

Payday is Coming

We have an awareness that we will see the Great King in a judicial scenario. This drives us to ask questions like:

- A. Where did I get the idea that nothing “bad” will come up at the judgment?
- B. Who will be there?
- C. How embarrassed will I be?
- D. How long will I bear my shame?
- E. How thankful will I be that my salvation was determined by the Gospel?

Perhaps, most sobering in light of 1:14 and 4:14 is the reality that we are preparing together. This is a personal application that has corporate ramifications that are quite eternal.

1. Because payday is coming, we become evermore thankful (vv1-7).

I am not saying these sort of “by the way” excuses for thanksgiving were in Paul’s train of thought, but I think we as the reader can see something outside of his intent by looking at what was on his mind prior to this “Judgment Seat/Tribunal of Christ” idea.

- A. We will stand before Him in perfect bodies (5:1)

5:1

The idea that it is called a “**tent**” shows the temporary nature as seen in 4:18. The “glory of God in the face of Jesus” (4:6) made clear by the indwelling Holy Spirit (3:2-3) is that which indwells our dirt-made house. And this is precisely why Paul says that our readiness for this new house in the skies is from this Same Holy Spirit (5:5).

5:2-4

For in this we groan, mentioned again in verse 4. It is like tremors before an earthquake. We are ready to crack and hard to keep together [we are, after all, clay pots (4:7)]. There is a sense that things are not exactly as they have been designed. Have you ever felt that way? Like things are not the way they ought to be? Every groaning of your soul is a witness that you are not as you have been created and are not as you shall be. **Earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation** contextually, this cannot be that which Jesus describes as “many mansions” in “the Father’s house.” This is something that must fit the context. If our earthly, dirt-wrought bodies are the temporary housing than the heavenly housing is that which we get after the dirt-wrought house is “destroyed” (5:1) **which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.** Having seen the Genesis 1 reference in 4:6 and the Genesis 2 reference in 4:16 (“outward man perishing”), it seems obvious to see the Genesis 3 reference in 5:3. In other words, when we arise in the last day, we will be as we were first in the garden: clothed in God’s glory, living in God’s presence; having access to the tree of life, but totally “not found naked.” A trip to Genesis 3 would help us discover that they found themselves to be naked after not finding shame in said nakedness first found in Genesis 2. Sin, then, with Eve was so debasing of God’s image (remember, 4:4 says Christ is now the “image of God”) that there was no resemblance between the original and the reflection, and they saw themselves as “naked.” Well, “no more.” Because of Christ, we have a day coming where we shall be properly clothed in the glory once had. **4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.** This “groaning” is that witness that says a resurrection awaits the believer, according to 1 Corinthians 15 (particularly 15:51ff).¹

¹ I wonder if Paul knew anything about the resurrection’s nature at this point? Was 1 Thessalonians written afterward? He seems to have: 1. An understanding that we “groan” awaiting the redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:18-24) while here he seems to place it, not at the resurrection, but at death (2 Corinthians 5:1). 2. He also understands that there is mortality swallowed up when our bodies are changed (1 Corinthians 15:51) but seems to connect that changing to this “body” being “destroyed” and “being clothed with an eternal house in the heavens”

B. We are being made ready by the Holy Spirit (5:5)

5:5

Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. See notes under verse 1. We'll just add here that the "Spirit who has clothed us inwardly in glory is preparing us for glory. This thought is introduced and this point argued since 3:18.

C. We are being continually gifted with faith (5:7)

2. Because payday is coming, we are aware and ready for a very quick transition. (READ 5:6-9).

5:6-8

So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. Being "in the body" is the emphasis here, and it is in distinction with the "eternal house in the heavens" (5:1). **7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.** In Philippians 1:23-24 Paul actually says "you are the only reason I am here."

Furthermore, while there appears to be a gap between having the "earthen jar" of 4:7 and the heavenly body of 5:1, Paul helps remove ambiguity in this very passage regarding what is typically known as the "intermediate state." He leaves no room for what is commonly referred to as soul sleep.

5:9

Therefore since it is as quickly as checking out of a body, **we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.** It is a good idea to bring Him pleasure. It's nearly impossible to do this accidentally. Nobody just so happens to "please so God."

- A. Quicker than checking out of a hotel.
- B. Quicker than graduating from highschool. (Leah and Jake and the realization)
- C. Quicker than losing control of a car in a flood (12 inches of water, most cars).

3. Because payday is coming, we seek to please Him.

5:9

Therefore Since we are away from Christ in this "clay pot" body (4:7) and we are being made ready by the Holy Spirit (5:5) **we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.** It is a good idea to bring Him pleasure. It's nearly impossible to do this accidentally. Nobody just so happens to "please so God."

- A. We listen to his voice. "Walk through the crowd slowly."
- B. We watch people we admire in the Lord. Rod Bell
- C. Contextually, we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us (5:5).
- D. We read the Scripture.
- E. We consider history. The correlation between

(2 Corinthians 5:1, 4). In other words, I am not sure I see him distinguishing between death and resurrection until he speaks of saints "who are yet asleep" returning with Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We already know that 1 Cor 15:24-25 shows almost no distinction between the 2nd coming of Christ and the eternal kingdom (no millennium) and was perhaps somewhat informed by John's Revelation 20:1-6. So is he morphing, again, two events (death and resurrection) into one event in 2 Corinthians 5:1-8 in the same manner?

“Everyone who is mindful of their mortality must therefore be mindful of their morality.”² Think about the reality that you can “please God.”

*Proverbs 11:1 Dishonest scales are an abomination to the LORD, But a just weight is **His delight**.*

*Proverbs 11:20 Those who are of a perverse heart are an abomination to the LORD, But the blameless in their ways are **His delight**.*

*Proverbs 12:22 Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, But those who deal truthfully are **His delight**.*

*Proverbs 15:8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But the prayer of the upright is **His delight**.*

This drives the believer to ask questions like:

- A. “Father, do I make You smile?”
- B. “Do I set You at ease?”
- C. “Do I cause Your heart to swell or Your eye to gleam?”
- D. “God, do You ever decide to spend more time around me in Your fullness?”
- E. “Master, do You ever nudge the angels and say ‘that’s my boy!’?”

5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat or tribunal (HCSB) of Christ, since we know that the glory of God is found in the “face of Christ” (4:6) allow me to plead with you to set your heart aright for the glory you shall see, literally, in that face. **that each one may receive the things done in the body**, I find this fascinating. He is going back to the “body you all now have.” In the middle of our romanticizing of how things will be, may we not forget of the accountability we have for how things are. **according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**

4. As payday approaches, we become increasingly concerned about how we are perceived.

5:11-12

Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; apparently, our work is vital to the readiness of others. **but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.** The consciences of his listeners are such a big deal. He mentioned it just a chapter ago and was confident that not only was he clear about how he was conducting himself (1:12), but his listeners would likewise be clear in Paul and his companions conducted themselves (4:2). Here, Paul is not merely satisfied with **God** knowing them, but rather **God and** the listeners knowing him clearly. Who in the world would say “I don’t care what believers think about me...but I am ready to face the Head of the church?” There are two possible issues here: 1. You’re not saved and you are showing it through your rebellion; 2. You are mistaking a godless group of people that may call itself a “church” with a real “church” who have no compulsion to live holy.

12 For we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have an answer for those who boast in appearance and not in heart. “When you need proof of somebody that is living the life in the face of those who are simply letting themselves off the hook all the time, point to us.” When you meet a dishonest Christian who says “only God can judge me”, you remember there are

² David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, vol. 29, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 266.

some of us who have lived before you in a pure conscience, and have appealed to—when all is said and done—your consciences.

- A. Who, in your life, ministers to you without making you feel like you have to justify their godlessness?
- B. Who are you always making excuses for?
- C. Who do you feel like you always have to defend because they have more “bad days” than good?