

2 Corinthians 5

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Paul is still defending himself—keep this in mind—he’s defending himself against the attacks of the false teachers which probably were primarily what’s called Judaizers. They were trying to foster on Gentile believers the Law of Moses and to encourage them to become Jewish in order to be Christians, in order to be saved. We have a hard time comprehending that, but legalism is still prevalent today. People believe that you’re saved not by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, but that you have to be working and doing good deeds—keeping the law, living a holy life—kind of working together with the grace and that we must earn our way to heaven. Not only in Romans but we know throughout the Scriptures that grace is unmerited, undeserved favor. You can’t combine grace and works. If you combine grace and works, it is no more grace; if it’s works, it’s no more grace; if it’s grace, it’s no more works. It’s like oil and water—they do not mix, one actually negates the other. It’s so foolish when people think that it’s a combination of both grace and works when the Bible is very clear that it is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Amen? That’s how we are saved.

What we’re going to find out in this chapter is Paul moves from the suffering in the ministry that he used as evidence of being genuine, he suffered in his ministry, he’s a true minister of God, tonight he’s going to be talking about the things that motivated him or motored him or kept him going so that he would, “not faint or lose heart.” The points that we bring up here is actually applicable to us tonight. We are all called to serve the Lord, we’re all called to minister God’s Word, to reach out to others, and we need the same motivation, the same motor, that Paul had that motivated him, it needs to motivate us.

I’m going to give them to you as we go. I realize you can break this chapter down in different ways, this is just one suggestion. There are four of them we’ll see tonight. First, if you’re taking notes, is he had a confidence of heaven. What kept Paul going, what kept Paul motored forward not being disheartened or fainting was that he was looking to heaven. He was of a heavenly-minded state. Some people think that if you get too focused on heaven, you won’t be any good on earth. I disagree. I believe the more we keep our focus on heaven and eternal values, the more that should motivate us to live for Christ on the earth. We need to be more heavenly-minded. Paul said in Colossians, “Set your affection”—your mind—“on things above, not on things on the earth.”

In verses 1-8, Paul had a confidence that he would go to heaven, that’s why he started with, “For we know” There’s going to be several “For we’s” or “we’s” in this section, and I’ll point them out as we go. This is the first confident assurance that we are going to one day as God’s people be in heaven and we’ll get a new body. He says, verse 1, follow me, “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved,”—I’ll let you know right away that this ‘earthly house’ or ‘this tabernacle’ that’s dissolved is our physical bodies, our actual bodies —“we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan,”—that is, in this body of clay, this cracked pot—“earnestly desiring to be clothed

upon with our house which is from heaven; 3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked”—or unclothed.

Verse 4, “For we that are in this tabernacle”—tent, that’s our body—“do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. 5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest”—I love that, we’re going to come back to that—“of the Spirit. 6 Therefore we are always confident,”—I want you to notice in verse 1, ‘For we know,’ and then in verse 6, ‘we are always confident’—knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

You may have heard this read several times at the funeral memorial services, I read it quite often, but again it’s basically one of the great sections of Scripture where Paul affirms that our physical bodies will one day be dissolved and that we will have a new body, a spiritual body, fit for heaven, a glorified body like the body Christ came out of the grave with and that we will spend all eternity in those glorified bodies.

Go back with me to verse 1, Paul says, “For we know”—we know this, we’re certain of this. Two things, first, how did Paul know? He knew by revelation. I love the idea that Paul being an apostle was given direct revelation from God. He would use the phrase, “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord.” So, God would speak to him. God had given him visions. Paul was caught up into heaven. If there’s anybody you want to listen to, you want to listen to Paul.

There’s people today that pit Christ against Paul. They actually abandon Paul for Jesus. That is a horrible, heretical mistake to think that Paul and Jesus are contradicting each other, that Jesus taught one thing, Paul taught another thing. Basically, Paul was an apostle like Peter and the other apostles, and he received direct revelation from God. Especially when it comes to the resurrection of the body, and we’re going to tie this in with the rapture of the Church.

Secondly, he says, “For we know” I want you to notice he begins speaking about our body, which is going to be “. . . eternal in the heavens,” and as I often do, I want you to do it with me again tonight, I want you to back up to 2 Corinthians 4:16. It really segues beautifully into our text in chapter 5. Start in 2 Corinthians 4:16. He says, “For which cause we faint not,”—what we’re reading tonight in 2 Corinthians 5 is what kept Paul from fainting or losing heart or giving up—“but though our outward man perish”—remember in chapter 5 we were talking about our bodies which are like tents that we groan in? Here he says—“though our outward man perish,”—again, the outward man is the physical body—“yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” That’s the new inner man or regeneration in the new life that we have in Christ.

Verse 17, “For our light affliction,”—which is what he’s been talking about—“which is but for a moment,”—which is temporal and transient, short-lived—“worketh for us a far more exceeding and”—here’s the key word—“eternal weight of glory: 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but

the things which are not seen are eternal.” At the end of verse 17 Paul uses the word “eternal;” at the end of verse 18 he uses the word “eternal.” He says, “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

Go back with me to 2 Corinthians 5, and without skipping a beat, no gap there at all, it shouldn't be a separate chapter, Paul says, “For we know” You're going to notice it tonight, especially in this first eight verses, that a lot of verses start with the word “for,” which means that Paul is giving the rationale or the reason for what just came before his words in that text. He says, “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.” Paul is telling us that though our light afflictions are just for a moment that we're in jars of clay, the glory might be of God and not of us, that we're weak earthen vessels, that we actually keep our eyes on the prize. Heaven is not just to be a final destination, it's to be a present motivation.

I miss the fact that when we sing the old hymns I loved growing up in church, so many of them talk about heaven, so many of them focused on heaven and being in heaven and being with Christ, being with the Lord. I think that we've kind of lost that. So much of our worship today is man-centered or focused on my feelings—how I feel and my intimate relationship with Christ, which is all fine—instead of being Christ-exalting or God-exalting or God-focused and getting our eyes on heaven. Sometimes we get discouraged because we do walk by sight and we're not walking by faith. We're looking at the material.

We're looking in the mirror, and you're going to get discouraged, right? When you get older and look in the mirror and think, What happened? Or, you stumble on your high school annual and find yourself in there and say, “Wow! Do I need a new body or what? Lord, have mercy.” These bodies are going to be dissolved, and when they are, we'll have “ . . . a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Notice our earthly bodies are referred to as or would be implied that they're made with hands. God made us. God created us and our bodies are under the fall and the curse as a result of man's sin in the Garden, so we have sickness and decay and weakness. But we're going to have a new glorious, eternal, heavenly body, and we're going to be able to spend eternity with Christ in that new, glorious body. Paul is basically affirming that we are going to have a new body in heaven.

Now, in the present body, verse 2, “ . . . we groan,”—and we not only groan but—“earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven”—which is referring to our new bodies. In Romans 8, we're going to read a lot about that on Sunday morning when we get there about creation groaning and travailing, “ . . . waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.” Well, even believers groan because of the curse, because of what sin has done to this world and even being under the curse when we were first born in sin and our bodies decay. So, verse 2, “ . . . we groan”—in these bodies—“earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.”

Now, if you're young and you're healthy and you've got a bad bod, you're working out in the gym and looking in the mirror. You see these guys in the gym just standing in front of the mirror flexing and pumping their muscles. I feel like reading this verse to them, you know. It's a tent. It's going to blow away. Don't worry about it. Just go home and eat some chips and watch tv. Don't freak out. Chuck Smith used to say, "I'll eat my pie and go early." I know we should take care of our bodies, but no matter what you do this body is going to decay, this body is going to get weaker and you're going to groan. It's a biblical thing, groaning for glory.

In verse 3 Paul says, "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked,"—King Jimmy, or unclothed, so we will have a body. We won't be just spirits floating around in heaven or like ghosts or like angels. I don't want to get sidetracked but I do believe that when a Christian dies, we're going to see it very clearly, that they immediately go to be with the Lord. Paul says, ". . . to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." The moment a Christian dies, he goes immediately to be with the Lord.

I don't believe the moment you get to heaven that you have your resurrection body yet. It's you, the real you, you're with the Lord. Bible students and theologians call it the intermediate state because what Paul is describing in these verses will actually not happen until the rapture of the Church, and then there'll be also other resurrections after that as well of the Old Testament saints or the tribulation saints and even of unbelievers. They'll be resurrected and brought before the Great White Throne Judgment. I believe that we're with the Lord, we're bodily alive and in His presence, and we know Him—He know us, we know others—but we haven't yet got our physical resurrection bodies like the one Jesus had. Just know this, that the nature and this picture of Christ's resurrection body is a picture of the body that we will have.

Now, we're not God. We're not divine, but remember Jesus was God and Man, so His human body was resurrected and glorified. Jesus came out of the grave in His same actual human body but a metamorphosed, a transformed, glorified resurrection body. That's hard for us to get our minds wrapped around that concept, "How could Jesus eat bread and eat food and eat fish? How could He be touched. How could He be seen and then pass through walls or disappear after His resurrection or physically just ascend right back into heaven?" I don't know, but it sounds pretty fun to me. Imagine the fun you can have freaking your friends out when you get to heaven? Or the travel that you can do going to heaven with that new body? Or the glories of not having any weakness, not having any pain, not having any sin? There's no groaning in heaven. We'll be in glory, and it'll be a glorious time. But, until the rapture, we don't actually get our physical resurrection body.

It's also important to understand that the Bible clearly teaches that because Christ rose physically, bodily from the dead, we who are in Christ will physically, bodily rise again from the dead. Even if you've been cremated, even if you've been eaten by a shark, even if your body's decomposed—the worms crawl in, the worms crawl out—your body will be quickened and resurrected. You say, "Well, how can that happen?" Is anything too hard for God? In 1 Corinthians 15, go back and read it, it's a whole description of this doctrine that our bodies, like Christ, will be resurrected.

So, from verses 3 to 8, you've got to keep in mind this new body, this body that's " . . . not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,"—is going to be given to the Church at the rapture. This is why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep"—or die—"but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"—and listen to what he says—"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality . . . then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" And he begins to praise, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

When Paul wrote to the believers in 1 Thessalonians 4, he said, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep"—died. Their bodies are sleeping, a metaphor for a believer's body at death. It looks like they're sleeping, which again ties in with what I'm saying because it's sleep because we're going to be resurrected, we're going to be quickened and resurrected. So, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as other which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again"—you see how it's based on Jesus, His death and resurrection?—"even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." So, those who die before the rapture in Christ, Christians who die before the rapture, they are in heaven with Jesus right now having the time of their life, and they're going to come back in glory. The Bible says that their bodies will be resurrected and reunited with their soul and spirit, and they will be glorified saints in heaven. "Then we which are alive and remain"—at that moment—"shall be"—translated. So, dead Christians will be resurrected; living Christians will be translated or " . . . caught up . . . to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

John 14, Jesus also said, " . . . I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." We should be looking for heaven, and it's another thought about getting older and your body waxing weaker as you start getting more and more excited. You are literally getting closer every day to heaven. Amen? You're getting closer every day to heaven. What a glorious truth that indeed is.

Paul was pretty familiar with tents, verse 4, because he was a tentmaker. An apostle who made tents? Can you imagine going in to get a new tent made and it's Apostle Paul, he's going to make you a tent. Paul likens our bodies unto tents. Now, tents are not very strong. Tents are not very permanent. You don't want to live in tents. I actually was almost three months living in a three-man tent when I just got out of high school. I went to Hawaii to surf, and I lived on the beach in a tent for three months. When I got done with that trip, it cured me from tent camping. Never again do I sleep in a tent. I need a real house. I need a real bed. I remember when I got back to California and went into my bedroom, I had a roof over my head, I could stand up by my bed, it was just amazing to think about. So, a tent is just a temporary abode. It's transient. It's weak. It's frail. So, we're groaning, verse 4, we're " . . . being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." And like 1 Corinthians 15, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Verse 5, "Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God"—I love...King James is a little convoluted to read verse 5, all that old English. Basically he says, this is what God has done. This is the work of God. "... who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." It's so amazing that verse 5 appears in this section on this subject. He just got through talking about our bodies being "... dissolved ... an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"—we're going to be in heaven, and goes on to say and God, right now—"... also hath given unto us the earnest of this Spirit." In other words, we do walk by faith, not by sight, but God gives us a down payment, a foretaste of the heaven we're going to experience right now. So, though we live by faith and we walk by faith, we also have this experience of the indwelling Holy Spirit. This is the doctrine of the earnest of the Spirit.

When you get saved, you're saved because the Holy Spirit is convicting you, is drawing you to put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ. When you open your heart and put your faith in Christ, believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit regenerates you, that means He gives you new life; then He indwells you. Every Christian has the Holy Spirit living inside of them, and then He seals you. You don't often think about that or talk about that. Every believer is sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption, and that seal is called the "earnest." That earnest is what we would call a down payment. Paul talks about this in the book of Ephesians as well. God doesn't just say, "Well, you better have faith that you're going to go to heaven." No, He says, "I'm going to give you a little taste of heaven right now. I'm going to give you a guarantee." It's the word used for a down payment.

If you buy an automobile, and you put money down and make payments, or you buy a house and put money down and then you make payments, that money that you put down is earnest money. Somebody might say, "Well, if you really want to buy this house, you better put some money into your down payment on it right away or somebody else is going to get it." "If you want this car today," that's classic - right? - a car salesman, "You want this car? Then, you've got to put so much money down to hold it for you as the down payment to make it clear that you're earnest about this deal."

It was a word that was also used for an engagement ring. What is an engagement ring? It's a sign of you're going to marry someone - right? - Lord willing. If you're earnest, if you're sincere and you want to commit yourself, you get engaged. You get engaged, and you give them a ring. Every time you look down at that ring you say, "I'm going to be married," and your heart fills with joy and excitement. The same is true of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God's engagement ring—you're the bride of Christ, one day you'll be wed to Him, and it fills you with joy and excitement that one day you're going to be with Him in heaven.

When the children of Israel went in to spy out the Promised Land under Joshua and Caleb and the other spies, when they went into the land and came back out, what did they do? They brought grapes with them, right? The grapes of Eshcol, and they were beautiful, big grapes. I picture them the size of basketballs. You could cut up that grape and eat it for a whole week. That was a taste of the Promised Land. They could eat the grapes and go, "Oh, man, a land flowing with milk and honey! Oh, I can't wait to get there! Oh, that's going to be great!" God

gives us a taste of heaven, and the Spirit of God dwells in us and gives us that assurance that we will be with Christ in heaven. Every child of God has the earnest of the Holy Spirit. Jesus will finish the transaction in your redemption—what begins with grace will end in glory.

Verse 6, “Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.” What does that mean? It means that we aren’t literally with Him in His presence. It doesn’t mean the Lord isn’t with us now, we just read we have “. . . the earnest of the Spirit,” but we’re not actually with Him. When we get to heaven, we will literally be able to reach out and touch Him. We will see Him face to face. No more faith in heaven, faith is turned to sight. So, we will not be absent, we will be present with the Lord because now as “. . . we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 We are confident,”—he says, ‘We know,’ verse 1, and now he ends with—“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” There’s no doubt about it, if you’re a child of God, the moment you die you leave your body and you are in the presence of Jesus Christ. That’s a good thing, right? That’s a wonderful thing. This is what kept Paul motored. This is what kept Paul going. This is what Paul meant when I will not lose heart even though all the trials and troubles and hardships that he faced.

The second thing that kept Paul going in verses 9-13 is his concern to please Christ. He says, “Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.” Now, whether we’re in heaven or not, if we’re not with the Lord, we’re absent. Right now we labor, so he says, “I want to live to please Him.”

Verse 10, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” Every believer will actually be judged by Christ not for salvation but for service. This is what is known as the Bema. The Bema is the reward seat of Christ, so we will be judged for how we serve the Lord, how we live for the Lord, what we do with our time, our talent, our treasure. You’re going to go to heaven. You are saved, but sometimes we forget as Christians, I’m going to have to answer for the opportunities God gave me. I’m going to have to answer for if He gave me a gift and an ability, did I use it properly for His glory? I’m going to have to answer to God how I lived my life, how I spent my time, how I invested in the Lord’s work. So, don’t forget that.

We’re going to heaven; yes, it’s going to be glorious, but I have this feeling that some people the minute they get to heaven and they stand before the Lord in the Bema seat, they’re going to be feeling a little bit disappointed that they didn’t spend more time in His service, devoted to Him, following Him. You’re going to be saved, but Paul in Corinthians indicates they’ll be saved just by the skin of your teeth. He uses the phrase, “. . . saved; yet so as by fire.” You’ll get in, but it won’t be a triumphal entry. What a humbling thing that will be.

Verse 11, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord,”—which is the righteous indignation of God’s judgment and His holiness, it’s tied together with the concept of the fear of the Lord. What do we do? We’re motivated to—“. . . persuade men”—we’re busy telling others about Jesus —“but we are made manifest unto God”—God knows our hearts. God knows our motive in

ministry. Paul was being attacked by the false teachers about his motive and his integrity. He said, “. . . and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences”—that you in your hearts know that we’re sincere as we serve the Lord.

Verse 12, “For we commend not ourselves again unto you”—in other words, we’re not bragging or giving self-commendation of our own works—“but give you occasion to glory on our behalf”—we’re giving you opportunity to be thankful to God for what He’s done through us in your lives —“that ye may have somewhat to answer them”—referring to the false teachers—“which glory in appearance, and not in heart.” Again, their whole focus was outward appearance, showing off before others, so Paul says their hearts aren’t right.

Verse 13, “For whether we be beside ourselves”—which is the idea of we’ve gone crazy, we’ve flipped out, we’ve gone mad—“it is to God”—we’re crazy for God—“or whether we be sober, it is for your cause”—we’re doing it for you, to minister to you.

The third motive in our text is verses 14-17, that is, Paul spoke of his constraint of love. He said, “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. 16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh”—now that we’re in Christ, we don’t look at people by their wealth or by their outward appearance, or we’re not people pleasers, we’re not impressed by men. We don’t know them or recognize them or show respect of person—“after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh”—that was in our pre-converted days—“yet now henceforth know we him no more. 17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature”—or creation —“old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Paul talks here about the love of Christ constraining him. Of course we could’ve taken a week at each one of these sections, but I do believe that this “love of Christ” is reference to not Paul’s love for Christ, which was no doubt great and that Paul loved the Lord with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind, but that he’s referring here to Christ’s love for him; and the same thing is true of us. We should love God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, but what’s going to motivate you to live for eternity, to live for heaven, to serve the Lord, not just that you’re going to heaven, not just that you’re going to have to answer to God for the way you lived, but that Christ loves you, the love of Christ for you, that’s what should motivate us and constrain us.

The word “constrain” there actually means holds us together. Not only did it motivate him, but it held him together. In other words, Paul says, “I don’t fall apart. I don’t come to pieces. I don’t just break up because God’s love and Christ’s love for me is holding me together.” I love that idea that we’re held together and able to not lose heart in the battle because God’s love, because Christ’s love, for us constrains us.

Now, in verse 17, Paul actually says, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new”—creation, so we don’t know men after the flesh anymore, we’re brand new in Christ—“old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” Again, I would like to spend a little more time

on that text. We quote it quite often, but in context here Paul, again, is talking about that in Christ we have a new position, we have a new passion, we have a new relationship now with God. Even though you're a Christian and you're in Christ and old things pass away, it doesn't mean that you're perfect. It doesn't mean that you never sin. It doesn't mean that after you get saved you may not carry some of your old hangups into your new life, but you should be growing in grace and knowledge and growing in sanctification and growing in holiness. But you're not going to be perfect, and you're not going to be sinless.

What does he mean by "all things are new"? You're a new creation, all things have become new. It means that you are a new person, you were born again, you're made alive spiritually, you are now no longer in Adam but you're in Christ, and I believe that a lot of this is because of our position now that we're brand new—that we're new in Christ, we're new in our position, and we have new life in relationship with Christ, and now we have a new love and a new desire to live and serve Christ.

The last motive in our text, verses 18-21, Paul says the thing that motivated him was his calling and his commission from God, his commission from God to be an ambassador for Christ and to beseech men to be reconciled to God. It says, verse 18, "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us"—here it is, Paul was given—"the ministry of reconciliation;"—so we're reconciled to God by Jesus Christ and we have a ministry of going to people who aren't saved and pleading with them to be reconciled to God.

Verse 19, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing"—there's our word 'impute'—"their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ,"—we are to represent Christ in this world—"as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." So, we go out as ambassadors representing Christ and we plead with men, ". . . be ye reconciled to God," the enmity is dealt with.

Verse 21, "For he hath made him"—the 'he hath made him' is a reference to God at the end of verse 20 would be God the Father, and He—"made him"—that is, Jesus Christ, God the Son—"to be sin for us,"—or to actually bear or carry our sin. Jesus did not become a sinner, He actually became a sin bearer on the cross—"who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Every Christian should memorize verse 21. You need to put verse 21 to memory. "For he"—that is, God the Father—"made him"—that is, God the Son—"to be sin for us,"—or to bear our sins. Jesus took our sins on the cross. Jesus was sinless, "who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"—or that we might be given through imputation, God the Father would impute to us the righteousness of God the Son.

This is this transaction that took place on the cross. This again is clear teaching by the Apostle Paul of the substitutionary, sacrificial, atoning death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Why do I emphasize that? Because there are heretical teachers becoming more prevalent every day, especially on YouTube—be careful—that are denying this essential biblical Christian doctrine. I just showed a clip to my pastors yesterday afternoon, some guy saying that, "Jesus taught we

work our way to heaven; Paul taught we get there by believing. I'm going to take the words of Jesus over Paul," and basically threw out Paul the apostle for Jesus Christ, which, by the way, Jesus did not teach. I think John 3:16 in your Bibles should be red letters, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That's Jesus speaking.

Whenever you interpret the Bible, if you're interpreting it that Paul and Jesus are contradicting each other, your interpretation is wrong. The Bible does not contradict itself, it's the Word of God. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God . . ." God doesn't contradict Himself.

This is the substitutionary, you might say penal substitutionary, sacrificial death of Christ on the cross. What a fitting text verse 21 is for us to celebrate the Lord's Supper, that Jesus actually bore the sins of the world. Why is not the world saved? Because you have to believe, you have to put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ. He died for the sins of the world, but you must turn from your sin and put your faith in Jesus Christ. You must believe in Him and receive the gift of eternal life.

Communion cannot save you. It's a picture of what Jesus did on the cross, but as you hold that bread and you drink that cup, remember this verse, "For he . . . who knew no sin"—became—" . . . sin for us . . . that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." He's given to you the righteousness of Christ. It's been imputed to you. You can't add to it, you can't increase it, you can just accept it and be thankful to God for the cross of Jesus Christ. Amen?