

Second Corinthians V Being Clothed with Christ!

(2-Cor. 4 & 5)

What God has done through Christ for those whom He calls, and for the whole plan of God

Fred R. Coulter—June 16, 2018

2-Corinthians contains some of the most difficult things that are recorded, that Paul and those with him had gone through and suffered.

Also, it helps us to understand that today we are living in times in which *our stresses and difficulties* are completely different from theirs. They were living under the Roman Empire. They also had the Jews and the Gentiles against them, as well as the Roman government against them.

They had a lot of things that they had to put up with. They had a lot of different things that they had to contend with. Remember what it was in the 2-Cor.1 that Paul said that *it was so difficult, we even were despairing of life.*

All of us are going to come to a time, somewhere in our lives, that we're going to have difficult circumstances come where we feel the same thing. What this does, this gives us the comfort and the Truth that we need from God to help us bridge the gap between the problem and what the solution will be, and how to carry things out.

We have two very important things here for us. In reading some of the things that the Waldensians had to go through, and what their lives were in the Alps, and how much of the Bible they had, they had considerably more than we had anticipated. Also, they were responsible for producing Bibles in the native language.

I also got another report that is the history of the Sabbath down through time. Sabbath has been well known, even in China. Think of that! We sit here and we have no concept of what God has done in the past and how He has done it. Sometimes it gets down to just a few. Remember the situation with Elijah. He said, 'Oh, I'm the only one.' *He wasn't.*

Regardless of where you are and where you're living, we're all going to face difficult times. Those difficult times will be different, depending how society is oriented and where you're living.

However, this verse is true, Matthew 7:13: "Enter in through the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way..." On churchathome.org, I've been focusing on *the way of God*. It is a *way of life!*

"...that leads to destruction, and **many** are those who enter through it" (v 13)—that means the majority. It's quite amazing! You think about how deceived this world is. It's absolutely incredible. Look at how many people are in the Catholic Church—1.2-billion. How many Protestants? *Probably 800-million!* They all think they're Christians. That's quite an amazing thing.

The other night I was watching this evangelist and he was talking about the works of the flesh and things like that. It's quite amazing that they really understand to a certain point, but then they don't understand beyond that.

When we have our difficulties, it's because it's the *narrow way*, as He says, v 14: "For narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way..." Jesus said, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' Look at what Jesus had to go through. *Everyone was against Him!* Even the apostles didn't understand very much. He willingly laid His life down.

Sidebar on the crucifixion of Christ: Rom. 7 talks about how a marriage is ended. That is with the death of either the wife or the husband. But in Rom. 7 it's talking about Christ and *His* death, to release the Israelites and to bring the Gentiles into the Church. He had to die in order to terminate the covenant with Israel.

Steve Green wrote me a very insightful e-mail; he's the one who did a lot of the answer back to Pacific Church when they were saying that the God of the Old Testament was the Father, not Jesus. His insightful statement was that if God the Father were God of the Old Testament, He would have to have come and died to end the covenant with Israel, *because it was a marriage covenant*. God said, 'I am your husband.'

What's going to happen with the resurrected saints and Christ? *In Rev. 19 we find the marriage and the marriage supper!* Very insightful! I'm glad Steve Green sent that to me. This ties in with this fact here:

Verse 14: "For narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way that leads to life, and **few** are those who find it."

Look at what Paul went through. When Paul went to prison the last time, he said, 'All in Asia

have left me. Only Luke is with me' (2-Tim. 1). That's an amazing statement!

We have another Scripture in Rom. 8; these Scriptures give us understanding when things get difficult. I remember when we had to leave [the WCG]. **If** you're going to stand for the Truth, you have to stand for the Truth. **If** you don't, then you're going to start denying it. You're going to find ways around what you need to do.

When we had to stand for the Truth, it was a difficult time for the whole family, everybody. It's not easy to go out and get a job. You put down on your application, what did you do? *I'm a 49-year old, worn out, rejected preacher!* I finally had to go in business being my own loan broker. That went very well, but today I couldn't do it. There were times we didn't know what was going to happen. We didn't know how we were going to get along.

Delores went to work. She had a terrible commute on one of those jobs. She'd get up at 4:30 in the morning and drive all the way up to Burlingame, 90 miles and back. Our trials are different than Paul's. In 2-Cor. 4 we'll see some of the trials he went through (2-Cor. 1, 4, and 11).

No wonder he didn't charge the Corinthians for tithes, because they were so messed up that had he said, 'You pay your tithes to me,'—if he said it in that language—they would have all left him, and they ended up doing it anyway.

Paul wrote Romans when he was in custody in Caesarea, waiting to have his trial and go to Rome.

Romans 8:22: "For we know that all the creation is groaning together and travailing together until now." *If you think it was that way back then, think about what it is today with nearly 7.5-billion people!*

I thought that was an interesting question that one of the reporters asked Trump, 'Why did you condemn and call him (Kim Jong Un) *little rocket man* and now he's your friend?' Trump said, 'So your family won't be killed in a nuclear attack.' If he pulls that off... Of course, if that's the way that it's going to go, *that's what God wants*, which gives more time for preaching the Gospel.

We can just interject here, *everything's going to work out together for good*, because that's what the verse says. God has to call the people, so that they are able to come to repentance. We have to do our part. All the other Churches of God have to do their part. I'm sure there are more things that we can do, so we'll see what we can do.

But even with us, Betty will remember, it was just Delores, Jim and Betty, and Kip. That's what it was. But it's not a matter of numbers, though numbers would be nice, a few more. So, keep that in mind and pray for it. Wherever we are, there are lot of people up in their 80s. I'll be 84 in July. If God has five more years for me, then that'll bring me to 89. I don't know how long I'm going to live. We're trying to get a manual of operation for the whole Church. It's about 25% done. But we need to get that organized, because I'm not going to be here forever. Even some of the elders are up there in age. They're not going to be here.

There's going to be a time when we're going to see a number of deaths come quite quickly. That doesn't mean that something's going wrong. That means if they die in the faith, which they do, that something is going right. *They're enduring to the end!*

So always remember that on every coin *there are two sides*. That's why Paul could write this: v 23: "And not only *that*, but even we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, also groan within ourselves, awaiting the sonship—the redemption of our bodies."

That's why we're here. That's why we have the Sabbath every week. The Sabbath every week is important. From my point of view, it's this way. We need:

- to learn
- to study
- to have the Truth

The Truth, the Truth, the Truth in everything that we do! We need to have it in a way, which we're getting it now, organized, so it can be passed on to others. That's why we have the Bible.

Verse 24: "For by hope we were saved; but hope that is seen is not hope... [we don't have it made, yet; ***you have to endure to the end***] ...for why would anyone still be hoping for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see..." (vs 24-25).

Now we have a clearer picture of it looking through the dark glass because of all of the things that are happening today, which have been occurring. We know we're living in the last days, without a doubt.

"...we ourselves wait for it with patience. Now, in the same way also, the Spirit is conjointly helping our weaknesses because we do not fully understand... [think about this from Paul] ...what

we should pray for, according as it is necessary..." (vs 25-26).

- How do we pray?
- Who do we pray for?
- What do we pray for?

Especially living in this age, where the whole age, Paul described as in the last days men shall be lovers of their selves, narcissists. That's what we have today. Ron sent me a song, which he sent on to Jonathan. He's going to send it on to Randy. The song is, 'Oh, how I love me.' We'll have a little fun with that at churchathome.org. What does it lead to? *It leads to all the difficulties that we see in front of us!*

"...but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groaning that cannot be expressed *by us*" (v 26).

That's quite a thing! Our feelings and our thoughts are communicated to God through His Holy Spirit to Him. Somewhere along the line, there's a translation. How that exactly works I don't know. I know there are many times we go along and we say in our prayers, 'O God, you know.'

Also, I think it that all the extraneous thoughts that come into your mind that have nothing to do with the prayer while you're praying—you know that happens—I'm sure those are edited out.

Verse 27: "And the One Who searches the hearts comprehends..." That's the important thing; **God alone knows the heart** of every person.

When Job repented, he said, 'I know that no thought can be withheld from You.' The whole purpose of what God wants in conversion is that we grow in grace and knowledge and develop the mind of Christ. Today we have that opportunity more than ever before.

Sidebar: Why are the last *first*? *Because the ones at the end of the age are going to be the only ones who understand what really happened!* The saints resurrected on the Sea of Glass; the angels take them up there. Think about those in the first century, second century, third century, and so forth. Think about those who had been martyred, had their heads cut off or racked out on the rack and killed that way.

Here, they're being carried up there, and they get up on the Sea of Glass—I'm sure we can all look down and see what's going on in the world—the first thing they're going to ask is, 'What's going on?' We know what has been going on. Therefore, we will have to be the ones to help lead things when the Millennium begins, because these people who

are left through all the things at the end-time are just going to be absolutely out of their minds with shock, grief, terror and fear. It's going to be something!

Being resurrected and look down and say, 'Look at that war going on.' The angel says, 'You wait until you get up here on the Sea of Glass and you'll know what's going on.' Since we have all video recordings, I've often wondered, has God recorded everything visually in history so that we can see what went on? *I don't know!* You go back and you read the first six chapters of Genesis and you wonder what on earth went on. The only clue we have today, Jesus said, 'As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man.'

- What was going on?
- How did that happen?
- Why does it only have three men who were righteous? *Abel, Enoch and Noah!*
- Why was it so evil that God had to destroy everything?

Maybe we'll get some answers. Maybe you'll say, 'Okay, our lesson for today is....' Twenty years after Cain killed Abel, what happened?

Verse 27: "And the One Who searches the hearts comprehends what the strivings of the Spirit *are* because it makes intercession for *the* saints according to *the will of God*. And **we know that all things work together for good...**" (vs 27-28).

That's the promise. That's why 1st and 2nd Cor. shows all of the downside of:

- what it is to be a Christian
- what it is to put up with human nature
- what it is to fight Satan the devil
- what it is to fight false prophets

"...to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (v 28). We've been called according to the purpose of God.

2-Cor. 4 is very instructive for us who are elders so that we know how we need to have the relationship with God and with the brethren, and how we can really understand the Scriptures.

2-Corinthians 4:1: "Therefore, having this ministry, according as we have received mercy, we are not fainthearted. For we have personally renounced the hidden things of dishonest gain... [that is one of the biggest sins of the leading evangelist on TBN] ...not walking in *cunning* craftiness... [not having a political agenda, not being there as some who snuck in] ...nor handling the Word of God deceitfully..." (vs 1-2).

The Greek can also mean *falsely*. This means false interpretation, deceitfully. This is why always keep in mind when studying: ***prove all things, everything!***

“...but by manifestation of the Truth...” (v 2). That’s what we search for; that’s what we live by. This is what leads us because all of the words that are here are inspired of God.

It’s like one man asked me one time, he said, ‘Have you ever heard the voice of God?’ I said, ‘No, but I read a lot of it.’ That’s why we have the Bible. ***It’s here!*** Does God need to speak to us? If we didn’t have a Bible, He would. But since we have the Bible, He’s not going to speak to us. Will He lead us so that we will think the things we need to? Will He guide us in thought? *Yes, He will, if we’re seeking God!*

Those who handle the Word of God *falsely* try and make it say something it doesn’t. It seems like almost everything from Feast of Tabernacles last year until even past the Passover, that’s all we were doing, *fighting false doctrines and different things coming out*. The ones who were promulgating different things were doing exactly this: ***handling the Word of God falsely or deceitfully!***

“...but by manifestation of the Truth, we are commending ourselves to every man’s conscience before God. But if our Gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those who are perishing; whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, lest the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is *the* image of God, should shine unto them” (vs 2-4). ***Satan is out there!***

- How does Satan get in?
- How does he inspire handling the Word of God falsely?

There’s one man, every time I say Satan inspires, who sends me a postcard and says Satan doesn’t inspire. I said, ‘How then do you explain the verse where it says that Satan put it in Judas’ heart? Is that not inspiration?’

Verse 5: “For we do not preach our own selves...” ***Think on that one statement right there!***

- What was the biggest problem in WCG? ***Preaching Herbert and Ted!***
- What happened? ***That was successful for a while!***
- But where are they? ***They’re not here!***
- Where is what they built up? ***All scattered to the wind!***

That ties right in with what we mentioned about men shall be lovers of themselves. If you preach your own self, what are you doing? That’s not to say you don’t relate experiences and things like that. But those who preach about themselves are putting themselves above God.

“...but Christ Jesus *the* Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (v 5).

- we are to serve
- we are to help
- we are to teach the Truth
- we are to teach the things God wants

Like we covered at the conference, that we have to take heed to ourselves. How do we get correction? ***We get correction if we’re studying the Word of God!*** We can get correction almost every time we study, ***if*** we’re yielded to God.

Verse 6: “Because *it is* God Who commanded *the* light to shine out of darkness, Who shined into our hearts *the* light of the knowledge of the glory of God in *the* face of Jesus Christ.”

What Paul was referring to was undoubtedly when he saw visions of Christ, when he was being taught in Arabia for three years. Paul had an awful lot to unlearn.

What happens when you preach yourself? Or falsely interpret the Word of God? ***You lead people away from God!*** When you preach yourself, there’s always going to be someone who is savvy enough to be very political, to nuzzle right up to you and tell you how good you are. Who was that in WCG? ***Stanley Rader!*** What happens when that occurs? ***You start changing the Gospel!***

How do you suppose it got from Sabbath to Sunday, where people believed it? This sounds very rational: Christ was resurrected on the first day of the week, and this is the New Testament, and we don’t want anything to do with Judaism. ***That’s true, you don’t want anything to do with Judaism!*** But when they said that, they’re saying we don’t want anything to do with the Old Testament.

When was Jesus resurrected? ***Toward the end of the Sabbath!*** He ascended to the Father on the first day of the week. ***That didn’t sanctify that day!***

Paul is saying here, Galatians 1:6: “I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away... [someone is coming in there and teaching them things that they shouldn’t be teaching them] ... from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which *in reality* is not another Gospel; but there are some who are troubling you

and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ” (vs 6-7).

How? *By preaching falsely the Word of God, dishonestly and by preaching self!* Notice the severity of it:

Verse 8: “But if we, or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, **LET HIM BE ACCURSED!**” *That means destined for the Lake of Fire!*

Verse 9: “As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, **LET HIM BE ACCURSED!** Now then, am I striving to please men, or God? Or am I motivated to please men? For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ” (vs 9-10).

What do you have? *A fake Christianity, based upon men and based upon lies!* If you examine everything that the Roman Catholic Church teaches, every single bit of it is based upon lies and *deceitfully handling the Word of God*, if they ever open it.

- Peter was never at Rome
- He was never an apostle to the Gentiles
- He wasn't buried in a pagan burial ground

If you haven't gone through that series, go on **churchathome.org** There are 21 half-hour segments on *Was Peter Ever in Rome? NO!*

Let's see what Paul had to do, v 11: “But I certify to you, brethren, that the Gospel that was preached by me is not according to man; because neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught *it by man*; rather, *it was* by *the* revelation of Jesus Christ” (vs 11-12).

When Paul talks about the glory of Christ, he knows what he's talking about. Just like Peter, James and John were taken up to the Mount of Transfiguration, and they saw Christ in vision in His glorified form, along with Elijah and Moses.

What was this to do? This was a visual education for them to understand that what they were going to preach as the Gospel is on the same level or more than—because Christ was there in the middle—Moses and Elijah. Peter never forgot that.

Verse 13: “For you heard of my former conduct when I was in Judaism, how I was excessively persecuting the Church of God and was destroying it; and I was advancing in Judaism *far* beyond many *of my* contemporaries in my *own* nation, being more abundantly zealous for *the*

traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, Who selected me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by His grace, reveal His own Son in me, in order that I might preach Him as the Gospel among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood” (vs 13-16).

Paul also said he was a Pharisee of a Pharisee (Phil. 3). His father was a Pharisee. Concerning law: **blameless!** What did Paul come to in his conversion with all of those things? He said, ‘I count them all but **dung.**’ The Greek word there is ‘skubalon.’

2-Corinthians 4:7: “Now, we have this treasure in earthen vessels... [***the Spirit of God, the knowledge of God, the Truth of God***] ...in order that the supremacy of the power may be of God, and not from us. On every *side we are* hard pressed...” (vs 7-8).

This is why I started out where we did. If troubles and difficulties come along, what do you have to do? *You have to take it one at a time!* Maybe they're going to be really bad. God will help you work it out.

The day is coming—the seeds of it are being sown now in the progressive movement, coming after Christians. Don't you think as angry as they are already, that giving it a few more things like that, they'll be very willing to lop off our heads? Think about it.

Sidebar: I cannot believe the total corruption and deception that is back there in the Justice Department, in the FBI and in the Congress. I can't believe how awful it really is and ***how derelict that the former president really was,*** and actively involved in that dereliction himself.

That's why you don't trust in men. You can't trust in men. ***Amazing thing!*** It happened to the Church in almost the same way. Didn't it happen when all the stuff was going on and was really, really bad, that all the ministers around the world lied from the pulpit that nothing was happening? ***They lied and said that all of these things that you're hearing about are nothing but rumors, they're not true, when they all became true!*** So you see how that works.

We have the Holy Spirit and that comes from God and that doesn't come from men. Verse 8: “On every *side we are* hard pressed, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing.” Paul said in 2-Cor. 1 that he came even to the point of despairing of living.

Verse 9: “Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in

our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.... [for the purpose of preaching the Truth] ...For those of us who are living are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then, on the one hand, death is working in us; and on the other hand, life is working in you" (vs 9-12).

In other words, he's saying that *we are spending our lives to preach the Truth* to you, so that you can be in the Kingdom of God and in so doing, we're getting older and we're wearing out. Paul eventually died. What did Paul say in his epistle to Timothy? *'I'm ready to be offered; my time is at hand. I've run the race; I've finished the course.'*

(go to the next track)

Going through verse-by-verse in all of these books is a very good way to study. Sometimes if you just do it by topics—get a verse here and a verse there and put it together—you miss the flow of what is being said. As you go along, and we put it all together, and put in the things from other parts of the Bible, or New Testament, then this helps us to understand it.

Verse 13: "And having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, 'I believed, therefore, I have spoken,' we also believe; therefore, we also speak, knowing that He Who raised the Lord Jesus *from the dead* shall also raise us through Jesus, and shall present *us* with you" (vs 13-14).

Paul always looked at the end. When you always keep focused on that, then you never lose perspective when difficulties come. We find this in Heb. 12 where he writes about that exactly. Paul wrote this when he was in prison in Rome the first time in about 60_{A.D.}—maybe early 60_{A.D.}—James, the brother of Jesus, was martyred in 61_{A.D.}

It's written to the Hebrews, but it's also written to the whole Church. This was written to those in Jerusalem. It had to be written before the death of James. So, this came before that occurred and to help them with the troubles they were having in Jerusalem. They were having a lot of troubles. All of that would lead up to the Jews rebelling against the Romans. That started in 66_{A.D.}

In Heb. 12 Paul is trying to encourage them. Whenever you get down and you get discouraged, think about all that have come before us. That's more than we can think about because we don't know many. After we get done with the Church history thing we're doing from 100_{A.D.} to 1600_{A.D.}, you'll have a little better idea of it.

Hebrews 12:1: "Therefore, *since* we are surrounded by such a great throng of witnesses..." He's talking to the whole Church and obviously the whole Church had the Old Testament as well. He's talking directly to those in Jerusalem.

I wonder how many in Jerusalem that were clinger-ons, rather than really converted, left and completely forsook everything when the temple was destroyed. Especially if they believed the misinterpretation that Christ was going to come when the temple was destroyed. Paul wanted to remind them and Heb. 11 is about all those who went ahead and were faithful.

"...let us lay aside every weight... [you've heard of heavy problems; it weighs down on the mind, heart and emotions] ...and the sin that so easily entraps *us*..." (v 1).

We're not fighting just against outward expression of sin, we're fighting against the reality of the thought of sin within. That's quite a project for God to convert the carnal mind and all that goes on in the mind.

Recently, Brit Hume—a long time commentator on Fox News—was talking about a certain thing with a certain man and the troubles he was going through. He said, 'I have learned over the years that every person has something inside that they're working on, that they don't discuss with anyone else. When I'm dealing with people, I try and remember that I don't know what it is that they're working on, so deal with them in kindness.'

I thought that was a very good expression and that would agree with things in the Bible, too. Sometimes you misunderstand what people are going through, and you come on them in a very bad way. I've done that many times and I'm sure you have, too.

"...and let us run the race set before us with endurance, having *our minds fixed*... [this is what is the thing of everything that we're covering here in this chapter] ...on Jesus, the Beginner and Finisher... [the Perfectionist] ...of *our* faith; Who for the joy that lay ahead of Him endured *the* cross, *although* He despised *the* shame, and has sat down at *the* right hand of the throne of God" (vs 1-2).

We're going to see in 2-Cor. 4 & 5 that Paul is emphasizing this very thing. *What it is that God has done through Christ for those who He calls, and for the whole plan of God!*

Verse 3: "Now meditate deeply on Him... [think on Him] ...Who endured such great hostility of sinners against Himself so that you do not become **weary and faint** in your minds"—and give up.

That's what Satan wants; he wants you to become weary and unable to handle things! Here's the reason:

Verse 4: "You have not yet resisted to the point of *losing* blood in your struggle against sin."

He talks about it here, finishing up 2-Cor. 4 and getting into 2-Cor. 5. Think about when it says that God so loved the world, He gave His only Begotten Son, think about the love that Jesus had to willingly lay down His life, go through what He had to go through, so that He could save them and complete the plan of God. Quite a thing!

2-Corinthians 4:15: "For all things *are* for your sakes, so that the abounding grace may cause the thanksgiving of many to overflow unto the glory of God."

In other words, if we're doing the things that please God, that is to His glory. If we love God and yield to Him, He loves us and all of these things.

Think what the Father had to go through when Christ was on the earth in the flesh. Christ had to carry *the law of sin and death* in Him. If He didn't, He couldn't be tempted. Yet, live a life without sinning. Think about that!

Verse 16: "For this reason, we do not lose heart... [ties in with Heb. 12, don't be weary] ...but if our outward man is being brought to decay... [we're all getting older, all have the problems and difficulties] ...yet, the inward *man* is being renewed day by day."

- with the Spirit of God
- with the Word of God
- with the Truth of God

That's how God wants us to change, grow and overcome when we're confronted with whatever it is. When we're confronted with these problems:

- What do we think about?
- How do we respond?
- What are our thoughts toward God?

Let's understand that here's a promise in 1-Cor. 10. Sometimes you get so overwhelmed, you forget this promise and then once you go through it and look back, you see that God did keep this promise.

1-Corinthians 10:13: "No temptation has come upon you except what is common to mankind. For God, Who *is* faithful... [these are powerful words] ...will not permit you to be tempted... [or tried] ...beyond what you are able *to bear*..."

How much can you bear with the strength of Christ, with the Spirit of God?

"...but with the temptation... [or trial] ...He will make a way of escape, so that you may be able to bear *it*" (v 13). *That's quite a promise!*

How that works out, you never know. Sometimes it will come right away; sometimes it'll come later. Sometimes it'll come along, you'll forget all about it and then all of a sudden one day, you're just doing something, and BING! you say to yourself, 'God did answer that. Look at that!'

What is the whole process of conversion? *The renewing of our mind* (Rom. 12:2) ***spiritually!*** That's the most important. Doesn't matter, the body's going to get old and wear out and be gone. But ***what we do spiritually*** is important. So, it's day-by-day. You've heard the saying in almost every successful sports person has this principle down correct: *Take it one day at a time!* What do they say when they've had, in competition, a severe loss and maybe even kind of a stupid loss?

Recently with the basketball playoffs between the Golden State Warriors and the Cleveland Cavaliers, Cleveland had it won with 4.2 seconds left. There was a man there and Cleveland was behind by one point. The player got fouled, so he gets two shots. If he makes both of them, they win, but he missed. One of his teammates got the ball right under the basket. He could have put it right in and they would have won by two. He was right there! But no, he went out and ran out the clock and it was a tie game, so the Golden State Warriors came back and won in overtime. That is going to be hard to overcome. Because then they lost the subsequent three games after that, so that Golden State Warriors won the championship.

You see how sometimes when a difficulty comes along, imagine what it's going to be with his career. This is why we need the renewal inward. That's the only way that that player's going to overcome that great gaff, because he will always be remembered for losing the game. Whether they would have won the playoffs or not, would have been another thing.

Likewise with us, *if we renew day-by-day!* How do we do that? *By prayer and study every day, every day, every day!*

2-Corinthians 4:16: "For this reason, we do not lose heart; but if our outward man is being brought to decay, yet, the inward *man* is being renewed day-by-day. For the momentary lightness of our tribulation... [think of all that Paul went

through] ...is working out for us an immeasurably greater *and* everlasting fullness of glory” (vs 16-17).

That’s quite a statement. In other words, regardless of what we go through for eternal life and the glory that will come with that, it doesn’t matter. It’s worth it. Whenever the problems come, we have to look at it and say, ‘Now what do I do?’ Some bloopers are little, some are big. Like that poor guy who lost the game. That was the biggest blooper in the history of basketball. *Likewise with us; we have to take that, focusing in on Christ, on everything.* Here’s why:

Verse 18: “While we consider not the things *that are* seen, but the things *that are* not seen.... [that’s hard to do; that’s why we have to keep our minds fixed on Christ] ... For the things *that are* seen *are* temporary; but the things *that are* not seen *are* eternal.”

That means that everything we go through, from conversion forward, is leading to eternal life. In addition to eternal life, there will be rewards. How God does that, He’s the One Who is going to determine that. There may be people who do far less than others who get a greater reward because of how they lived and what they did. God is the One Who is in charge of that.

Now then, Paul’s very encouraging, continuing right on in 2-Corinthians 5:1: “For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle... [our body] ...is destroyed, we have a building from God... [a spiritual body and mind] ...a house not made with *human* hands, eternal in the heavens.” *Our reward is in heaven and coming when we’re resurrected!*

Verse 2: “For in this we truly are groaning, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven.” That is, you’re looking for the resurrection. You want to hasten it. Isn’t that what happens?

Verse 3: “If indeed *that* being clothed, we may not be found naked”—*spiritually as well as physically!* Why does it say *clothed*? *We’re looking at spiritual clothing now!*

Galatians 3:26: “Because you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” Always remember this, having the Spirit of God you are the begotten children of God, not adoption. You are sons. This is sonship, because the seed of the Father remains in us.

Verse 27: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.” In the Greek there it can mean *you are clothed* with Christ. That’s what he’s talking about in 2-Cor. 5.

Verse 28: “There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

That’s speaking spiritually. In the flesh, we are still all of those things, but God doesn’t look at us that way. He looks at us as to what our spiritual end result is eventually going to be.

Verse 29: “And if you *are* Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to *the* promise.” There you can have all kinds of different studies on being an heir of God.

Being clothed with Christ! What did Christ tell the Laodiceans? He said put on white garments that your nakedness is not seen. In other words, your spiritual deficiencies are not going to cause you great problems. So, if you put on Christ—and what are the clothes that we put on? ***The clothes of the saints is the righteousness of God!*** The righteousness of God comes with *loving Him, keeping His commandments, growing and overcoming!* All of these things come together here.

2-Corinthians 5:4: “For we who are in *this* tabernacle truly do groan, being burdened; not that we wish to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon so that the mortal *flesh* may be swallowed up by life. Now, He Who is working out this very thing for us *is* God...” (vs 4-5). *God is working in us!*

Sometimes that’s hard to realize. It’s just like the law of gravity. It’s everywhere; it’s powerful, but you don’t even notice it. ***Same way with the Spirit of God!*** There are times when you know God’s Spirit is working more directly with you than at other times. But it is never *not* working with you; it’s always working with you. God is the one Who is doing it. What is His workmanship? *Eph. 2!* It’s amazing how all the Scriptures hang together.

Ephesians 2:8: “For by grace you have been saved through faith...”—*saved from Satan the devil and the world.* That’s not the final salvation. ***The final salvation is the resurrection!*** Between the time of baptism and resurrection, there’s a lot of work going on day-by-day.

“...and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works... [your own works; we do the works of God] ...so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, ***being created...***” (vs 9-10)—*a process:*

- renewed day-by-day
- being changed day-by-day
- growing and overcoming day-by-day

“...in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them” (v 10).

When it talks about God is working with us, God is literally doing it. I’m sure that we will not fully grasp this until the resurrection. In the meantime:

- we live by faith
- we walk by faith
- we look at the things that are eternal

Not the things that are spiritual or physical!

2-Corinthians 5:5: “Now, He Who is working out this very thing for us *is* God, Who has also given us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore, we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in *this* body, we are away from *our eternal* home, *which is coming* from the Lord. (For we walk by faith, not by sight.) We are confident, and we are willing to be *away* from *this* home (*that is*, out of *this* body) and instead to be at home with the Lord” (vs 5-8).

Isn’t it something, God never told the apostles until the very last minute it’s not going to be in their lifetime. With John, in the book of Revelation, He showed its way out there.

The critics say John could not have written the book of Revelation, because it’s so different from his Gospel and his three epistles. *It was written by Christ and John was the stenographer!* Therefore, it’s more important, because that filled in all the blanks from the time of John to the new heaven and the new earth. That’s the framework.

Verse 9: “Because of this, we are also laboring *so that*, whether present or absent, *we* may be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may receive according to the things *done* in *his* body—what he has practiced, whether good or evil. So then, *because* we know the fear of the Lord, we are persuading men; but we are fully known to God, and I hope are also fully known in your consciences” (vs 9-11). Paul had to fight that whole Church. Wait till we get to 2-Cor. 13.

Verse 12: “For we are not commending ourselves again to you, but are giving you an occasion to boast on our behalf, so that you may have *something to answer to* those who themselves are boasting in *physical* appearance, and not in *the* heart.”

These false apostles were saying, ‘Look at Paul.’ Remember by this time he probably had some things crippling him. Remember on his first

evangelistic tour, he was stoned and left for dead. I’m sure that’s why Luke, who was the physician, was always with him. I imagine he had to work over Paul’s back, legs, and his feet all the time.

When we get to 2-Cor. 11 you’re going to see what he went through. Paul really went through a lot. The next time you say, ‘I’ve been going through so much, I can hardly bear it,’ read 2-Cor. 11. Ask yourself, what would you have done if this were you.

I bet when he was out in the deep clinging to something for a day and a night, he thought, ‘That’s it.’ When you’re out there clinging, all you can see are the waves. You can’t see anything very far. There you are, all alone; just You and me, God, and the fish below me.

Verse 13: “But if we are jubilant, *it is* to God; or if we are sober-minded, *it is* for you... [to help you grow and overcome] ...for the love of Christ compels us, *because* we have thus concluded that if one died for all, then all died” (v 14).

Paul said, ‘When I came to the conviction of sin, I died.’ ***He died by baptism!*** This tells us that as far as in this physical life, *we look forward to the eternal life that is coming!* The only reason that we continue in the physical life, is to:

- let us renewed day-by-day
- do what God wants us to do
- how He wants us to do it
- all of that together

Verse 15: “And He died for all so that those who live should no longer live to themselves, but to Him Who died for them and was raised again.”

That’s why we live *in* the world, but we’re not *of* the world. That’s how it is right there. I am sure we’ll understand that more when we’re resurrected. What is that going to be like? I don’t know how to express it.

How much does a child growing in the womb really know? *Nothing!* When he’s born, immediately comes from living in water to living in the world; from not breathing, but to breathing. Then everything begins to unfold. Why do babies when they’re first born cry so much? *Expand their lungs out so they can breathe!*

- What’s it going to be like to be born again of the Spirit?
- What is it going to be like to adjust to a spirit body?
- How is it going to be that we will be able to, however it will be done, appear in a

glorified form, or appear in a form that looks like flesh?

- How's that going to be?

These are some of the things that are so fantastic, if we keep them in our mind, and always are headed toward that goal, and day-by-day renewed, that we'll begin to understand.

Verse 16: "So then, from this time *forward* we know no man according to *the* flesh; but even if we have known Christ in *the* flesh, yet, now we no longer know *Him accordingly*. Therefore, if anyone *be* in Christ, *he is a new creation...*" (vs 16-17).

We see *being created* (Eph. 2). The Protestants say, BANG! You're automatically a new creation. Not true. But what they do with their little prayer, and accepting Jesus is taking the first step over the threshold and then having the door slammed in their face.

"...the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.... [showing that it's a process] ... And all things *are* from God, Who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ..." (vs 17-18). *That's what grace upon grace is, as noted in John 1, direct access to God the Father!*

- He the One Who has drawn us
- He is the One Who has called us
- Christ is the One Who paid the penalty so we could have our sins forgiven
- He is the One Who is working with us with the Father

"...and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation; which *is*, that God was in Christ..." (vs 18-19). Everything that Jesus went through was inspired and directed by the Father.

That's why Jesus said, 'I do nothing of My own self, but as the Father has taught Me. As the Father has commanded Me, *I do!* As the Father has showed Me what to speak, *I speak!* The Father, *then spiritually in Christ*, also participated in the suffering of Christ.

"...reconciling *the* world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them..." (v 19)—present and in the future. This is a statement, but a prophecy, because the world has not been reconciled, yet. Have to go through the whole plan of God, the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles, Last Great Day, all of that together. This will not be fulfilled until there is the Lake of Fire to get rid of the wicked and Satan the devil.

"...and He has entrusted to us *this* message of reconciliation" (v 19). This is an important thing for every minister and elder. You have been

entrusted by God *to not preach yourself, to not falsify the Word of God*. That's why it's important in serving the brethren.

That's why Paul said to the elders, 'Take heed to yourselves, and the flock, the Church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood.' That's quite a thing! Entrusted means stewardship, *that you use someone else's property to increase a profit* for whoever owns that property, likewise with the brethren.

Verse 20: "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ; *and* God, as it were, is exhorting *you* through us..." If they preach the Words of God, *they are God's words!* God is doing the exhorting, though we're the mouthpiece temporarily.

"...We beseech *you* on behalf of Christ, 'Be reconciled to God.'.... [think of this, how powerful this one verse is] ...For He made Him Who knew no sin to *be* sin for us, so that we might become *the* righteousness of God in Him" (vs 20-21).

That's an amazing thing! That's the whole plan of God there! I think we're going to learn quite a few things; this is quite a book!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 7:13-14
- 2) Romans 8:22-28
- 3) 2-Corinthians 4:1-6
- 4) Galatians 1:6-16
- 5) 2-Corinthians 4:7-14
- 6) Hebrews 12:1-4
- 7) 2-Corinthians 4:15-16
- 8) 1-Corinthians 10:13
- 9) 2-Corinthians 4:16-17
- 10) 2-Corinthians 5:1-3
- 11) Galatians 3:26-29
- 12) 2-Corinthians 5:4-5
- 13) Ephesians 2:8-10
- 14) 2-Corinthians 5:5-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 2-Corinthians 1
- Romans 7
- Revelation 19
- 2-Timothy 1
- 2 Corinthians 11
- Philippians 3
- Romans 12:2
- Ephesians 2
- John 1

Also referenced: Series:

Was Peter Ever in Rome? (churchathome.org)

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