

“Future Hope & Future Judgment”
2 Corinthians 5:1-10
Evan Godbold
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Introduction:

Good morning everyone. Great to be with you to open God’s word together. We have made it to the month of August. August already. Goodness. Summer has flown by. It is hard to believe it is already August. Unless, of course, if you go outside, you say, yep. August.

August is an exciting month the life of our church. We are having our last official Sunday with our awesome summer interns. Trey Postelle, our new Student Pastor arrives, today and starts next week. And we head into the fall this year with renewed strategy on discipleship next month, with some great opportunities in the pipeline.

So, we’re glad you’re here. And we are excited to continue our study of 2 Corinthians together, but before we dive in, let’s pray.

[Prayer]

Opening Illustration:

In life, we are constantly inundated with new information. And it’s been my experience, that I sort of have a few categories for important information. And my brain sort of stores them and sorts them. For really important information, we can sort of become sticklers for being accurate. And what is funny is, God sort of made our brains to prioritize info, so what is really important to be specific and accurate to me—may not be the same for you.

All of us do this. We just sort and store stuff, particularly stuff we maybe don’t care about as much and make it to where we get so lax about information that we actually conflate things with other things. I’ll give you a few examples of how we do this and don’t even know it.

[Picture of UK, England, Great Britain]

So here is a good example. This one we get wrong a lot. As Americans, we don't often think about these distinctions. But those are actually three different things that get conflated for one another. And you are like, "We won the war. We can call them what we want." Fair enough.

[Picture of Chameleon / Anole]

So here is a Texas one. A lot of us grew up calling the things on the right chameleons. Maybe just sort of the generic "lizard" if you at least knew the difference. The guy on the right is called a green "anole." And it's local to our area and can change color. Maybe you caught it as a kid and let them bite you. But chameleons they are not. The green anole.

[Clone Trooper/Storm Trooper]

This one is really important to get right. A lot of people get lazy and just call both of these guys storm troopers, but... they are *obviously* really different. The guy on the left is clearly a *Clone* Trooper. Clone Troopers were *good* guys and were part of the Grand Army of the Republic. On the right we have an Imperial Storm Trooper. They were part of the Galactic Empire and were bad guys.

A lot of people call the clone troopers storm troopers. They just lump them all together. *Blasphemy*.

I say all this tongue-in-cheek, but I am pointing out something that we really do. And sometimes, we actually do it when it matters. One such instance is actually in the realm of the Christian life—actually—the Christian afterlife. We are actually really bad speaking specifically about our Christian hope after death. WE use broad and phrases terms like:

- Heaven
- The End
- The Resurrection
- Christ's Return

Almost interchangeably. But in today's text, we're actually going to get some encouragement and exposition from Paul about what happens to the Christian after *she or he* dies. And Lord willing, maybe bring some specificity to what we can all expect. Both as relates to our where our final

hope is, what our final destination is, and how judgment and reward fits into all of it.

Read passage.

¹ 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.

2 Corinthians 5:1-10

So, we need to for a second reorient ourselves. We are at the start of a new chapter, but thematically, we are still connected to the previous chapter.

Last week, David walked us through the end of chapter 4, which is an encouragement for the believer to not lose heart because of their hope in the eternal, and we heard Paul's words about our afflictions on this earth being light and momentary compared to the eternal weight of glory prepared for us as we look for things that are unseen and everlasting, not the temporary things that we can see in the here and now.

So, Paul has encouraged the believers in Corinth to *remember* their hope in view of their struggles, as Paul himself has modeled through the afflictions he has suffered in his ministry.

And so, he continues his exhortation in verse 1 of chapter 5

¹ 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.

So, what is Paul saying? On the one hand, we can take this illustration at face value. He's comparing our bodily existence to living in a **tent**, and the resurrection body to a palace or other grand building from God. The idea here is temporary versus eternal. Anybody that has stayed in a tent, knows that its entire existence is predicated on being able to be broken down, picked up, and moved.

Thinking about this comparison in its historical context, if we remember, we actually learn that Paul was a tentmaker in the story of Acts 18 where he first arrives in Corinth. He meets Priscilla and Aquilla, also of his trade. And that's how they met, making tents to sell in the markets in Corinth. Corinth was a big bustling port, and it was also the site of the Isthmian Games, which were part of the four year Olympic or Olympiad cycle. So, we think of a tent, and we think of Paul who makes tents, and we think of the city of Corinth, bustling with tourists and sailors, one thing begins to become very clear:

Tents are temporary. Like the afflictions Paul talked about that we experience here on earth in 4:17, which are light and momentary, so too, Paul says, are the very vessels in which we experience them. Tents are not a permanent dwelling. They're for people who are just passing through. And Paul is reminding Corinthians something they already—**"for you know."**

That phrase appears a couple of other times in Paul's writings, both in Romans. And each time it's used, it suggests a teaching that Paul is assuming that his readers already know and believe because they've already heard it from him. This especially seems likely here as Paul would have been with for over a year. Tents as a sermon illustration is too good not come up if you make tents and live in a city filled with them. So, Paul is *reminding them* about something they already have heard.

The verb translated “is destroyed” also means “to tear down,” and is particularly appropriate for the image of striking a tent. So we have in this metaphor of things we know... *tents* (something temporary) being torn down or destroyed, contrasted with things that we can’t fully know—a house from God, not built with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Now it can and will get tricky sifting through all of Paul’s metaphors here. So we need to assign meaning right away to what we are talking about correctly, or we’ll be off for the whole thing.

What is implicitly in view here, we see explicitly in verse 6, is our human bodies, being contrasted with our heavenly or resurrected bodies.

So, we have to get our “heavenly dwelling” terminology straight. Verse one is not referring to the actual realm of Heaven, where God dwells. He is using the term “Heavenly dwelling” to refer to the new, glorified bodies given to believers at the Resurrection of the dead.

He continues this metaphor in verse 2:

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

So here, our metaphors are still holding. We’ve got this tent, our earthly bodies that we are living in. They do the job, but they are temporary. They can’t hold up to the task forever. And that’s true of our bodies, right? They grow old. They get sick. They break down. So, what happens? *We groan.*

Sometimes literally... my wife Andrea, she will literally say “Oi” like an old Yiddish-speaking woman. There’s some Ashkenazi Jewish lineage in there. 4 kids. *Oi!* Kids are rough on tents.

When I think of tents breaking down, I wonderful, hilarious memory of camping with some friends and family from when I was probably 16 or 17 years old in Big Bend National Park in the Basin, in the Chisos Mountains. It was Spring Break, and it had been hot and dry all week, and we’d had a great time. But the last night there, we had a nice, big Thunderstorm. And it was four guys in a larger tent and two girls, in a dome tent. Well the dome tent was new and had a nice rain guard attached to it. The larger tent that we had... was neither new, nor very water resistant. It was a

rough night. And eventually, it got so windy and rainy that the tent literally collapsed on us at like 3 am and we ended up sleeping in our cars for the rest of the night while the girls just laughed at us. Then we drove the 9 hours or whatever it was back to Tomball... and we did our fair bit of groaning.

But that's the impermanence of tents.

“longing to put on” — this is another clue here that we are really talking about bodies. We don't “put on” tents. But we do “put on” clothes. Things that cover us. So, we have a temporary tent body, a temporary covering, but we will eventually have a perfect, permanent, heavenly dwelling. And Paul says, he longs to put it on.

There are so many of us, that can relate to this groaning. This longing. There are no words sometimes when we look at the way our bodies can be ravaged by illness and infirmity. And this isn't exclusive to getting older. Disease and infirmity are afflicted on the young and old alike. All of us could probably go down an endless list of people we know who are facing serious challenges in their health. Many in here are personally contending with serious challenges in their health. So, *we groan*. Not complaining. But in the aching, yearning for something different. Something better. Something that lasts. Not a temporary tent that will eventually be chewed by moths or have the sun, wind, and rain rip holes through it. But a permanent dwelling built by God that will endure.

We long to put on this new dwelling, Paul says in verse 2.

³ if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked.

In verse three we have an aside. But it is an important one. He wants to be clear what is desirable and what is not. The word **naked** is a reference to being disembodied. Some commentators say it is a reference to judgment, linking nakedness here to *shame*, as with Adam and Eve when they had sinned in the garden and were naked and ashamed. Judgment after death does come later in our passage, which we will see in verse 10, but this misses the point of Paul's metaphor.

Others have said that it is about death itself. That death is in itself a judgment because of the fall, and it is a type of nakedness. That is true, but again, this idea is incomplete.

Remember, in Corinth, we have a Hellenistic undercurrent about the afterlife. Many Greeks in Paul's day believed something popularized by the philosopher **Plato: the Eternal preexistence of the soul**. Simply put, the idea was that even before birth, human souls existed in the heavenly realm. And human soul shed of its bodily existence was considered better—it was a return the purest form of existence. But here, Paul compares it to being naked.

Naked, when you are thinking about shelter metaphors, is sort of the opposite of what you want, right? At least a tent provided something in the way protection. Verse 4 actually gives us this reasoning.

⁴For 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.

Paul here repeats the thought verses 2–3, rewording it, expanding, and interpreting his statements, so that he leaves no room for any misunderstanding.

He speaks again of groaning in the earthly tent again, he now says “being burdened.” Explicitly, Paul is saying the earthly tent of our flesh is a burden because it is not built to last. It breaks down.

“Not that we would be unclothed...”

Here is the key. Paul is saying, “We don’t want to be naked. We don’t want to be unclothed. Instead, we want to be further clothed. So that, what?—**“what is mortal is swallowed up by life.”**

It is clear here we are comparing bodies. The temporal, earthly body and the eternal resurrected body. In fact, Paul is echoing his previous letter to the Corinthians with this language:

⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

1 Corinthians 15:53-54

So, this “swallowing up” language is present again. And we know we have this view of both earthly and resurrected bodies as dwellings and clothing. **But then what is the nakedness, this being “unclothed” that Paul talks about?**

The only explanation that it is the intervening time between our physical death and the Resurrection at the end of time. This period is often called by theologians **The Intermediate State**.

We will talk more about that in a minute. But for now, make a note in your brain that Paul has compared it to being naked and seems to praise much more the actual day that he is Resurrected with a glorified body. And verse five, he continues to talk about this hope.

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

Paul reminds the Corinthians again that this new Resurrection body is God-given and he is preparing us for it, with the Spirit—Paul says—as a guarantee. This echoes his same wording about the Spirit in chapter 1.

²¹ And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, ²² and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22

The Holy Spirit is the down-payment on the Resurrection, Paul says. It is a guarantee that God has prepared us *for this very thing*, Paul says. The Resurrected Body. The heavenly dwelling. The Holy Spirit, living in you

already, will be the same power that conquers the grave and swallows up death with victory, giving you a new, glorious body.

It is both a future reality and present hope.

And in verses 6 - 8, Paul gives us the response to such a hope, and a bit more.

⁶So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

The response to the hope of the resurrection and the assurance in it that comes from the Holy Spirit is to ***always be of good courage***. Then Paul begins to sort of synthesize his ideas and start putting things together in the rest of 6 on through 7 and 8.

Paul uses a specific type of rhetorical figure here, breaking off his thought in this verse. He interrupts himself. This type of interruption is called an ***aposiopesis (a-poe-sy-oe-pee-sis)***. Your \$10 word of the day. You stop what you are saying and then you interject an explanatory statement (verse 7). That's what Paul does here. (v7 "for we walk by faith, not by sight"). Then he resumes his statement but with alterations in the grammar (That is called an ***anacoluthon***) in verse 8.

But the thrust of 6-8, Paul doesn't set aside his statements about the dwelling from heaven and the clothing of immortality—that is, the Resurrection body. But here, he is speaking more of the "nakedness" that we have in verses 3 and 4.

As the remainder of this section makes clear, Paul reckons with an intermediate state between his death and the resurrection. "To be absent from the body" and "present with the Lord" is not the *final* state of the human being, but it is now the real and present state for Paul and the Corinthians. And of course, it is our present state now.

Now we can talk more about this Intermediate State between bodies. For the believer, the Intermediate State is what we often call “going to heaven” when we die. What does Paul say about it? He says we are absent from the body but present with the Lord.

Our souls leave our bodies and go to Heaven to be with Jesus, who is even now, seated at the right side of God the Father. But Jesus is resurrected. He is there bodily, fully glorified. We, on the other hand, Paul says, will be naked. Our souls will have no bodies, which will still be decaying on earth. He will already be experiencing what we long to experience.

But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:20

Now this is important to address too. Some people have used that verse as well as the “nakedness” we talked about in our passage to say that there *is* no intermediate state. At least not a conscious one. They take the figure of speech “fallen asleep” literally, which is just a kinder, softer way of saying “dead.” The same way we might say, “no longer with us” or “passed away.”

Proponents of the false doctrine called “Soul Sleep” would say that there is only a Resurrection to come. That there is no “being with the Lord” at death until we are united with him at the end. That the eternal soul of the dead person is unaware of its state until the Resurrection.

Of course, Jesus’ own words to the penitent thief on the cross undercut this idea completely.

“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Luke 23:43

Truly, today. No intervening time. With Jesus. Paul is claiming this promise. But he is also pointing at the inherent tension between the natural state of creation of humans.

Before the fall, we had bodies. God created Adam and Eve bodily, and then breathed life into those bodies. **And when he was done, he called it very good.** *Bodies are part of God's created order.* Separating souls from bodies at death, is part of God's plan of redemption, but the final plan again, includes **recreation. Resurrection. New bodies!** And while we wait for that day, we groan. And because we don't really understand what an existence without bodies will be like, we can understand why Paul doesn't sound that excited about it at first. Indeed, in verses 2-4, we see Paul compare it to nakedness.

One commentator even put it like this:

"[Paul's] point is that he longs to bypass the intermediate condition altogether and allow this mortality to be swallowed up by real life—life in the resurrection body. In short, he would rather live on earth till the resurrection."

-Ben Witherington III

That, to me, is a bit overstated, but I think we see what he's getting at. Paul is *ready* for the Resurrection. *That* he understands. *That* he can at least fathom. We remember from chapter 4 that he is hard pressed, persecuted, that he has endured much in his earthly tent for the gospel. He longs for that body to be regenerated the way his heart already in the process of being through the Holy Spirit. And that is why he sort of turns away from the idea of being disembodied at his death.

But here in verses 6-8, we see that he would in fact rather be in Heaven than continue on earth in the struggle. What is the reason? Is it to be released from his struggle in the body? No, actually. It is because the object of his faith, the Person of Jesus Christ, is what he truly desires. And he is in Heaven, where his soul goes when he dies.

And so we are forced to realize that for Paul—and I would argue for us as well—there is actually a tension at work here. As Witherington says, Paul longs for the resurrection, but he longs also to be with Jesus. So, his desire to be in a body, the type of existence he (and every other human being) is created for, still pales in comparison to being **at home with Jesus.**

13th century theologian Thomas Aquinas helps us here:

Thus, the reward of the saints is wonderful and desirable, because it is heavenly glory. Hence, [Paul] links the desire of the saints with this reward, saying: Here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling. Here he does three things. First, he expresses the desire of grace for its reward; secondly, he shows that the desire of grace is retarded by the desire of nature (v. 4); thirdly, he shows that the desire of grace overcomes the desire of nature (v. 6).

-Thomas Aquinas

Our natural desire is to want to have bodies. Our *supernatural* desire to be with Jesus, the object of our heart's delight, *overcomes* this natural desire. I think Aquinas is right. It is good and right to think that the resurrected body is better than being "naked" as a soul in heaven. **But being with Jesus, is better than not being with Jesus! So, we say as Paul does at the end of his life in Corinthians:**

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Philippians 1:21

To be with the Lord, wherever the Lord is, is to be at home. And that is an immeasurable gain.

But Paul is not done.

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

So, we might get confused here if we are not careful. Because earlier we were using "dwellings" as imagery to talk about our bodies. Now we are using the phrase "at home" to describe being with Jesus. It helps to know that Paul is using a totally different expression for "at home" and than earlier where he used the word "dwelling." So, we don't want to mix our metaphors, at least, not any more than Paul already does. "Being at home" is actually a verb with a *figurative* connotation of being comfortable and at peace. This is the perfect metaphor for heaven. But a different

metaphor altogether than earlier when he used the noun form of the word “dwelling” to describe our bodies. So, just so we are clear, we are not talking about bodies any longer but the intermediate state of being with God in Heaven (that is, “at home”) or continuing to strive here on Earth (that is, “away”).

So, Paul is saying whether in our bodies here on earth, or outside of them as souls in Heaven with Jesus, even though believers do not see these glorious things being realized, they are of good courage, living by faith, not by sight, aiming to please God.

And the reason we 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.

Because one day, our works done in this earthly tent will be judged.

Judgment seat of Christ. This is word, “*bema*” or seat, is actually sort of a step, an elevated platform. Paul is likely calling to mind the image of a public assembly, where typically a person of exceptional merit would be *rewarded* in public in the forum from a tribunal of judges.

Here the one seated on the *bema* or judgment seat is Christ. He will judge believers according to their deeds. Now here, the ESV uses the words good or evil. But that second word “evil” is a poor translation, and that is sort of a lynchpin for how we are to take this judgment. **φαῦλος** is the word in the Greek, and it can have the meaning for being sort of *morally low. Foolish. Evil. Base.* But there’s also the more brass tacks meaning of **“inferior quality.”**

That’s what is in view here. And that’s important because this judgment is for believers. We have a sort view like a lot of stuff where there is just sort of one final judgment. Jesus separates the sheep from the goats, the wheat from the chaff—that is, those who believe and those who don’t. Right? We’re judged not by works right? It’s by grace through faith that we Ephesians 2:8-9 that we are saved?

Yes and Amen. It is by grace through faith that we are saved. But it is by *our works* that we are judged.

What is in view here is what Paul wrote in his previous letter:

¹¹ For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15

Paul is saying. Your foundation is Christ. By grace you have been saved. *You are saved.* But what are you doing with that saving faith? Are you building on that foundation? What kind of materials are you using? The good stuff? Gold, silver, precious stones? Or the *phaulos*? The bad stuff. Wood, hay straw—that stuff won't last when the righteous judge examines your life. Only the things of him in your life will remain.

So, Paul ends with a warning, but it is also a reminder of his confidence, not in himself or even in his works. It is all by God's grace that at that final public hearing, Paul's ministry will be vindicated and shown to faithful. And he is exhorting the Corinthians to remember well his example.

Application:

There's much more we could say. But we only have so much time. So, I wanna bring out the main three takeaways from today's text, and I want give some specific applications for us.

1. We have a glorious HOME - *with Jesus.*

First, in Heaven after we die, then with him when returns to Earth as King.

So earlier, we talked about ideas that get conflated. A pair of ideas that I think a lot of us as evangelicals sort get lazy about is going to Heaven versus the final Resurrection.

Sometimes we act like that when someone dies. “Oh, she’s finally home,” is in fact fine to say about someone who believed in Jesus in this life. But only because they are at home with the Lord. Their ultimate home is still to come. It’s a new Heaven and a New Earth at the end of all things.

So, when we grieve the loss of those of we love who are in the Lord, it is okay to say they are in a better place. That is certainly true, but it is a two-stage hope for them. Their first and greatest hope has been realized. They are united with Jesus. I think Peter at the transfiguration. “Let’s stay here. I could make shelters.” I wanna be with Jesus as I am seeing him, glorified, glorified, hanging out with Moses and Elijah. Their pain and suffering in this life is gone. We don’t know what that is like. In fact, we don’t know much about that Intermediate State at all. Reformer John Calvin helps us here.

We ought not to enter into curious and subtle arguments about the place of paradise. Let us rest satisfied with knowing that those who are ingrafted by faith into the body of Christ are partakers of that life, and thus enjoy after death a blessed and joyful rest, until the perfect glory of the heavenly life is fully manifested by the coming of Christ.

- John Calvin

Amen. Sounds pretty wonderful when you put it like that. How could it not be when we’re with him? *But it gets better.*

2. We have a glorious HOPE - the Resurrection of the Body.

This intermediate state is necessary for many of us. Maybe Christ will return in our lifetime. Maybe we will get to skip that intermediate, bodiless state. Or, maybe he won’t. Our job isn’t to try and discern the time of Christ’s return. In fact, we are cautioned against doing so. Instead, Jesus tells us in Mark 13 to “Stay Awake!”

But we are counseled in Paul's other writings to have Resurrection hope.

⁵⁰ I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

1 Corinthians 15:50-53

¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

For all of us, this is the eternal hope. We are ready not just to be with his Christ, but to see him finish his work! To remake the world—a new heaven, a new earth, a new creation, without sin and death, all for the glory of the king.

We may suffer for a while, and, for us who believe, when death comes that suffering ends. Thanks be to God. **But when Christ comes**, suffering becomes untrue, unmade!

So when we go to funerals, when we counsel our loved ones, we don't just talk about being in a better place. We talk about *that!* That in the words of Tolkien, *every sad thing will become untrue!*

Don't conflate the rest and peace of heaven—that intermediate state—with the unspeakable glory and renewal found in the resurrection. Encourage one another with that. We don't grieve as those without hope. Our hope goes beyond a place of rest and comfort. Our hope is in Jesus

and his finished work of *defeating death. Undoing it.* We sing a song here Death was Arrested. It's awesome. We love playing it. You love singing it. One day, Death won't just be arrested. Death will be unmade.

So, we have a glorious HOME, with Jesus. For us right now, that's in Heaven. But it's wherever he is. We have a glorious HOPE - the Resurrection of the Body.

3. We have a glorious JUDGE – *and we make it our aim to please Him.*

We can't get around it. Verse 10 is there. And there is application for us this morning. But before we talk about it, we must affirm as strongly as we can that the gospel of Jesus Christ means that we are saved by grace through faith and not by works. Ephesians 2:8-9 are verses that anchor our gospel message. You cannot earn your way into heaven.

But after death comes judgment, for all mankind, Hebrews 9:27. And we are judged by what we do?

So am I trying to have it both ways? Am I secretly saying it's Faith + Works like the Mormons. "It's by grace you have been saved—after all you can do." (That's an actual passage from the Book of 2 Nephi, from their Book of Mormon.)

No! That's heresy! That's a false gospel! But, we see clearly in the scriptures there is a judgment for salvation... and there is a judgment for heavenly reward. Both are based on works. But only one is for believers. Jesus is saying. Great! You received my mercy. You received my grace. How did you live? What did you do?

So a judgment for salvation and a judgment for works. Jesus actually teaches both of these himself in his Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard in Matthew 20 and the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 24. In the Vineyard parable, all the workers get the same wage, regardless of how long they worked. The wage here is the gift of eternal life. In the Talent Parable, something else is in view. All of these men are confessed servants of their Master in the Talent parable. And all are given according

to their ability. And some do better than others. Each are rewarded. One doesn't obey. And not only is he not rewarded, he is cast out.

In our Corinthian, Paul is trying to remind the church that even though we are saved by grace through faith, we are still to obey. We are still to build on that foundation. He's been reminding them of how he has done that in their midst. He looks forward to the day where stands before the judge. Because he could do anything under his own power? No! In the parable of the talents, who gives the talents? The Master. Paul knows everything he has was given. And he makes it his aim to be faithful. He is of good courage.

Are we? Do we make it our aim to please him? Are we faithful with what we are given?

After all, Ephesians 2:8-9 is great, but we need to keep reading.

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 2:8-9

God prepared good works for us to do. Are we walking in them?

We don't live in fear of judgment as believers, we know what we have been given. But that doesn't mean we should be idle. Paul reminds us of that.

We have a glorious Judge who one day will see all that we have done. How then shall we live? We shall live as those who long to be at home with him. Those who long to see him finish his work, but we are also tasked as helpers in that work, by his grace. We are not sufficient for these things. But he is, so we should walk in them by faith. Until our faith is made sight.

[CLOSING PRAYER]