

Preached on 11/5/23 at GBC – Ruston

"Every Believer's HOPE, Pt.1"

II Cor.5:1-4

In Paul's previous epistle to these **SAME BELIEVERS** Paul wrote by Divine inspiration the following words concerning the **SIGNIFICANCE** and **NECESSITY** of the **RESURRECTION** of Christ and all those He represented – *"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then [is] our preaching vain, and your faith [is] also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith [is] vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. **If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.**"* (I Cor.15:12-19) **Think about that last verse Paul wrote – "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."** Paul wrote Timothy concerning the importance of this truth concerning the resurrection - *"And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; **and overthrow the faith of some.**"* (II Tim.2:17,18) The word translated "**overthrow**" means 'to subvert or to **DESTROY**'. **This is so important – TRUE FAITH** can't be overthrown by anything – *"Now the just shall live by faith: but if [any man] draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. **But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.**"* (Heb.10:38,39) But a false profession of faith can and will be overthrown – **REMEMBER the parable of the sower and the seed.** This truth concerning the resurrection of Christ means much more than the small emphasis put on it once a year by those in false religion with their "**SUNRISE SERVICES.**" Matter of fact, the belief this truth and a dogmatic stand on it is evidence that one possesses true God-given faith. **Listen to Paul – "And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."** (Rom.4:22-25) **Consider this:** If Christ were not raised from the dead, and if all those for whom Christ died are not raised, **two things are true:** **FIRST** – God is proven to be **UNFAITHFUL**, seeing He had promised by the mouth of His servant - *"For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."* (Ps.16:10) Peter restated David's words concerning Christ when he preached on Pentecost – **Acts 2:25-27.** **SECOND** - Christ is found a liar, seeing He stated plainly He would rise again, and all those who are His will rise as well – *"Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."* (Jn.2:19); *"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."* (Jn.6:39,40); Remember what He told Martha before He raised Lazarus – **Jn.11:21-27.** With that said, let's look at our text for today.

Look at Vs.1 – *"For we know that if our earthly house of [this] tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."* Everything Paul

writes from this verse forward is written in light of what he had previously written. In every true Christian faith, the MIND is the controlling factor as it works out to the mind and will. Paul tells us by these words that in light of the suffering and tearing down of this earthly house, our physical bodies, we have a much greater prospect of a better house, a resurrected body. Back over in I Cor.15 Paul had dealt with the subject of the resurrection of the body – “*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [must] put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*”(I Cor.15:52-54) Paul tells them and us - “**FOR WE KNOW.**” The word translated “*we know*” means ‘to perceive with the eyes or with any of the senses’. How did he know and believe in the resurrection of the body? He **KNEW** by Divine revelation. Paul stated the same thing concerning all God’s elect in every generation. They **KNOW** by Divine revelation – “*But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. BUT GOD HATH REVEALED [them] UNTO US BY HIS SPIRIT: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*”(I Cor.2:9,10) All those regenerated and converted by God the Holy Spirit, all those given true faith and true repentance have this hope. **LISTEN TO ME:** None of us enjoy the pain and suffering we experience in our physical bodies. None of us enjoy the prospect of our physical death, nor the separation of our body and soul. That’s just normal and human. There is a fear of death **that is not sinful**. It is a natural infirmity which comes from our love of life. Our bodies weren’t created to die, but sin has entered and death by sin. So, we do have a natural aversion to all this. But we are lifted above this earthly affliction by a heavenly hope - the certainty of being resurrected in a new, spiritual, immortal, glorified body that will never suffer or die. Paul tells us that our “*earthly house,*” i.e., **our physical body**, will be dissolved. He called it a “*tabernacle*”, because like the tabernacle in the Old Testament, it is temporary. When this earthly tent is taken down, **we know**, not by experience, but by God's testimony, “*we have a building of God.*” This expresses the certainty of our actually possessing a permanent, glorified body. This glorified body is not an earthly house “*made with hands,*” in contrast to a perishable tent. Paul tells us it is a spiritual, eternal, heavenly body created by God. He wrote it is “*eternal in the heavens*”, meaning it will never perish. **This is SO IMPORTANT** - Human works have absolutely nothing to do with the future resurrection of believers. Our final glory isn’t conditioned on our perseverance. It is of God, and it is based on the righteousness of Christ, without the deeds of the law. So, the fact that we are secure and certain to enter heaven's glory based on the imputed righteousness of Christ is our comfort and encouragement against the pain and suffering and death of these physical bodies, those things in the previous chapter Paul called “*our light affliction*”.

Look at Vs.2 – “*For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.*” This God-given knowledge concerning our eternal house causes us to “*groan*”. The word translated “*groan*” mean ‘to sigh or grieve’. This groaning is positive. It is looking forward to leaving our present suffering. Believers do desire to be free of this earthly tabernacle and its infirmities and to have our spirits clothed with new, glorified bodies free of pain, suffering and death. This desire grows to the degree that we suffer and experience the pain and infirmities of this life. Again, there is a natural aversion to physical death, and this is a guiltless infirmity. This infirmity is inseparable from this present life. In this sense, we don’t look forward to physical death. But as we grow old, or as we suffer more for the Gospel, especially one like

Paul who suffered greatly, our desire to leave this body and be joined with our resurrected bodies will grow. Listen to Paul's words to those at Rome: "*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time [are] not worthy [to be compared] with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected [the same] in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only [they], but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting for the adoption**, [to wit], **the redemption of our body**. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, [then] do we with patience wait for [it]."* (Rom.8:16-25) The desire here is not for death. **The desire is for final glory in heaven.**

Look at **Vs.3** - This is a difficult verse to interpret. Many imply that Paul was experiencing doubts concerning his own salvation, but that would be contrary to the Holy Spirit's goal in this exhortation to establish their hearts with grace. God the Holy Spirit would never promote unbelief or legal fear which both dishonor God. Paul said, "**WE KNOW**," according to God's promise revealed in His Word that our souls will be clothed in new, resurrected bodies. This is a promise of God, and He is faithful to fulfill His promise in Christ. Right now we are clothed with the imputed righteousness of Christ, and we shall enter into the presence of God clothed in the pure and perfect robes of Christ's righteousness imputed and shall not be ashamed. His righteousness demands our bodily resurrection. The word "**naked**" here refers to the intermediate state of believers between physical death and the union with their resurrected bodies. There are **two alternatives** for believers. **One** is to experience physical death and go on to be with the Lord, waiting for that union with our glorified bodies. The **other** is to be alive when Christ comes back and to be immediately changed, united to our glorified bodies - "*Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, we shall be changed*" (1 Cor. 15:51-52). Paul is simply saying that of the two, he prefers the latter.

Read Vs.4. Listen to YLT of this verse – “for we also who are in the tabernacle do groan, being burdened, seeing we wish not to unclothe ourselves, but to clothe ourselves, that the mortal may be swallowed up of the life.” While we are in this body we groan because we're burdened and weighed down by infirmities of the flesh and by the sufferings and persecutions that come because of the Gospel. We all continually experience and cry out with the Apostle Paul – “*For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! **who shall deliver me from the body of this death?***” (Rom.7:22-24) But we don't desire death simply to escape these burdens, and we don't look on death as the end of all things. We desire to leave this physical body in order to be clothed with a glorified body. Our desire is the actual experience of the blessedness of eternal life in final glorification. **Even death is not desired for its own sake.** Death is only desired as it is a passage for a believer to go on and be with the Lord and ultimately into that glorious change of a new glorified body. So Paul in all

this is simply stating that of the **two alternatives**, he personally desired to survive until the second coming of Christ, and he desired that Christ would come soon.

Paul's desire is the desire of all the church of God in every generation – "*He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*"(Rev.22:20)