A close-up of a hand

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**2nd Corinthians 5 – “NEW CREATION”**

**2ND COR. 4:17-18“**18 …fix our eyes **not** on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is *seen is temporary*, but what is *unseen is eternal*.”

*Focus your attention* on what the Holy Spirit is revealing to you about what is going on around you (UNSEEN), Don’t get caught up in focusing just on what is taking place in the natural. (WHAT IS SEEN). Ask Him to *“enlighten the eyes of your heart”.*

In chapter 4 Paul compared our bodies to “jars of clay”, in this chapter he calls them an “earthly tent”. He reminds to focus on our eternal home awaiting us in heaven.

**2ND COR. 5:1-4 “**For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, *not* built by human hands. **2**Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, **3**because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. **4**For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

He says that we groan for something better, something beyond what we experience here on earth. We groan for our “heavenly dwelling”.

*“Groan”* (Grk. stenazó) This is a ‘sigh’ of longing. In Jewish thought, groaning was also associated with the anticipation of God's deliverance and the coming of the Messiah.

Why do you suppose people are so attracted to fairytales, and fictional fantasy stories? We all have an inner longing to experience a world where good heroes conquer evil villains, the world is a safe and comfortable place, and we all live happy ever after.

It’s interesting because this world was never like that, (except for a short time in Eden). [and perhaps “Camelot” – the mythical kingdom where everything was perfect.]

C.S. Lewis - *“The fact that our heart yearns for something Earth can't supply is proof that Heaven must be our home.”*

We yearn for what Jesus calls “my Father’s house” which is eternity where he dwells and has prepared for us since the beginning of time.

**John 14:2** “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”

We are built with “eternity in our hearts”. That’s why we find the passing of time very odd, and are also very uncomfortable with the concept of death; “I can’t believe so much time has gone by!” “I can’t believe he/she died!…” *[what do we expect?]*

**Ecc. 3:11** “He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yetno one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.”

God is the one who made us this way…

**2nd Corinthians 5:5-8**“Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. **6**Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. **7**For we live by faith, not by sight. **8**We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.”

*“God has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come!”*

Have you ever put a deposit on a house that you’ve been really wanting to buy?

Once you put that deposit down, something changes, you feel a sense of ownership of the property, and begin imagining yourself living in it. This is what it is like in the Spirit. God placed a deposit of His Spirit in each of us when we “believed”. That seed continues to grow and grow, (which is called “sanctification”), but doesn’t become complete until we reach our heavenly dwelling (glorification), the longing however, begins right away. That’s why Paul said he’d prefer to be *“away from the body and ‘at home’ with the Lord.”*

**2nd Corinthians 5:9-10“**So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. **10**For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”

*The Judgement Seat of Christ?!?*

The judgment seat of Christ does *not* determine our salvation; that matter was settled by Jesus’s sacrifice on the cross, and our faith in Him by believing. All our sins are forgiven, and there is “no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

Jesus said, “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and *will not be judged* but has crossed over from death to life” (John 5:24, emphasis added).  
  
So, even though our salvation is not in question, we still must appear before the judgment seat of Christ. It will be a time of examination and a time of reward. Jesus will assess what we did in this life with the opportunities God gave us and how faithful we were. The Bible teaches that those who have been faithful will receive reward, that those who were not will miss out on.

It's sort of like the Olympics, those who excelled receive medals. But all get to participate in the games and celebrations.

**2nd Corinthians 5:11-12 “**Since then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. **12**We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to *take pride* in us, so that you can answer those who *take pride* in *what is seen* rather than in *what is in the heart*.”

“Take pride”, also means to “Boast in”. It’s the equivalent of someone saying, “let me brag on you”. Again reminding us not to fix our eyes on what is seen, but what is unseen.

**2nd Corinthians 5:13-16 “**If we are “out of our mind,” as some say, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. **14**For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. **15**And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. **16**So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.”

Apparently Paul’s rhetoric about preferring to die and go to heaven (verse 8 and others like it) caused some people to say that these people are “out of their minds’ because they believe so strongly that there is a heavenly dwelling awaiting them.

Paul reminds the Corinthians that Christ’s love compels us not to think of these hopelessly people lost forever, but as those whom Jesus died for, and have the potential to live for Him. He urges them not to look at them just from a worldly point of view, but to look upon them with spiritual eyes.

He points out that there was a time that they looked at Jesus wrongly with unbelief, but they do so no longer!

**2nd Corinthians 5:17**“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

**NKJV – “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**

This is one of the most powerful verses in the Bible and very much worth memorizing.

“Therefore” – Since we were just told not to look at people from a “worldly point of view”, let’s go ahead and look at them from God’s point of view…

* If **anyone** *is* “in Christ” – *whosoever* puts their faith in Jesus the Messiah.
* He is a **new creation** – The presence of God’s Spirit in a person’s life does not just become an addition, or an appendage, it leads to a transformation from one type of creature to another. From a 2-dimensional being (body/soul) destined for destruction, to a three-dimensional being (body/soul/spirit) destined for eternity!
* **Old things have passed away** – you are no longer judged by a former identity, but have clothed yourself in Christ and take on His!
* Behold, **all things have become new** – Did you ever watch a butterfly? It’s almost impossible to imagine that this beautiful creature fluttering around the flowers in the sunshine was once a hairy worm that could only crawl along the ground. That’s how we are when we become new creations, all things are made new.

There is a scene in “The Chosen” where Mary Magdalene, a woman whom the Bible calls; “a sinner, whom Jesus cast out seven demons”, is trying to explain to the Pharisee Nicodemus the transformation that happened to her when she put her trust in Jesus. She put it this way; *"I was one way... and now I am completely different. And the thing that happened in between... was Him."*

***[video]***

If you are truly a new creation does that mean you never sin again? Do you ever stumble like you formerly did, or do you lose all the habits and behaviors of your old self? Many times people are instantly freed from those things, but often times your “flesh” still tries to take over, even though you are given a “deposit of the Holy Spirit”. The big difference is that;

**Romans 8:1** “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”.

If you are “in Christ” Jesus, “Christ is in you”!

**Romans 8:10** “And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”

That righteousness is *‘imputed’* to you, because of grace. In other words, you are deemed righteous because of Jesus in you.

* **Lam. 3:22-23** “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed,  
      for his compassions never fail, They are new every morning.”
* **1st John 1:9:** “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”
* **Psalm 103:12** “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”

**\*\*\*THE NORTH SHORE FELLOWSHIP FOUNDATIONAL VERSE\*\*\***

**2nd Cor. 5:18“**All this is from God, who *reconciled us* to himself through Christ and gave us the *ministry of reconciliation*”

**VISION:**

**North Shore Fellowship exists to Lift up Jesus, and to “reconcile” people into A relationship with God through him. *(2nd Corinthians 5:18)***

**2nd Corinthians 5:18** “Now all things *are* of God, who has *reconciled* us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the *ministry of reconciliation*.”(NKJV)

This verse speaks very clearly about the heart of God, for us, and for the lost.

The Story of God and His People:

“In the beginning” He created mankind for Relationship, with Himself and with each other. He recognized that a breach in this relationship with man by *sin*, lead to *separation* between us and Him (and also us and each other).

**Gen. 1:26** “Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us.” (NLT)

He wanted to create little ones that resembled Him, ones whom He could take care, provide for and protect. And most of all ones whom He could “love and be loved by”.

He wanted a RELATIONSHIP with these whom He brought into the world. He wanted to be their Father.

When He created the earth and all that was in it, and most of all the people that He had created…

**Gen. 1:31** “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.”

God was very happy. He had what He wanted, RELATIONSHIPS with those whom he created in His image.

*Gen 3:9* tells us that the *“Lord walked in the garden in the cool of the day, looking for them”,* to spend time with them.

It was all going perfectly until *something dreadful* happened…

***Sin*** *entered into the world!*

The man and woman disobeyed the Lord’s one commandment, when they ate of the forbidden fruit.

From then on the relationship was damaged. Sin grew and grew, and created a *separation barrier* between God and man.

Every generation afterward has experienced the effects of this breach, and has suffered from lack of intimacy with God the father.

God did many things to try to *recapture the relationship* that was suffering because of the presence of sin in the world. Throughout the Old Testament He raised up; prophets, kings, did many miracles, and even *created a law* to try to resolve the sin issue. Still as each generation came and went, it seemed farther and farther away from the closeness of the relationship that he had with Adam and Eve.

By the time Isaiah came along, their sin had gotten so bad, that God *hid His face* from them and *stopped hearing their prayers*.

**Isa. 59:2**“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have *hidden His face* from you, So that He will *not hear*.”

*So what did God do?*

He still desired to be reconciled with his children, but there was a *roadblock*, a *barrier,* a *separation* between he and them. The relationship was damage by generational sin and had gotten very far away from the sweet time of fellowship they had in the garden of Eden before “The Fall”.

He did the unthinkable…He sent His *only begotten son*, to be born of a woman, to live a sinless life and die as a *once-and-for-all sacrifice* in a brutal death for our sins.

Jesus willingly gave his life, so that we can be reconciled with the father…

Through Jesus, He made a way to reconcile us back to himself, so that once again, we can enjoy relationship with Him, and with each other, and reconcile the lost into a love relationship with Him as well.

**Romans 5:8-11*“****But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* **9**Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. **10**For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. **11**And not only *that,* but we also **rejoice** in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

This is how we are reconciled to God. But this reconciliation is not intended for us alone, it’s the good news that He wants us to share with the world.

(Continue to end of chapter…)

**2nd Cor 5:19-21** “**19**that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.  **20**We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: *Be reconciled to God.****21****God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God!” <>*

God wants to be reconciled with all those whom He created in His image. Jesus is the way that makes it possible, and we are the messengers to spread the good news.

He wants to do it here in our community, all over New Jersey, and the throughout the rest of the world.

AND…He wants to use US to do it. YOU and I are the ones he has entrusted with the task, and been given the “Ministry of Reconciliation”.

That’s our job, God has appointed us with a special responsibility within the *“Ministry of Reconciliation”.* [More important than a presidential cabinet position.]

We are His ambassadors, His messengers, His Ministers, and this is our message:

***“We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God!”***

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