

WHEN WE STRIKE THE TENTS AND HEAD FOR HOME

A. We used to have an annual Church Camp Out each fall at Dillon State Park. These initially took place in September and then we moved them to October, typically the week of the Fairfield County Fair. While a few folks would rent cabins, most camped in tents or pop-ups and a few in campers or RVs. Campouts were a blast: Autumn colors would be at peak, our campfires were epic, laughter was constant, and our campfire worship times were absolutely incredible.

B. While these amazing campouts lasted for several days, once Sunday arrived, everybody packed up and headed home. As fun as tent camping was, no one ever chose to make Dillon their permanent home. Perhaps the fun would have lasted another week or so, but winter, wind, ice, and snow would've soon killed the fun.

C. Today we'll see tents depicted as our earthly bodies, temporary housing for our souls. But the blood-bought children of God will one day be given spiritual housing that will be far superior to these temporary abodes. Seven years ago I visited my 89 year old neighbor, Marjorie in the hospital. She'd been widowed, suffered from multiple afflictions, and was writhing in pain. As I held her hand she looked at me and said: *"I just want to go be with Jesus and see Harley."* In other words, she was ready to strike the tent of this earthly abode and be present with the Lord and reunited with her beloved husband. Very soon thereafter she went home. One day her new body will be gorgeous!

D. As we move towards our main course, let me share a few appetizers:

1) **Ecclesiastes 3:11** (NLT) says: *11 Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end.*

2) **C. S. Lewis echoes:** "If I discover within myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."

3) **John Wesley said:** "This earthly body is slow and heavy in all its motions, listless and soon tired with action. But our heavenly bodies shall be as fire; as active and as nimble as our thoughts are."

4) **George Whitefield said:** "How sweet is rest after fatigue! How sweet will heaven be when our journey is ended."

E. **2 Corinthians 4:16-18** (ESV) was written by a part time tentmaker, the Apostle Paul. The tattooed servant of God reflects on our suffering & afflictions in light of what we have to look forward to. His words should encourage us...

1) **V16: 16** *So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, (That is true for every human.) our inner self is being renewed day by day. (But the renewal part is only true for the regenerated sons and daughters of God!)*

2) **V17-18: 17** *For this light momentary affliction (Which often feels heavy and unending) is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look*

not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, (temporary) but the things that are unseen are eternal. (Our aging eyes in these aging bodies see the evidence of our fallenness: gray hair, less hair, wrinkles, etc., but the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to give us illuminated glimpses of the glorious things to come. When you scope out vacation destinations, the promotional ads often oversell. They describe earthly paradises. But the Scriptures don't oversell--they accurately depict the glorious Paradise of God.)

3) The late D.L. Moody elaborates: "Surely it is not wrong for us to think and talk about Heaven. I like to find out all I can about it. I expect to live there through all eternity. If I were going to dwell in any place in this country, if I were going to make it my home, I would inquire about its climate, about the neighbors I would have--about everything, in fact, that I could learn concerning it. If soon you were going to emigrate, that is the way you would feel. Well, we are all going to emigrate in a very little while. We are going to spend eternity in another world... Is it not natural that we should look and listen and try to find out who is already there and what is the route to take?"

F. 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 (ESV) Paul leaps right into the next chapter...

1) V1-4: *1 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this tent we **groan**, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, 3 if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. 4 For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened--not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. (For more on groaning, see Romans 8.) (How many products are on the market to help the aging relieve pain and perhaps groan a little less?! Which is better Blue Emu or Australian Dream? Apparently neither will make you stink! The groans signal the approaching day when our tents will come down. But the groans will one day vanish when we meet Jesus Christ our Lord!)*

2) V5: *5 He who has prepared us for this very thing (**What very thing? The mortal being swallowed up by life; immortality.**) is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. (What does it mean, The Holy Spirit has been given as a guarantee?)*

* **The ESV Study Bible says:** The presence of the Spirit in Christians' lives now is a down payment or guarantee that they will receive resurrection bodies when Jesus returns.

* **The Life Application Study Bible is more expansive:** The Holy Spirit is God's "guarantee" of what will come. His work in our lives today assures us that the healing process will be thoroughly completed in Christ's presence. Each time the Holy Spirit reminds you of Scripture, convicts you of sin, restrains you from selfish behavior, or prompts you to love, you have evidence that He is present. You have the Spirit within you, beginning the transformation process. Whether you deal with aches and pains or even disabling limitations, trust God that His total renovation of your body and soul is in process. **(Our new bodies will not groan or wear out or fall apart, or ever ever die!)**

3) V6-10: *6 So we are always of good courage. (**Wasting away, dying, death--they're fearful things. But God's Word imparts courage. Courage is a virtue because fear is present.**) We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7 for*

we walk by faith, not by sight. (Remember 2 Cor. 4:18: "we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen.") 8 Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. (Slap this banner daily: "We aim to please Him!")

G. The first step in pleasing our Lord is to recognize we're sinners in need of rescue. We recognize we're members of the sinful race and God's wrath is upon us. We recognize we're spiritually dead. We then recognize (if God is giving us the ability to recognize any of this) that God loves us and we do not deserve that love. God sent His Son to earth to live the life of righteousness He'd always intended for us. We recognize He's sent His Son to the cross with our sin imputed upon Him. We understand the wrath we deserved was unleashed upon Him. By faith we realize the righteousness of His Son has been imputed to us. Through the regenerative power of the Holy Spirit we turn away from sin, turn instead to God, receive His atoning sacrifice and forgiveness, and walk in joyful obedience. In this the aim to please Him has commenced. The Holy Spirit not only brings about our desire to please Him, He empowers and enables us to please Him!

H. We've had a couple Graveside Services recently. (Sam Schilling & John Glaize.) At both of these I told folks that our Cemetery will one Day be full of holes. That'll happen when Jesus returns to raise the dead. You'll want to be in that number! Philippians 3:20-21 (AMP) is for tent campers like us: *20 But [we are different, because] our citizenship is in heaven. And from there we eagerly await [the coming of] the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 who, by exerting that power which enables Him even to subject everything to Himself, will [not only] transform [but completely refashion] our earthly bodies so that they will be like His glorious resurrected body.*

I. At just about every Graveside Service I read from 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 54-55 (NLT): **We'll close with these words today: 42 It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. 43 Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. 44 They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies... 54 Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: "Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"**

*** Close with Prayer...**

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (ESV)

16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. **17** For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, **18** as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

2 Corinthians 5:1-10 (ESV)

1 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. **2** For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, **3** if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. **4** For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened--not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. **5** He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. **6** So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, **7** for we walk by faith, not by sight. **8** Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. **9** So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please Him. **10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Philippians 3:20-21 (AMP)

20 But [we are different, because] our citizenship is in heaven. And from there we eagerly await [the coming of] the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; **21** who, by exerting that power which enables Him even to subject everything to Himself, will [not only] transform [but completely refashion] our earthly bodies so that they will be like His glorious resurrected body.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44 & 54-55 (NLT)

42 It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. **43** Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. **44** They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies... **54** Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: "Death is swallowed up in victory. **55** O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

Quote by John Wesley

"This earthly body is slow and heavy in all its motions, listless and soon tired with action. But our heavenly bodies shall be as fire; as active and as nimble as our thoughts are."

Quote by George Whitefield

"How sweet is rest after fatigue! How sweet will heaven be when our journey is ended."

Quote by D. L. Moody

"Surely it is not wrong for us to think and talk about Heaven. I like to find out all I can about it. I expect to live there through all eternity. If I were going to dwell in any place in this country, if I were going to make it my home, I would inquire about its climate, about the neighbors I would have — about everything, in fact, that I could learn concerning it. If soon you were going to emigrate, that is the way you would feel. Well, we are all going to emigrate in a very little while. We are going to spend eternity in another world.

... Is it not natural that we should look and listen and try to find out who is already there and what is the route to take?"

[Video Clips & Important Articles](#)

Phil Keaggy - Concert in Granville, Nov 8th, Spring Hills Baptist/Living Waters Benefit
<https://www.itickets.com/events/434404>

What Is The Heart Of The Gospel? by John MacArthur
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZuVt7qWO80>

[Bonus Stuff](#)

[1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 \(NIV\)](#)

13 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. **14** For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him. **15** According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. **16** For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. **18** Therefore encourage one another with these words.

[1 Corinthians 15:1-58 \(NIV\)](#)

1 Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. **2** By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. **3** For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **4** that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, **5** and that He appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. **6** After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. **7** Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles, **8** and last of all He appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. **9** For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. **10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them--yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. **11** Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed. **12** But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? **13** If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. **14** And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. **15** More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses

about God, for we have testified about God that He raised Christ from the dead. But He did not raise Him if in fact the dead are not raised. **16** For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. **17** And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. **18** Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. **19** If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. **20** But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. **21** For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a Man. **22** For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. **23** But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when He comes, those who belong to Him. **24** Then the end will come, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father after He has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. **25** For He must reign until He has put all his enemies under His feet. **26** The last enemy to be destroyed is death. **27** For He “has put everything under His feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under Him, it is clear that this does not include God Himself, who put everything under Christ. **28** When He has done this, then the Son Himself will be made subject to Him who put everything under Him, so that God may be all in all. **29** Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? **30** And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? **31** I die every day--I mean that, brothers--just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord. **32** If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” **33** Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” **34** Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God--I say this to your shame. **35** But someone may ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?” **36** How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. **37** When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. **38** But God gives it a body as He has determined, and to each kind of seed He gives its own body. **39** All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. **40** There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. **41** The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. **42** So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; **43** it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; **44** it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. **45** So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. **46** The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. **47** The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second Man from heaven. **48** As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the Man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. **49** And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the Man from heaven. **50** I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. **51** Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- **52** in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised

imperishable, and we will be changed. **53** For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. **54** When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." **55** "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" **56** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. **57** But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. **58** Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Revelation 21:1-7 (NIV)

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. **2** I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. **4** He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." **5** He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then He said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." **6** He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. **7** He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

Amazing Grace

By John Newton (1725 - 1807)

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

Quote by Matthew Henry

"He whose head is in heaven need not fear to put his feet into the grave."

Quote by C. S. Lewis

"Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you get neither."

Theological Notes on 2 Corinthians 5:5

Theological Note on 2 Corinthians 5:5

The ESV Study Bible

"He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee." - 2 Corinthians 5:5 (ESV)

The Spirit as a guarantee. The presence of the Spirit in Christians' lives now is a down payment or guarantee that they will receive resurrection bodies when Jesus returns.

- Theological note on 2 Corinthians 5:5, *The ESV Study Bible*, Crossway, p. 2229.

Theological Note on 2 Corinthians 5:5

The Life Application Study Bible

"God Himself has prepared for us this, and as a guarantee He has given us His Holy Spirit." - 2 Corinthians 5:5 (NLT)

5:5 The Holy Spirit is God's "guarantee" of what will come. His work in our lives today assures us that the healing process will be thoroughly completed in Christ's presence. Each time the Holy Spirit reminds you of Scripture, convicts you of sin, restrains you from selfish behavior, or prompts you to love, you have evidence that He is present. You have the Spirit within you, beginning the transformation process. Whether you deal with aches and pains or even disabling limitations, trust God that His total renovation of your body and soul is in process.

- Theological note, *The Life Application Study Bible*, NLT Version, Tyndale, p. 2571.

Theological Note on 2 Corinthians 5:5

The Reformation Study Bible

"He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee." - 2 Corinthians 5:5 (ESV)

5:5 Guarantee. (See note on 1:22) The Holy Spirit's work in us now in daily renewal and spiritual strengthening (3:18; 4:16) is both the foretaste and guarantee of future completion of that work in resurrection bodies and complete sanctification.

- Theological note on 2 Corinthians 5:5, *The Reformation Study Bible*, Reformation Trust, p. 2056.