

# 2 Corinthians 5 - Skip Heitzig

| <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woVTpfROoCI>

Calvary Church with Skip Heitzig

Greg White -

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## Sermon Study

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### | Primary Scripture Texts

For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

**2 Corinthians 5:1**

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**2 Corinthians 5:21**

## Contrast Between the Old and New Covenants

Paul contrasts the Old Testament and New Testament, highlighting the superiority of the New Covenant. The Old Covenant was glorious but temporary, while the New Covenant is eternal and more glorious. [2 Corinthians 3](#)

- [2 Corinthians 3](#) -

Paul emphasizes the transition from the Old Covenant, which was glorious but fading, to the New Covenant, which is eternal and surpasses the old in glory.

## Historical Context

The Old Covenant refers to the laws given to Moses, while the New Covenant is established through Jesus Christ, offering eternal life and a direct relationship with God.

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## Endurance Through Trials

Paul discusses the trials and afflictions faced by himself and others, emphasizing perseverance through faith. Despite being hard-pressed, perplexed, persecuted, and struck down, they are not crushed, in despair, forsaken, or destroyed. [2 Corinthians 4:1, 8-9](#)

- [2 Corinthians 4:1](#) -

Paul encourages believers not to lose heart because of the ministry they have received through God's mercy.

- **2 Corinthians 4:8-9** -

Paul describes the paradox of Christian suffering: being pressed but not crushed, perplexed but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed.

## Historical Context

Paul's ministry was marked by constant danger and persecution, reflecting the early Christian experience of spreading the Gospel amidst opposition.

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## | Renewal of the Inward Man

Paul contrasts the perishing outward man with the inward man being renewed daily. He uses the metaphor of a statue growing as the marble wastes away to illustrate spiritual growth amidst physical decline. *2 Corinthians 4:16*

- **2 Corinthians 4:16** -

Paul reassures believers that while the physical body deteriorates, the spiritual self is continually renewed.

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## | Focus on the Eternal

Paul encourages believers to focus on eternal, unseen realities rather than temporary, visible ones. This perspective provides endurance through trials. [|2 Corinthians 4:18](#)

- [|2 Corinthians 4:18](#) -

Paul teaches that focusing on eternal truths rather than temporary circumstances helps believers endure hardships.

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## | Our Earthly Tent and Heavenly Dwelling

Paul uses the metaphor of a tent to describe the temporary nature of our earthly bodies, contrasting it with the eternal dwelling prepared by God. [|2 Corinthians 5:1-4](#)

- [|2 Corinthians 5:1](#) -

Paul speaks of the certainty of a heavenly dwelling, a permanent home, contrasting our temporary earthly bodies.

- [|2 Corinthians 5:2-4](#) -

Paul expresses a longing to be clothed with the heavenly dwelling, emphasizing the temporary nature of our current

physical existence.

## Historical Context

Paul's background as a tentmaker informs his metaphor of the body as a temporary tent.

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## | The Spirit as a Guarantee

The Holy Spirit is described as a guarantee or down payment of the future glory believers will experience. [|2 Corinthians 5:5](#)

- [|2 Corinthians 5:5](#) -

The Holy Spirit is given as a guarantee of the eternal life and glory that awaits believers.

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## | Confidence in Life and Death

Paul expresses confidence in life and death, knowing that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. [|2 Corinthians 5:6-8](#)

- [|2 Corinthians 5:6-8](#) -

Paul articulates a fearless confidence in facing death, as it means being present with the Lord.

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## | The Judgment Seat of Christ

Paul discusses the Judgment Seat of Christ, where believers will be rewarded for their deeds done in the body. | *2 Corinthians 5:9-10*

- *2 Corinthians 5:9-10* -

Believers will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ to receive rewards based on their earthly deeds.

## Historical Context

The Bema Seat was a raised platform used for judgment and awarding prizes in ancient Greek culture.

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## | The Ministry of Reconciliation

Paul describes the ministry of reconciliation, where believers are ambassadors for Christ, sharing the message of reconciliation with God. | *2 Corinthians 5:18-20*

- *2 Corinthians 5:18-20* -

Believers are called to the ministry of reconciliation, acting as ambassadors for Christ to bring others to God.

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## | **Substitutionary Atonement**

Paul explains the doctrine of substitutionary atonement, where Christ became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God. [| 2 Corinthians 5:21](#)

- [| 2 Corinthians 5:21](#) -

God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

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## | **All Scriptures Referenced**

[2 Corinthians 3](#), [2 Corinthians 4:1](#), [2 Corinthians 4:8-9](#), [2 Corinthians 4:16](#), [2 Corinthians 4:18](#), [2 Corinthians 5:1](#), [2 Corinthians 5:2-4](#), [2 Corinthians 5:5](#), [2 Corinthians 5:6-8](#), [2 Corinthians 5:9-10](#), [2 Corinthians 5:18-20](#), [2 Corinthians 5:21](#)

# Theological Debate

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## Debate Topic: Substitutionary Atonement

**Perspective 1:** Substitutionary Atonement is the belief that Christ died as a substitute for sinners, bearing the punishment that was due to them. (Aligns with sermon's perspective) **[Typical Denominations/Traditions: Evangelical, Reformed, Conservative Protestant]**

**Alternative Perspective:** Christus Victor and Moral Influence theories, which emphasize Christ's victory over sin and death and his moral example, rather than substitutionary punishment. **[Typical Denominations/Traditions: Eastern Orthodox, some Mainline Protestant]**

## Background Insights & Connections

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- **Early Church:** The early church period, spanning the first few centuries after Christ, was a time of rapid growth and significant challenges. Christians faced persecution from both Jewish authorities and the Roman Empire. This period was marked by the spread of the Gospel through missionary journeys, such as those undertaken by Paul the Apostle, and the establishment of Christian communities across the Roman Empire.
  - **Paul the Apostle:** A pivotal figure in the early church, Paul was originally a Pharisee named Saul who persecuted Christians before his dramatic conversion. As an apostle, he played a crucial role in spreading Christianity to the Gentile world and authored many New Testament letters that addressed theological issues and practical church matters.
  - **Bema Seat:** In ancient Greek culture, the Bema was a raised platform used for public speaking and judgment. In the New Testament, the term is used metaphorically to describe the judgment seat of Christ, where believers will be rewarded for their deeds. Understanding this cultural reference highlights the accountability and reward themes in Paul's teachings.
  - **Tentmaking:** Paul was known to have supported himself through tentmaking, a common trade in the ancient world. This practice allowed him to minister without being a financial burden on the early Christian communities. It also symbolizes the integration of work and ministry, demonstrating that everyday occupations can serve God's purposes.
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# Key Points

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- **Key Point 1: The contrast between the Old and New Covenants.**

Paul contrasts the Old Covenant, which was glorious but temporary, with the New Covenant, which is even more glorious and eternal. He emphasizes that the New Covenant offers a more profound and lasting hope. This understanding helps believers not to lose heart despite trials, as they are part of a ministry that is eternal and merciful. Paul's confidence in the New Covenant is a source of encouragement for enduring hardships.

**Discussion Question:** How does understanding the eternal nature of the New Covenant help you face daily challenges?

- **Key Point 2: Endurance through eternal perspective.**

Paul teaches that endurance comes from looking beyond present afflictions to eternal realities. He uses his own life as an example, filled with trials and threats, yet he remains steadfast by focusing on the eternal reward. This perspective allows believers to endure suffering, knowing it is temporary and outweighed by eternal glory. Paul's life demonstrates that seeing beyond the present pain to the eternal reward is crucial for perseverance.

**Discussion Question:** What are some practical ways you can shift your focus from temporary struggles to eternal promises?

- **Key Point 3: The temporary nature of our physical bodies.**

Paul describes our physical bodies as tents—temporary and fragile—contrasting them with the eternal dwelling we have in heaven. He encourages believers to view their physical limitations as part of a temporary existence, with the promise of a permanent, glorious future. This understanding helps believers to groan not in despair, but in anticipation of the eternal life to come.

**Discussion Question:** How does viewing your body as a temporary tent change your perspective on aging and

physical limitations?

- **Key Point 4: The Holy Spirit as a guarantee of future glory.**

The Holy Spirit is described as a guarantee or down payment of the future glory believers will experience. This assurance provides confidence and hope, as the Spirit's presence is a foretaste of what is to come. Paul uses this truth to encourage believers to live confidently, knowing that their current experiences are just a preview of the eternal joy and peace that await them.

**Discussion Question:** In what ways have you experienced the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of your future hope?

- **Key Point 5: Living to please God in light of the Judgment Seat of Christ.**

Paul emphasizes the importance of living to please God, knowing that believers will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to receive rewards for their earthly deeds. This judgment is not about salvation, but about rewards for faithfulness and motivation. Paul encourages believers to focus on pleasing God rather than seeking earthly recognition, as eternal rewards are far more significant.

**Discussion Question:** How does the knowledge of the Judgment Seat of Christ influence your daily actions and decisions?

- **Key Point 6: The ministry of reconciliation.**

Paul explains that believers have been given the ministry of reconciliation, tasked with sharing the message of how to be right with God. This ministry is central to the Christian life, as it involves bringing others into a relationship with God through Christ. Paul's own life is a testament to the importance of this mission, urging believers to view others as potential brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Discussion Question:** What are some ways you can actively participate in the ministry of reconciliation in your community?

- **Key Point 7: The transformative power of being in Christ.**

Paul declares that anyone in Christ is a new creation, with old things passing away and all things becoming new. This transformation includes a new status, family, perspective, and set of desires. Being in Christ means sharing in His life, power, and eventual glory, providing believers with a profound sense of identity and purpose.

**Discussion Question:** How has your identity in Christ changed the way you view yourself and your purpose in life?

## | Action Steps

- Reflect on areas of your life where you need to shift your focus from temporary struggles to eternal promises.
- Identify one person in your life with whom you can share the message of reconciliation this week.
- Spend time in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to reveal areas where you can live more confidently in light of your eternal hope.

## Discussion Guide

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1. **Paul contrasts the Old and New Covenants in 2 Corinthians 3. How does understanding the superiority of the New Covenant impact your view of your faith journey?**
  - In what ways do you see the New Covenant as more glorious in your own life?
  - How does this understanding encourage you in your daily walk with Christ?
2. **Reflecting on 2 Corinthians 4:1, Paul mentions not losing heart despite trials. What are some personal challenges you face that make it difficult to maintain this perspective?**
  - How can you apply Paul's example of perseverance in your own life?

- What practical steps can you take to not lose heart in your current circumstances?
3. **In 2 Corinthians 4:16, Paul talks about the inward renewal despite outward decay. How do you experience this renewal in your spiritual life?**
    - What practices help you focus on inward renewal?
    - How does this renewal impact your interactions with others?
  4. **Paul speaks about looking at the unseen and eternal in 2 Corinthians 4:18. How does focusing on the eternal change your perspective on temporary struggles?**
    - What are some eternal truths you hold onto during difficult times?
    - How can you remind yourself to focus on the eternal in your daily life?
  5. **In 2 Corinthians 5:1, Paul describes our bodies as tents. How does this metaphor influence your understanding of life and death?**
    - What does it mean to you to have a 'building from God' as mentioned in the verse?
    - How does this perspective affect your view of aging and physical limitations?
  6. **Paul mentions the 'Judgment seat of Christ' in 2 Corinthians 5:10. How does this concept of accountability influence your daily decisions and actions?**
    - What motivates you to live a life pleasing to God?
    - How do you balance the idea of grace with the call to live righteously?
  7. **In 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul states that anyone in Christ is a new creation. How have you experienced this transformation in your own life?**
    - What old things have passed away for you since becoming a believer?
    - How do you continue to embrace the new life in Christ daily?
  8. **Paul describes the ministry of reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5:18-19. How do you see your role in this ministry in your community or family?**
    - What steps can you take to be an ambassador for Christ in your daily interactions?

- How can you help others understand and experience reconciliation with God?

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