenness
 - Preparing us to take possession of a more glorified dwelling ...
- 2Cor 5:4** For while we are still in this tent, **we groan**, being burdened-not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.
- The mortal swallowed up by life (**Zoe** :greek)
 - Zoe (life) – not Bio (life):biological
 - Zoe (life) is all the rest: meaning, purpose, spiritual, relational. A life full and rich.
 - True life will drink up, with swallow that which can die.
 - Just knowing this should give us hope and courage.
 - Paul tells us in the next section.

2 Cor 5:5-10 He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

6 So we are always of good **courage**. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, **7** for we walk by faith, not by sight.

8 Yes, we are of good **courage**, and we would rather be away from the body and **at home** with the Lord.

**** 9** So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to **please him**. ******

10 For we must **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Be Bold

- As Christians we should be courageous. Do not act out of fear - know God has a plan (having faith in Him)
 - Not a ticket to foolishness – “walk” in faith. Our endeavor is to act in His will.
- We should have courage and confidence in the Lord.
 - Because of your heavenly dwelling.
 - Because God prepared us w/ Holy Spirit as guarantee: The Holy Spirit dwells in you
 - ❖ (if you have accepted Jesus as your savior)
 - ❖ He has taken up residence up in you **1 Cor 3:16** you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you

Romans 8:11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

- Be brave - knowing heaven is better
- With faith (confidence in the Lord)
- Be **courageous**. The power of Christ resurrected **lives** in you.
- The power of God that resurrected Christ lives in you -- so be brave while on earth

Romans 8:38-39 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, **39** nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- The crux of all this is in verse 9

2 Cor 5: 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to **please him**.

Practical | Application

- **** **** Either on **earth** or in **heaven** -- Serve Jesus! **** ****
 - On earth this gives us purpose and meaning.
 - And what we do here has eternal implications.
 - All will stand in front of the Lord Jesus Christ and give an account for their actions.
 - ❖ Will he say, “Well done good and faithful servant.” **Matt 25:21** ?
- How are we doing? What are you investing in?
- Maybe you need to ask yourself what Gnosticism you are allowing into your life.
 - Have I gotten into a habit of ignoring sin, knowing God is gracious to forgive?
 - ❖ This is called “cheap grace”
 - ❖ The sacrifice that saved you was not cheap.
- It is easy to become complacent – inactive in serving Jesus.
 - or focused on “our” stuff, “my” goals
 - But that isn’t entirely what God calls us to.

- I need to be asking myself that continually.
Psalms 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!
24 And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!
 - Lord how may I server **you** today?
 - I have to be careful with this because it is easy to serve myself by serving others.
 - ❖ By doing things to be accepted or approved, but ...
- Ephesians 6:7** as servants of Christ ... [we need to serve] ... with a good will as to the Lord and **not** to man.

Conclusion

- SUPER important here!
 - Salvation does not come because of your actions
 - Your actions come because of salvation
- Out of recognition of what Jesus did for us – don't cheapen his sacrifice.
- He poured into this fragile mortal shell the treasure of His power
- He offers us protection and promises to cloth us in an "eternal weight of glory" instead of shame
- He is a caring, loving sacrificial God – and that is who we serve.
- Empowered by our future hope and purpose – we have confidence and courage in our service.
- Each of us have our life path,
 - If it be making plastic parts or leading an entire corporation.
- We all have our daily tasks
 - We all eat, we sleep, we work, we play
- And in it all we serve Christ in all we do.
 - "to the Lord and not to man [nor self, but to the Lord]"

PRAY

SEED QUESTIONS/NOTES/OUTLINE

Your inner self is being **renewed** day by day. (2 Cor 4:16)

You are **body** **and** **soul**

Be **courageous**. The power of Christ resurrected **lives** in you.

Either on **earth** or in heaven **Serve Jesus!**

Your inner self is being _____ day by day. (2 Cor 4:16)

You are _____ **and** _____.

Be _____. The power of Christ resurrected _____ in you.

Either on _____ or in heaven _____!

- Psalms 139:23-24

June 4th

- Based on the above: every Christian's calling is to tell others the good news
- Be humble, do not be proud of our reward, but direct others who boast of earthly things.
 - This is not crazy (as some have claimed) it is sound and for you.
- THE PROOF:
 - We all die
 - Christ died and was raised so we might be raised with Him
 - See all not as earthly but heavenly (eternal)
 - New creation
 - Reconciled with God -- through Christ (Gospel)
- God appeals to others through us (Ambassadors)
 - "We implore you" your sins are forgiven through Christ

Background

- Letter is a defense of Paul's Ministry
 - People wondering why Paul does the things he does
 - This world is not Paul's home
- This series—Away from Home
 - Week 1: Our Tent
 - § Ends with Paul imploring us to be Bold!
 - Week 2: Our Task
 - § *Now the task at hand*

Our Motivation and Transformation (Verses 11 to 17)

1. Our Task— "WE persuade others" Vs.11
 - a. Paul Comes back to this in Vs.18 to 21--first he gives us motivation
2. Motive #1 (Vs.11 to 13): "knowing the fear of the Lord"
 - a. We all will stand before God--Judgement
 - b. We know the terrible end some will have and the glorious end others will have Outward appearances are deceiving
 - c. Paul situation; was not concerned with outward appearances
3. Motive #2 (Vs.14, 15): "the Love of Christ controls us"
 - a. One died for all... therefore all have died
 - b. Now that we are raised we no longer live for ourselves
4. Transformation (Vs.16, 17): We are new creatures (the fall / recreation)

Our Task (Verse 18 to 21)

1. Ministry of Reconciliation (vs. 18, 19)
 - a. God reconciling the world to himself (not reconciling the Himself to us)
 - b. Entrusting us with this ministry
2. Ambassadors (vs. 20):
 - a. This is not our home
 - b. God making his appeal through us
3. Our Message (vs 21)