

**TRIUMPHANT LIVING**  
Taught by Dr. Bruce Bickel  
*“Heavenly Confidence” Part 1*  
January 24, 2014

Let us open your Bibles, please, to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5. We are studying life in the gospel and what it means to live a gospel-oriented life. We come now to the 5<sup>th</sup> Chapter of 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians and Paul is writing to the Church of Corinth. We will be looking at verses 1 thru 5 today in you handout. Let’s listen to the Word of the Lord. I’ll be reading from the New American Standard version of the Bible.

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:1-10. “For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, Inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life, Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.”

I’m going to read a little bit more because it is important that we understand the context of these first five verses in the total part of the package. So continuing at verse 6, “Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight—we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Therefore, we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

May God be pleased to open our eyes that we might behold His glory in the face of Christ.

We have been studying this passage of 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians of Paul’s life in the new covenant; it is really life in the gospel ministry. I want to remind us of a couple of things that we have been learning so far. Turn with me back to Chapter 3:18 and I want you to see the purpose of the gospel of Christ. We have been talking about the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the person of Christ, the work of Christ, and repentance and faith as the content of what is the gospel, a Biblical gospel message. Not the Americanized version but as the Biblical version of the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the personal work of Christ, and repentance and faith. I want you to see what is the purpose of the gospel.

You’ll see that here in Chapter 3:18. “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.” Now there you begin to see what the purpose of the gospel is and, basically, it is this in summary: it is to restore the glory of man to reflect the glory of God. That is what we are talking about in transformation. The purpose of the gospel, when we preach the gospel of Christ and Him crucified, is to restore the glory of man so that man reflects the glory of God because man was created in the image of God for His glory.

Man was the greatest accomplishment in God's creative efforts because after He created man, He said, "It is good" and it wasn't until the fall that man was tainted by sin and by our original parents, Adam and Eve, that we were introduced into the whole concept of a sinful nature. Prior to that we existed in a glorious state and what Paul is teaching us here is that moment by moment, when we embrace the personal work of Christ, you and I are being transformed from one stage of glory to the next to return us back to that original state so that you and I personally can become the means by which God's glory is put on display. When somebody says, "What is the purpose of the gospel?" It is far more than just eternal life. That's a consequence, not the goal. The goal is to restore your glory, my glory, back to its original state so that you and I reflect the glory of God. You and I reflect the glory of God. That is where we get the idea and you have heard me say for twenty-some years now that ministry is who you are, where you are.

When you and I are restored back by this transformation process of the grace of God and restored back to our original glorious state, we now are in a position to reflect the glory of God. To recall the Old Testament passage we've talked about numerous times in Ezekiel 36: "I will give you a clean heart and cleanse you from all of your unrighteousness." Give you a new life, put the Holy Spirit in you and cause you to be obedient. And his purpose in life describing for us so that we have the same purpose, and that is to be the means by which God puts His life on display to demonstrate His holiness. When He says in Ezekiel 36: "I will demonstrate the fact that I am holy says the Lord God when I demonstrate my holiness through you." Now God never requires of us something He does not equip us to do before hand. He never requires of us something He does not equip us to do before hand. If our purpose is to be the means by which God puts His life on display and to show His holiness, He is going to have to do something in our lives to restore to us the original glory of our creative being so that we reflect His glory and put His life on display.

So Paul reminds us in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:18 the purpose of the gospel and that is this: to restore to us the glory of man so that we reflect the glory of God. Now what is the gospel itself? Go to Chapter 4 to the next couple of verses, down to verse 6.

What is the gospel? If somebody said, "What is the gospel of Christ?" We would say, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." We would give something trite like that, but it is much more than that, Men. It is far more glorious than just my wellbeing. God's glory is at stake.

Look at 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:6. "For God, who said, 'light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." There is the gospel. It is the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. That is what the gospel is about. It is about you and me understanding the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ, so that when you and I examine the personal work of Christ in all of His sinless perfection and perfect obedience we see in the face of Christ the glory of God. In addition, it is when you and I repent and come to saving faith that we begin to be transformed to that original state of our glory so that we reflect the glory of God. The gospel is about the glory of God, it is not about you and I having a well-planned life. Now certainly He does plan our lives and I am not belittling that. All I'm saying is it is much more than just God loves you and has a wonderful plan. God is transforming you to your original state of glory so that where ever you are, you will be the means by which people will see the glory of God. Now you talk about self-esteem, you talk about worth and value; what more worth and value could we have in our lives than to be the means by which God is going to put His life on display? That is what Paul has been teaching us in Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Now we come to a wonderful, a very comforting portion about the end of our life as we come to Chapter 5. Paul now begins to take us through a transition when he says, “For we know that if the earthly tent...” (Referring to our physical body) “...which is our house is torn down, we have a building...” (He’s referring to our eternal glory) “...a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

As I was studying this the last couple of weeks, I was really struck by that word “know” because it begins this phrase with a prepositional phrase “For we know...” When you see something like that, it is like the word “therefore” you have to go back and understand what he has been talking about. That is why I reviewed for us what the gospel is; because that little word “for” says...what I’m going to say now is based upon what I’ve already said. That is what we would call in theology our hermeneutic. Basically, a hermeneutic is this: it is the science of biblical study. You want to take a look roughly at three things.

- (1) You want to take a look at historical background. What is going on in the context of what Paul or whomever the Biblical writer is writing. What is the historical context.
- (2) The second thing you want to understand is, take a look at the grammar. What are the verbs, the word tenses, the sentence structure, and the six literary forms. Take a look at that because they are all significant.
- (3) The context in which you find one verse and where does it fit in the other verses.

As I was studying this the other night, I was really struck by this word “know.” It is a very powerful word. Paul says, “For we **know**...” He is not saying we guess. I was contrasting that with some of the literature of some of the psychologists and psychiatrists who try to explain the Christian faith. One of them says, “The whole doctrine of eternal life is nebulous because nebulous claims of life after death.” Now that is a worldly view. They refer to the “nebulous claims of life after death.” That is why they say you cannot trust Christianity because of the “nebulous claims of life after death.” But notice the word that Paul uses. He says, “We **know**...” We know. He is not saying this is a nebulous concept. There is something that Paul says that “I know this...I **know** this.”

When I began to look at this, that word “know” is a perfect, active, imperative verb. I know that doesn’t mean much but let me explain what it means. You need to look at three things in this word: first of all, it falls within the perfect tense, which means that there is a past event that occurred in Paul’s life that now put him in the position of having a consequence of that past event. Something happened to Paul that changed his mind from being a nebulous concept of eternal life to now he can say boldly and actively, “I **know**.” Something happened to him. What is it that happened to Paul? Let’s go to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:16-17: “Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. Therefore if anyone is **in** Christ, he is a new creature; and the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” Paul is referring to what happened to him and his regeneration, in the immediate active regeneration. It is this directed immediate work of the Holy Spirit upon his soul that is what regeneration is. Regeneration is the direct and immediate work of the Holy Spirit upon the soul of man. Now that doesn’t mean that all the fruits of the regeneration are going to be evident immediately, that is not what I’m saying. All I’m saying is there is something that happens when the Holy Spirit gravitates to a man and grabs him and changes his heart and He removes that heart of stone and replaces it with a heart of flesh. Something happens. It is immediate because it is the divine work of the Holy Spirit upon the soul of man. When Paul says when that happens, everything changes in the way that I think.

Notice what Paul says: 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:16. "...therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh"; it changes your view of mankind. It changes your view of God, it changes your view of yourself. Paul says there is something so radical that happened to me that I now **know**...because something immediate and something divine happened in my life that changed the way that I look at everything. That is why he says that when you become a Christian you become a brand new creature. He is not talking about taking your old way of life and re-making it. He's saying you have a whole new life to start making. You are not re-making your old life. He said something significant happened. It is all wrapped up in that little word "**know**" because there is a past event in Paul's life that has radically changed the way he viewed everything.

It started with how he viewed God. Look at the verse right above, in verse 15. "...and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf." He is referring to the life, death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and he says, "When I understood that, by the immediate and direct work of the Holy Spirit upon my soul, and I was reborn, I began to look at everything radically different and it started with how I viewed God differently. I knew Jesus in the flesh, but I don't see him that way any more." One thing that we need to be careful of, Brothers, is this: we need to understand that one of the characteristics of God is this: that He is indivisible. You do not divide Him up. One of the dangers which we have in our culture is separating the humanity from Christ from His deity; He always is the God-man. Be careful because you'll just say, "That is because He was human." No, when He was human, He was divine. You do not separate His divinity from His humanity. He is always the God-man. So when He was on the Cross, yes, He was human, but He was also God. When He is God, He is also human. You cannot separate Him; Christ is indivisible, you do not separate Him into His humanity and into His divinity. He is always the God-man. That is what makes it so powerful...to realize that was possible and only He could do that. Be careful, Brothers, of how you look at Christ.

You do not divide Him up. "Oh, He is just a man...oh, now He's God...I'm going to separate the two." No, a thousand times, no. He is always divinely human, and divinely God. He is always the God-man. That is what makes it so powerful. So when you read a chapter like Philippians 2 when it says that He didn't take His position as God as something to be grasped but He later decided to become a servant. You see, what makes it powerful is this: what He did then as a man, it was God doing it. He was divine when he did that. He set aside His divine characteristics for the sake of us, but He never lost His divinity and His humanity. They are always the same. Do you understand that? He is indivisible. You do not divide Him up.

What Paul is saying here is, "I know Jesus in the flesh, but I don't see Him that way any more. I see Him radically different because something immediate and direct happened in my life when God, the Holy Spirit, took my heart of stone and removed it and gave me a heart of flesh, and I was reborn and everything changed because I am a brand new creature and I see things radically different." It starts with this: you see God differently. That is why the world will say, "I cannot understand Christianity because of the nebulous concepts of life after death." Paul doesn't say, "These aren't nebulous, this is real." That is why the verb is active. It is not only perfect in perfect tense which means a past event that occurred in his life which changed the way that he thought. It now has the present activity of being "**knowing**" and that means he is now performing the act of this verb, he is **knowing** it as he is writing this passage and instructing us. He **knows** this because an event occurred in his life. Well, Brothers, I would say this, until there has been the direct and immediate work of the Holy Spirit upon your soul, you will never understand this passage we're talking about. Because to you it just may be a nebulous concept of life after death. But Paul is saying, "But not for me. Something happened to me.

It changed the way I look, and now I say, I **know** that when my life dies, my soul is going to have on a glorified body. I **know** that.” And Paul is now being very, very active and describing it.

So the fact that it is an active verb really tells us that he is performing it. He is doing it right now. He **knows** this because of the past event of his regeneration.

The third thing is that it is a perfect, active, imperative verb. That means, the imperative tense in the Greek means it is a tense of assertion. He is stating something that is real. This is not nebulous. Paul is saying, “Folks, this is real. I’m asserting this because I **know** it actively because something happened to me that changed the way that I think about everything, even my impending death.” Brothers, for us, this ought to be great encouragement as we read Paul’s letter because he is a realist. He **knows** that his earthly tent is going to dissolve but he **knows** this: because my view of everything has changed because of my regeneration, I **know** this that when my earthly tent dissolves, immediately I **know** that I am going to have an eternal home.”

So he says, “Don’t be discouraged.” Notice the number of times he says, “Be encouraged.” Be encouraged about what? About understanding your finality of your glorified body versus the world’s system of nebulous thoughts of Christianity. Paul says, “No.” But I would say this, Men, until the active regeneration occurred in your life, much of what we are talking about you will never understand. It will just be a nebulous concept of Christianity. We need to understand what Paul is saying to us about this. It should give us great encouragement.

Yes?

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *[UNCLEAR] which should be very helpful to us as believers to understand that as we are...what you just said is helpful to us as believers to understand. As evangelists, in terms of us sharing the gospel, if we were to say that to another person that says, “I don’t understand what this passage is saying, it doesn’t make any sense to me, how can you have both God and man at the same time?;” but it could be any number of [UNCLEAR], all kind of smoke screens...but if the response to that person is, “You are not going to understand. Step 1 is the Holy Spirit, Step 2 is understanding...that to me...I could understand how that very easily could come across as arrogant...that itself does not make sense to an unbeliever. So how do you compassionately share with a person this very notion that you have talked about...which is first the presence of the Holy Spirit, second is understanding of scripture and yet at the same time you are sharing scripture with a person?*

Well first of all, I would not talk about this. This is way over their head...

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *I’m talking about any passage of scripture.*

Well, you always want to go back to” “What have you done with the personal work of Christ?” Whatever they say, “I don’t understand, this didn’t make sense,” go back to the very basic: “What have you done with the personal work of Christ?” That is where you start and you keep it right there. Don’t let him off the hook. “Well, that’s your opinion.” Say, “Well let’s see what the scriptures say and what are **you** doing about the personal work of Christ?” That is the real issue because that is the only way that a person will be brought to saving faith through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. So they will throw all sorts of smoke screens at you. You have to take them back to the real basic and that is this: “What have **you** done with the personal work of Christ? Let’s talk about that.” Keep it right there and go back and describe who Christ is, His sinless

perfection, and His perfect obedience. That leads you into the sequence of the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the personal work of Christ and repentance and faith. Sort of in that order. You start with, "Let me tell you about who God is." Then you describe the sinfulness of man; then you describe the personal work of Christ; then you describe to them their response, which is repentance and faith. Then you go back to that point of "What have **you** done? I can't answer all these other questions until you answer that question yourself... what have **you** done with the personal work of Christ. When you tell me what you have done with that, we can go and I can answer some of your other questions." All those other things are just smoke screens.

Yes?

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *Let me try to answer Ian. It says in scripture on your child-like faith, I fed you as a child, when you are a man, I will feed you as a man. The answer is not that you don't understand but the answer is one day you will understand.*

Thank you.

Charles Spurgeon says it this way, "You don't take people to the University of Predestination and Election until they graduate from the College of Repentance and Faith. {LAUGHTER} That's basically it. You take them back to the very basic, "What have you done with the personal work of Christ?"

I think I told you that years ago I was on a plane and I was going to a speaking engagement somewhere in the country and I was studying my passage with the Bible open and a gentleman right beside me, a rather erudite-looking man, kept watching what I was doing and after some time he said, "What are you doing with the Bible open?" I said, "Well, I'm reading it." {LAUGHTER} He asked, "But why are you reading it?" I told him what I was going to do and he introduced himself, he was a Jewish psychiatrist, a very congenial gentleman and we had a wonderful conversation.

Then he said something like this, "I like Christianity because it is a great moral philosophy but I have a lot of problem with Jesus Christ." I said, "I understand that but I'll make you a deal. If I can answer every question you have about the personal work of Christ to your satisfaction, will you become a question?" And he said, "No." I said, "Your problem is not knowledge, it is unbelief, your problem is unbelief. It is not knowledge, it is not intellectualism, because you just said that if I answered every possible question to your satisfaction you would still reject it? That is unbelief." Well we didn't talk much after that and on the way out we were walking down the jet way and he came up to me and said, "That is really intriguing. Where can I learn more about Christ?"

I just gave him my Bible and said, "Here take this." He said, "Are you sure?" I said, "I've got plenty and much of it I have memorized so you can have this." I just gave him my Bible and I don't know what the Lord is going to do with that. I have no idea. I have never seen him since then but the point was this...do you see the audacity of unbelief? He said that if I answered every question to his satisfaction, he would still reject Christ. That is not intellectualism that is unbelief. And what is unbelief? Unpardonable sin. Unpardonable sin is unbelief. In the passage it talks about giving the miracles of Jesus accrediting Baal-zebub and that is the height of unbelief. The unpardonable sin is unbelief. You take them right back to the very basic: What have you done with the personal work of Christ?

Now if we would have had more conversation, I was not going to get off that. I was just going to talk to him about the person and work of Christ. His sinless perfection and perfect obedience as a reflection of the glory of God. That is what it is. You see, the gospel is: the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. So you talk about Christ and His sinless perfection and perfect obedience. That is what I would do.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *The irony of that interaction though, Bruce, was that you destroyed his God which was the idol of intellectualism right there.*

That's correct.

Yes, Bishop?

BISHOP RODGERS: *Wouldn't you say, if you go back to say Jesus and Nicodemus, it is inevitable at some point people will be offended by the repent and believe? There is an offense and we cannot get away from it and we ought not be so frightened of offending.*

Let me be careful of how I say this but Bishop Rodgers has just made a powerful statement that we need to embrace. I'm often criticized for being narrow-minded. When somebody says, "You are awfully narrow-minded." My response is, "Well, thank you." {LAUGHTER} Now people say, "You are not open-minded." I say, "Well, I'm open-minded but not at both ends." {LAUGHTER} You need to realize this: Christianity, which is Christ, it is not a good way of living, it is not a moral philosophy but Christianity is the most exclusive faith there is. "No one can come to the Father but by Me." No one **can** come, it doesn't say, "No one **may** come. There is a difference in the verb.

When you were in first grade and you raised your hand and you said to your teacher, "Can I go to the bathroom?: Miss [UNCLEAR] would say, "Yes, you can and yes you may." The scripture does not say, "You **may** come..." That is **permission**. **Can** has to do with **ability**. Jesus says, "No one has the ability." That is exclusivism. Christianity is the most exclusive faith there is and when somebody says, "You are too exclusive." Say, "Thank you, you're right." But it is also this: it is the most merciful. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that whosoever believes may come to Him and have eternal life."

We always want to talk about the ease of it because we want to be well thought of. But Bishop Rodgers is right, it is exclusive but it is also compassionate and merciful. We teach both at the same time. So when somebody says that Christianity is exclusive; yes, it is, by design it has to be because what is the gospel? It is the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. That is exclusive. It can only be found through the personal work of Christ. "No one can come to the Father but by Me." There is no other option. You cannot put Jesus up against Mohammed or Buddhism or Islam. They are just going to wash out. We need to realize that Christianity is exclusive. You do that with compassion and mercy but don't fight it off. You don't water it down.

One of my grave concerns in general speaking is what I would call the feminization of Christianity. Psychologists would say, the male (man), the male (person), has certain characteristics that are hard; the female has certain characteristics, which are soft. God is the balance of both the hard and the soft. But what have we done in recent years? We want to talk about the soft. God is love. Yes, we talk about His love. Understand what I am not saying. We talk about His mercy. Yes, we do. We talk about His compassion. But do we talk

enough about His righteousness? His holiness? His glory? His justice? See, we avoid the hard, male characteristics of the nature of God in favor of the soft female characteristics of God and we feminize Christianity.

What else has happened. We feminize God. Not only do we feminize Christianity but we feminize God because we are basically saying that we only talk about His love, mercy, and compassion. Now that is true and we need to do that in balance, we preach the whole counsel of God. How about our hymns? What have we done recently in our hymns? We have created now a works that just talk about ooey-gooeyness. When do we talk about His holiness? When do we talk about His power, or His majesty, His sovereignty, His justice, His mercy, His judgment? That is what the great hymns taught us. But now it is *Kum bay ya* {LAUGHTER} throw your stick in the fire and we'll have nice fellowship. Now, I'm not belittling that...yes, I am, sorry. I'm just trying to give an illustration, Guys. Just notice how we de-emphasized the male characteristics of God in His characteristics—the hard ones. That is how psychologists describe the difference...the hard and the soft. We have become very soft oriented.

Bishop Rodgers taught us a couple of months ago on the whole issue of love how we have sentimentalized the love of God. The love of God is the sacrifice and is not a feeling. It is a sacrifice that He did. We need to keep it in balance. My whole point...my concern is the feminization of Christianity is that it starts with the feminization of Christianity itself and God in our hymns and then the whole church has become feminized.

Notice the number of times you'll go into a church and you will see all the activities listed and who are they listed for? Woman and kids. Now that is fine and I'm not saying that you stop that. But how about balancing that with something for the men? We don't do that, we have lost the ministry of men. That is why I'm so committed to you guys here and so faithful to you because you are so faithful to me. I'm so grateful for that.

Yes, Jay?

**JAY:** *I wanted to, with Ian's question in regards to evangelizing, I do believe that we are seeking the Lord through prayer and we have individuals on our minds and our hearts whom we want to evangelize that the Lord would give us the words to say, and sometimes those words are going to be scripture and I think just even this week there was a guy I've been talking to the last couple of years and the Lord put it on my heart to ask him are you willing to take a chance with your soul if you say there is no God and he didn't have an answer. I said, "But I just wanted to say that to you" and I walked away.*

*The other thing I wanted to ask you about, Dr. Bickel, is about unconditional love. I hear that a lot... unconditional love, unconditional love. But isn't God's love conditional prior to regeneration?*

Of course, it is conditional, it is exclusive. It is absolutely exclusive. "No man can come to the Father but by Me." His love is exclusive, for His elect. Now God loves everybody but not to the same degree. He does not love everybody savingly. He loves everybody creatively. So you can say this with great confidence, "God is my Father creatively, but He is not my Father philoly relationship-wise; that is only for God's chosen, for the elect, those who are redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb. We have to be careful when we say, "The Brotherhood of Man..." We can say that when we understand that we are talking in the context of creation, but you cannot do that in the context of regeneration.



I am not the brother of everybody. I am creatively but not in the family of God. It is exclusive and so God's love is exclusive that way. He loves everybody creatively but not everybody savingly.

Bishop Rodgers, do you want to add to that?

**BISHOP RODGERS:** *Everybody is your neighbor but not everybody is your Brother.*

There you go, well said. Everybody is your neighbor but not everybody is your Brother. And you say, "Who are your Brothers?" It is those who embrace the gospel life and who understand that they have the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ; and they understand that being transformed so that their original glory will be the means by which God will reveal His own glory. We become the means by which God puts His life on display. We are neighbors to everybody but not Brothers to all people. OK?

That is just all introduction for the word, "No." {LAUGHTER}

Let's take a look at our passage. 2nd Corinthians 5:1-4. "For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life."

You know, we all know something about life insurance, but we must realize that a life insurance policy does not insure a single moment of your life. All it does is give you money after your death. The only insurance policy is what we are reading here in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5... "if I know that my earthly tent is dissolved, I have a heavenly home that is made with not human hands but made by God." The only life insurance is the gospel of grace. And the results of union with the Living Son of God through faith. That is the only life insurance we have.

Now Paul has been talking about life insurance in Chapter 4. The two major themes of Chapter 4, if you recall, are both brought about by divine intervention. The themes that we see in Chapter 4 are the glory after and through suffering...you'll see that in verses 8, 9, 13, 14, and 17. After that life in the midst of death in verses 10 through 12.

In Chapter 5 Paul goes into a deeper meaning of our life after death and explores the believer's view of death and mortality because of the natural consequences of living in a hostile environment. The key thought here in this section of Chapter 5 is verse 4 in my judgment where it says, "We do not want to be unclothed but clothed." Now Paul illustrates in this passage a principle of the Christian life, which he applies to our death: that all growth is by addition, not by subtraction. All growth is by addition, not by subtraction. Growth comes from building up, not tearing down. Growth comes from positive means, not negative means. Growth comes by attraction, not repulsion. Growth comes by a love of good, not the fear of evil.

That principle is based upon Jesus' comment when he said, "I came not to destroy but to fulfill." Jesus did not come to destroy, He came to fulfill. It is kind of like this: you start with something, you add something to it, you improve it all you can, and then finally you have the end result, which is what you have best. An illustration might be likened to the farmer who takes a stick and he puts a rib bit in the ground and he says, "I wonder what would happen if I put two sticks together, or three sticks together, or 4." So he starts with one

stick and adds another, and another stick, and all of a sudden he has a wooden plow. So then years later he says, "I wonder what would happen if I could make it out of iron rather than wood." So he takes those sticks and converts them to iron and all of a sudden he has the modern day plow, but it started with something and you keep adding on to it to get what you really want. That is what Paul is saying. Remember this, we have the treasure earthen vessel...Paul says you start with the life of God, you share the life of God; Christianity is a shared life experience. God shares His life with us. We have this treasure in earthen vessels to show that the all-surpassing power comes from God. You start with this regenerated life that Paul eluded to with the word "know." You start with that and then you add things to it. And what is it that we add in Chapter 4? You add the hassles of life. Persecuted, but not destroyed; hassled but not defeated. You add those situations in life that are refining us because what is happening to us according to the purpose of the gospel? You are being transformed from one stage of glory to the next so that you will be returned to your original glorious state to reflect the glory of God.

Paul is saying you are growing through life. You start with the life in Christ and you add the situations of life and you end up with what we are now talking about in Chapter 5...the glorified body. You start with your life in Christ and you end up with the glorified body. It is the whole principle of addition. Growth comes through addition, not through subtraction. The idea is that Paul applies to death is the principle of starting with something (that is our earthly life), adding onto it (the hassles and trials of life), and thus the results in our heavenly body of a glorified state. That theme runs all the way down to verse 10.

So our outline would be something like this: He gives us three reasons for divine confidence about our impending death. He gives us great comfort that we can have in the face of death because we are believers. First of all, a heavenly dwelling and that is verses 1-5, which we will look at today. That is the certainty of possession of a spiritual body. The certainty...I **know** this... I **know** that there awaits for me a glorious heavenly body because something happened to me to change the way I look at everything. I see God radically differently now, I see people radically different now, I see the whole concept of death radically different now and why is that? Because when a person becomes a Christian, they become a brand new person. The thing that changes, Brothers, when you are regenerated to the immediate direct work of the Holy Spirit upon your soul is you begin to think differently about everything. Everything changes. That is one of the indications of true saving faith. How do you think about God? How do you think about people. Yes, everybody is my neighbor but not everybody is my brother. Yes, God created all people and he is the Father of mankind creatively, but He is not the Father of mankind philoly. You are all my neighbors but you may not be my brother. You see, you look at things radically different. It starts with how you view your own impending death and the great confidence you can have.

We're going to cut it off right now because for me to get into that, we would be here another hour. So we'll pick this up next week. Bring this next week and we begin looking at the first 5 verses. I want you to understand what Paul is now teaching us by this principle of division. You and I growing and you need to understand that in the context of the gospel you are being transformed from one stage of glory to the next.

Our finest stage of glory is our earthly tent dissolves and our heavenly home becomes our possession and we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ. We are going to see next week that your clothing now...when he says, "I would rather be clothed than naked." Nakedness has to do with our own inabilities. Clothing has to do with God's righteousness. Scripture tells us this: that you are wrapped in the robes of righteousness. Look at

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:21. “And He who knew no sin became sin in our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

Do you realize what your heavenly clothing is going to be, Brothers? It is going to be this: it is going to be the righteousness of God; you are going to be wrapped in His righteousness. Paul says, “I would rather be clothed than unclothed.” I would rather be clothed in the righteousness of Christ rather than the inabilities that I have in my own human anatomy. That is what I’m looking forward to and I **know** this because something happened in my soul by a direct and immediate work of the Holy Spirit that took my heart of stone that was insensitive to spiritual things and radically changed the way that I think about everything because now I have a life that is sensitive to the spiritual things.” Brothers, that is regeneration and until that occurs in your life...what are you going to do with the personal work of Christ...none of this will be understood.

May it be so that God will be pleased to open our eyes that we might behold Him more clearly for Jesus’ sake. Let’s pray.

Father, we are just really at Your mercy for us to understand anything of the scripture and we thank You that You gave us the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to come along side and to guide us into all truth. So, Father, if we have said anything that is not consistent with Your holiness, Your righteousness, Your glory, Your majesty, Your sovereignty, or Your grace would you remove that from our minds and only those things that are consistent with Your revealed Word will be the things that would penetrate our souls. May it be so for Jesus’ sake. And all the Brave Men said, “Amen.”