

Text: 2 Corinthians 5:1-5

Title: Confident of Things Unseen

Truth: We can be completely confident that God will deliver us from our temporary tabernacle and house us in a permanent, heavenly building.

Date/Location: Sunday February 15, 2026 at FBC (prev. Feb 22&26 2006)

Introduction

The context of chapter 4 holds sway over this passage because of the “For” at the beginning of 5:1. We do not lose heart, we learned last week, because we see things differently than we used to see them. Instead of focusing on the degradation of our outer person, the afflictions, and the depressing things we see around us, we focus on the constant inward renewal, the eternal weight of glory, and the things beyond our capacity to see. Those things are eternal. And one of those things is an eternal body in an eternal existence eternally worshipping God and serving Christ with every other person in the same glorious state. 5:1 focuses upon one of the specific eternal blessings that await us, one of the things that is not seen.

I. The Theology of the Resurrection Body, v. 1

A. The body we live in right now is **an earthly house**. It is a tent, a temporary abode meant for pre-kingdom conditions. Paul made tents, so he was familiar with their nature, perhaps often needing repair and replacement. Because of our state, disconnected as we are from the life-giving sustenance of God due to the separation caused by sin, our bodies dry up and become brittle. They crack and turn to dust, like old plastic or rusty metal. The sun beats down on them, and they decay from the ravages of wind, and abrasion, and contusion, and time, and inner breakdown of the cells that sustain our lives.

This refers to our physical body as it is outfitted for earthly existence. We come from the dust of the earth too—so both our origin and capabilities are earthly (Gen. 2:7, 3:19, Eccl. 3:20 and 12:7).

Let that sink in. This *is* happening to you, right now. We have an expiration date, a shelf-life, a best-if-used-by. (That is why it is

good to serve the Lord today, because if you did not serve the Lord yesterday, you cannot go back and do so now. So, before today becomes yesterday, thank and worship and serve Him now.)

Peter refers to the body as something that he wears now, but will shortly put off (2 Peter 1:13, 14).

- B. The body Christians will receive is a new, heavenly, permanent dwelling, **a building from God**. Our temporary tent will be set aside and re-constructed into something far sturdier. Think of the difference between a polyester or nylon tent with a few poles and cordage and pegs in the ground...versus a 1500 square foot full basement foundation augmented with insulated walls, topped with a robust roof, sealed windows, strong doors, electricity, indoor plumbing, and a 2-car attached garage. When the wind gusts blow, which is going to survive?

The heavenly building is our glorified body, not a structure like a stick-built two-story McMansion. It is not made with hands. God makes it. In Col. 2:11 the same word is used of the spiritual circumcision done to believers—one done apart from the hands of a surgeon. It is also used in Mark 14:58 a temple made with hands, that is, our Lord's body. In Heb. 9:11 we learn of a greater tabernacle than the temple, which is "not of this creation." The same idea is found in Daniel 2:34 and 2:45 of a kingdom that comes into the world but not of this world. It is from Heaven, it is an "act of God."

- C. Notice please that the contrast we are talking about is not a real versus imaginary contrast. Our future glorified existence will be just as real as what we experience right now in our temporary existence. It is not a material versus immaterial contrast. Our future bodies will be just as "material" as our bodies are now. It is instead a present versus future contrast, a temporary versus permanent contrast, and earthly versus heavenly contrast.
- D. **Paul's confidence can be ours too.** Did you notice the phrases **we know** and **we have**? The theology we are talking about here is something that we can know and be confident about. There is another reason for this confidence we will read about in verse 5, but for now, ponder this. We know it. We have it. We know it

based on *this* portion of God’s word. But we can also know it from other portions of the Bible, like 1 Corinthians 15:35-54 (see v. 42 as a first point of focus). It is also discussed by Paul’s letters in Rom. 8:29, Phil. 3:21 and also by 1 John 3:2. God’s word is solid, His promises sure. We can trust Him to tell us exactly what is true and right. We can trust it so much that it affects how we live, how we view death, how we grieve at funerals.

II. The Desire for the Resurrection Body, v. 2-4

A. **Desire for a New Body.** In fact, this theology of the earthly and heavenly bodies causes us to **groan** with a desire for our new body, expressing the undesirable circumstances that we find ourselves in our present bodies and circumstances. This is an almost or altogether involuntary expression like a sigh or groan from deep within the soul that even the Lord has done (Mark 7:34).

That is to say, we believe so confidently the truth of what we know is coming (all of v. 1) that we can see our present situation in that light as non-ideal. It is certainly *not* that we groan desiring to keep our present temporary tents. That would be backwards and focused on things temporal. Instead, we *want* to be in a new situation. We want it so much that we can “taste” it!

B. **Not Discontent or Dread.** We are not teaching discontentment, for we know that we must be content with the lot God has assigned us. But we can recognize that things are incomplete, unfinished, undone, in some way unsatisfactory. As a result, Paul had (and we should have) a deep desire for the new building God will give us. Not a dread of death, but a desire for a new habitation; an eager anticipation to be unburdened by the frailties of our outer frame. Our current frame perhaps limits our service for God or allows us to be subject to persecution. Not only will our bodies be permanent structures in heaven, but the conditions of persecution and limitation will be removed!

C. The apostle now uses the metaphor of clothing to explain how we will be connected to our new body. Our spirits will have a different garb than they do presently.

D. **Desire for the Rapture.** Paul would much prefer to be clothed with this new body as soon as possible instead of being found **naked**. This word carries on the metaphor of clothing, suggesting that when our spirits leave our present bodies (“clothing”) that our spirits are then naked. They lack something that they need for a completely outfitted life.

E. The groan or sigh is a weighty burden, v. 4, but it is not that we desire to die, or to be rid of our earthly bodies. We understand that happens God’s timing. But we would rather be transfigured right now, with the new clothing put on right over of our existing clothing, allowing us to skip passing through the “naked” stage of being a spirit without a body.

There is uncertainty as to whether this disembodied state is remedied immediately in the intermediate heaven with a temporary body until the resurrection, or if we wait in that unclothed state until the rapture/resurrection. In any case, the state of being with Christ is far better and there will be no lack if we do have to “wait a spell” for everything in God’s plan to be buttoned up including the delivery of our final resurrection body (Rev. 6:11).

III. The Guarantee of the Resurrection Body

A. Guarantees. 90 days. 1 year. 5 years. 10 years? 30 years like the roof over our church auditorium, of which 17 years remain? A 100-year guarantee? How about an infinite guarantee? The word for guarantee means a first installment, a down payment, part of the deal in pledge. It is assurance that the remainder will come.

B. Scripture says three times that the Holy Spirit is this kind of guarantee. Besides here, see 2 Cor. 1:22 and Ephesians 1:13-14.

C. Paul is teaching us that the presence of God’s Spirit convicting, teaching, guiding, praying in our lives gives us assurance that we will enjoy an eternal building from God.

Each believer has a sense of the internal witness of the Holy Spirit. It is not an emotional feeling of the Spirit’s presence, for our emotions wax and wane. Even when at low emotional points, we can have confidence of the Spirit’s presence based on God’s Word.

Our faith perseveres even when things “feel bad” and God seems far away.

If not emotional or subjective, how is the Spirit’s presence known with objective certainty? We start with Christ’s work of redemption upon which the Spirit’s presence and work is based. In other words, without Christ’s work, we have no good connection to God whatsoever. The Spirit of God opens our hearts to that we accept Christ and His work as true and trust in Him.

Furthermore, the Spirit opens our hearts to accept the Word of God as, without question, the Word of God instead of the word of man. In this way, the Spirit’s internal testimony is intricately connected to faith in Him and the generation of that faith.

Then there is also a transformation that is evident in our lives. There is fruit from the Spirit—all the kinds of character traits we have been learning in our series on Christian character. There are good works. There is conviction of sin. There is learning—when the light bulb turns on in our brains about some precious Bible truth.

If we are paying attention—and we should be—we can from these things sense the Spirit’s work in our lives both through the Word of God and internally within ourselves. Working “backward” from this kind of faith in Christ and His Word assures us that the Spirit is at work in our life.

His presence is a guarantee of our future inheritance.

D. God has prepared us for this very outcome. It is God’s pre-planned idea that His people get new bodies made after the image of the One who created them.

Conclusion

Here is what we learned in this paragraph of God’s word: Paul desires a heavenly body and is fully confident that God’s eternal purpose for that very thing will be fulfilled because God has given us His Spirit as a guarantee.

Far from fearing death, our focus is pointed toward receiving a heavenly building, not made with hands, eternal in heaven. It will not, indeed cannot, die. We long for it and hope to be alive at the

rapture when we will be transformed in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15:51-52). This way, we will avoid disrobing from our body at death and having to wait for our new body. But even if that is what God chooses for us, as He has for so many of our Christian family before us, we know mortality will be ultimately swallowed by life and death's sting will be totally removed. For Christians, it is a guaranteed—forever.

MAP

Appendix: What will happen to me?

1. Death

- A. Spirit goes to either Heaven or Hades immediately.
 - i. Righteous (Christians): immediately into Heaven, to be with Christ in bliss (Phil. 1:21-23, 2 Cor. 5:8).
 - ii. Wicked: Hades, to be tormented until final judgment.
- B. Body goes to the grave and decays.
- C. Intermediate state between death and rapture/resurrection.
 - i. Are we just a spirit floating around in heaven? Or do we have some kind of bodily existence? Rev. 6:9-11 suggests the tribulation saints have some kind of body over which they can put a white robe. 1 Sam. 28:14 shows Samuel, who was temporarily “brought back,” wore a mantle, talked, etc. In Matt. 17:13 Moses and Elijah had bodies in the transfiguration.
 - ii. The wicked also seem to have a body of some sort. The rich man in Luke 16:24 had a tongue on which he wanted water to be placed.
- D. Rapture/resurrection for Christians who have died.
 - i. Spirit comes back with Christ in the clouds (1 Thess. 4:14).
 - ii. United with resurrected body (1 Thess. 4:16). In heaven, we are *not* like ghosts which have no bodies! This is the eternal heavenly building from God of which Paul speaks in 2 Corinthian 5:1-5.
 - iii. Bema seat judgment to reward service (Rom. 14:10, 2 Cor. 5:10). This seems to be followed by the wedding supper of the lamb.

- E. Resurrection and judgment for the wicked at Great White Throne judgment after the millennial kingdom. All of these people will be cast into Hell.
2. Rapture for living Christians (a new hope for Christians that was a mystery in the Old Testament, 1 Cor. 15:51-52, 1 Thess. 4:13-18).
 - A. Body is transformed (1 Cor. 15:52, Phil. 3:20-21).
 - B. Person is taken to be with Christ (1 Thess. 4:17).
 - C. Bema seat judgment to reward service (Rom. 14:10, 2 Cor. 5:10).
 3. Exceptions – Resurrection back to a natural body on earth. These returned from the intermediate state 1.C above to a regular life, to once again experience either death or the rapture.
 - A. Mark 5:42 – Jairus’s daughter.
 - B. Luke 7:14-15 – the son of the widow at Nain.
 - C. John 11:44 – Lazarus.
 - D. Acts 9:40 – Dorcas (Tabitha).
 - E. Acts 20:12 – Eutychus, who had fallen from a third story window.
 4. Exceptions – Resurrection to a glorified body??
 - A. Matthew 27:51-53 – The resurrection of some Old Testament saints when Jesus rose from the dead. Apparently, they were taken to Heaven then.
 - B. Rev. 11:11 – The two witnesses during the tribulation.

Appendix: Common Errors

People have all kinds of unbiblical ideas in this area. Consider some of the more common heresies:

1. No resurrection of Christ – 1 Cor. 15:12.
2. No resurrection at all – the Sadducees in Matt. 22:23 say that there is no such thing as resurrection.
3. Resurrection is already past – Hymenaeus and Philetus said this in 2 Tim. 2:18, as if the believers still here missed it!
4. Annihilation – For the wicked, this view says that once death occurs, the person has no more existence whatsoever. This denies 1A, C, D, E above.

5. Soul sleep – This view says that when one dies, there is no intermediate state. The soul is unconscious until the resurrection. This denies 1C.
6. Purgatory – This view says that when one dies, the believer may not go straight to heaven. He may have to pay for sins by being punished before he can go into heaven. This denies 1Ai above and the finished work of Christ as full payment for sins.
7. No bodily resurrection, just a “spiritual” resurrection – this view says that there is no material body resurrected. This denies 1D, 2A. It also denies the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our Lord obviously had a real body after He was raised, because he ate food, he had body parts, and he could be touched and handled (John 20:17, 20:20, 20:25, 21:12-13, Luke 24:40-43).
8. Reincarnation – This view says when one dies, they come back, perhaps in another person or animal. This view runs into a problem at Hebrews 9:27 which teaches that it is appointed for people to die one time and then face judgment.