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II Corinthians 5

Paul is discussing and defending his ministry and answering the accusations of his enemies. In this chapter, he points out that his ministry is serious; not careless.

Paul works from serious motives and not fleshly desires. He cites the four motives that control him.

Paul's confidence of Heaven. 5:1-8

In Chapter 4, Paul had mentioned his determination to serve Christ in spite of suffering and even death. He lived by faith, not by sight.

This was not blind trust; it was a certain confidence in the Word of God. When a man knows where he is going, no wind can change him nor enemy defeat him.

The outward man might be perishing (4:16) but what difference did that make?

```` Paul knew that glory lay on the other side.

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

2 Corinthians 4:16

The "building" Paul is talking about here is not the mansion Christ is preparing for believers (John 14:1);

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

John 14:1 it is the glorified body that will be ours when Christ returns (Phil. 3:21); (I Cor. 15:50).

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. Philippians 3:21

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 1 Corinthians 15:50

Our earthly house is a tent (tabernacle) that will one day be taken down (dissolved).

But God has a glorified body for us!

However, our desire as Christians is not to have this earthly body taken down in death but to have it "clothed upon" and transformed.

How do we know we have this glorious future?

We have the earnest of the Spirit (vs. 5), that "eternal down payment" that assures us the rest of the blessing will be ours.

Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 5:

We are today "at home in the body but absent from the Lord". Our yearning desire is to be "at home with the Lord" and living in glorified bodies that will never change.

### **Concern to please Christ 5:9-13**

Paul is not selfish; his Christian service is motivated by more than a hope for the future.

He seeks to please Christ and be acceptable to Him.

Paul always wanted to be found "well pleasing" to Christ.

Paul had a healthy fear of the Lord ("terror" in vs. 11), for he knew that all believers would someday be judged at Christ's Judgment seat (I Cor. 3:10-15); Romans 14:7-13).

Knowing that his works would someday be revealed and tested, Paul wanted to live the kind of life that pleased and honored Christ.

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

1 Corinthians 3:10

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.1

Corinthians 3:11

Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;1 Corinthians 3:12

Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.1

Corinthians 3:13

If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 1

Corinthians 3:14

If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.1 Corinthians 3:15

The word "appear" in verse 10 means more than "stand" or "show up". It carries the idea of being revealed; "for we shall be shown as we are" is the meaning.

There will be no pretending at that judgment; our character and works will be revealed as they are and the suitable rewards will be given.

But the true servant of God is careful even today to have an open life, manifest both to God and men (vs. 11).

How important it is that we let God do the judging for He sees the heart.

The Corinthians were "glorifying in appearance" as they boasted about various preachers and criticized Paul.

Keep in mind that "results" are not always the best test of a man's life and service.

The motive of the heart is the important thing.

### **His Constraint of Love 5:14-17**

Paul had been accused of being mad (Acts 26:24) since he went to such extremes to win men to Christ.

And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

Acts 26:24

But the controlling power of his life was the love of Christ. This does not mean Paul's love for Christ, although certainly that was there.

It means rather the love that Christ had for Paul.

The apostle was so overwhelmed by Christ's love for him that to serve and honor Christ became the controlling motive of his life.

He describes Christ's love in verses 14-17 as a love that led Christ to the cross to die for dead sinners.

Why did he die?

"That we might live **through** Him." (I John 4:9); "that we might live **with** Him" (I Thess 5:10); and "that we might live **for** Him" (II Cor. 5:15)

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

1 John 4:9

Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.<sup>1</sup>  
Thessalonians 5:10

There can be no selfishness in the heart of the Christian who understands the love of Christ.

One of the problems at Corinth was that believers were judging after the flesh (I Cor. 4:1-7).

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.  
1 Corinthians 4:1

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.<sup>1</sup> Corinthians 4:2

But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.  
1 Corinthians 4:3

For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.<sup>1</sup> Corinthians 4:4

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.  
1 Corinthians 4:5

And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.  
1 Corinthians 4:6

For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? 1 Corinthians 4:7

They were comparing Paul with other teachers and using carnal judgment instead of spiritual discernment.

They were forgetting that the Christian life is a new creation with new values and motives.

To judge Christ after the flesh is wrong; that is, to look upon Him (as the world does) from a human point of view, as a great Teacher or Example.

Paul, as an unconverted Jewish rabbi, probably did look upon Christ after the flesh.

But, when he saw the glorified Christ, he changed his point of view.  
We must have that spiritual evaluation based on the Word of God.  
Men said Paul was beside himself; they were judging after the flesh and proving that they lacked that "love of Christ" as the controlling force of their lives.

### **His Commission from God – 5:18-21**

We have seen three motives that controlled Paul's life and ministry: his confidence of heaven, his concern to please Christ and his constraint of love.

There was a fourth motive; Paul's commission from God.

Paul was an ambassador for Christ! His message was one of peace: God paid the price for sin; God was not at war with sinners; sinners could now believe and be saved.

What a tremendous message!

**Ambassadors are chosen,** and Christ had chosen Paul to be His representative to lost mankind.

Paul did not represent himself (see 4:5) but Christ.

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

1 Corinthians 4:5

His message was the Gospel that Christ had committed to his trust (1 Thess. 2:4).  
But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

1 Thessalonians 2:4

His aim was to please Christ and be faithful to the task given to him.

### **Ambassadors are protected.**

An ambassador must be a citizen of the nation that he represents, and Paul (as with every Christian) was a citizen of heaven (see Phil. 3:20 where "conversation" means "citizenship").

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Philippians 3:20

The nation supplies every need and stands ready to protect its ambassadors.

So Christ supplied every need that Paul had and stood with him in every crisis.

**Ambassadors are called home before war is declared.**

God has not yet declared war on this wicked world, but one day He will.

There is a coming day of wrath (I Thess. 1:10) that will judge the wicked, but Christians will be called home before that day comes (I Thess. 5:1-10). And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 1:10

The Church, God's ambassadors, will not go through the tribulation. The message of the Church today is one of reconciliation.

God in Christ on the cross has reconciled the world to himself and is willing to save all who trust His Son. Ours is not a message of social reform (although the Gospel reforms lives, Titus 2:11-15); ours is a message of spiritual regeneration.

We represent Christ as we invite the lost to receive Him. What a privilege – what a responsibility!

All of us are ambassadors, whether we accept the commission or not. "As my Father hath sent me, so send I you," said Christ in John 20:21.

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.  
John 20:21

Let us make sure that our message, methods and motives are right so that our work might be lasting and stand the test of fire when we stand before Him.