

## **What Is Our Endgame?**

### **2 Corinthians 4:16-5:21**

#### **Introduction**

Good morning, Lighthouse! Are you ready for the Word of God this morning? Our sermon title is “What Is Our Endgame?” A king was hunting in a forest when he stumbled upon a tree with several targets drawn on its trunk. Right in the center of each circle was an arrow. “Who is this fine archer?” the king asked his men. “I must find him and recruit him for my army.” Just at that moment, a boy carrying a bow and a quiver of arrows walked by. Overhearing the king, he admitted that he was the one who had shot the arrows. “Are you sure you didn't just push the arrows into the middle?” asked the king. “No, sire,” said the boy. “I shot them from a hundred paces.” “That is amazing!” cried the king. “From now on, consider yourself to be in the service of your king.” The boy was overjoyed. “Now, tell me,” continued the king, “how did you come to be such an excellent archer?” “Well,” said the boy, “first I shoot the arrow at the tree, then I paint a ring around it.”

Too often we can be guilty of setting goals that we cannot miss, or we fail set the right kind of goals, or our motives are out of line. So, what should our goals be as Christians? What is our aim? What is our endgame? I am going to give a quick answer and build on it what our purpose and endgame as a church is: Look to my left, and your right: Ephesians 3:21 – Unto Him (Jesus) be glory in the Church throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Our purpose and our very own existence to is bring glory to God and enjoy Him forever. In everything you say, in everything you do, you are to bring glory to God. We get to do this!

## Background

Our text today comes from the last 3 verses in chapter 4 and the entire chapter of 5. Let's examine some background behind our text to help understand the bigger picture.

2 Corinthians is a letter written by Paul is the Apostle to the Church in Corinth. There are many Churches we read about in our NT that we can take example after: Churches like Thessalonica, Paul says when they received the Word from the Apostles, they received it not as man's word, but as it is in truth, the Word of God. We at Lighthouse as we open the Scriptures ought to know with confidence that this Bible here is the very Word of God. Not mine, Ray's or Pastor's opinion. The Bereans in the Synagogues before being established. It says in Acts that they more noble in those in Thessalonica, they received the word with readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily whether to see what Paul was saying was true. Now, the application of that is not to always challenge your Pastors, but to take God's Word, examine it thoroughly and see for yourselves whether the Word of God is being preached in truth.

Churches likes those in Ephesus, and Philippi are also good ones we can take example from. However, the one in Corinth is not your ideal church you want to be like. Unless you want to look at it as "this is what you are not to do."

This local church was established during his 2nd mission trip where he stayed 18 months. This was a church filled with many issues and received a lot of rebuke from Paul. They questioned his Apostleship, his speaking ability, they had division over which leader they preferred (I'm with Paul, I'm with Apollos, I'm with Peter), a member was having affair with his step-mother, they made the Lord's Supper a party – there was issue after issue. Despite these things, Paul still had a sincere love for them and desire for them to grow in the Lord.

## Scripture

### 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:21

(16) For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

(17) For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and 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.

(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.

(2) For in this we groan, 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.

(4) For we that are in this tabernacle 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 of the Spirit.

(6) Therefore 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.

(9) Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

(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.

(11) Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

(12) For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

(13) For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.

(14) 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: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

(17) Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

(18) And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

(19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

(20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

(21) For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

### **Outline**

I. Our endgame is to glorify God because our hope motivates us, vv. 4:16-5:8.

A. Believers are to look at life with an eternity lens, vv. 4:16-18.

1. Paul talked about how he was constantly faced death and many hardships for Christ.

a. But though he was constantly facing death, various perils, it didn't really trouble him, for he had a proper understanding of life and death.

b. If he were to live, he still gets to win people to the Lord. If he dies, he gets to be in heaven with the Lord.

2. He knew his outward man perish, but his inward man (the real him) is renewed daily. Our bodies here is not the real us, our spirit is.

3. He knew this life on earth was temporary so anything that happens to him is nothing in comparison to what his eternal life awaits. However, this does not mean we ought to just disregard everything in life, it means we ought to make it count.

B. Our anticipated hope of new bodies, vv. 5:1-4.

(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.

1. This statement carries on what Paul said in the previous verses connected by the conjunction “for.”

2. Paul uses this metaphor: “Our earthly house of this tabernacle.”

a. This word tabernacle comes from the Greek word “Skenos”

this means a hut or temporary residence, that is, (figuratively) the human body (as the abode of the spirit): - tabernacle.

b. He is referring to his earthly body, which is temporary. Tabernacles or tents were not meant for permanent residence. He states that if this body is destroyed, he has a house not made with hands, eternal in heavens.

There is a new body that God has prepared for us. Salvation isn’t just for the soul and spirit, but for the body also. Resurrection is how God saves our bodies. We have a glorious new body to come.

c. This is the same concept Jesus referred to when He said these words to His disciples:

John 14:1-3 (1) Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. (2) In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. 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.

3. He then says we groan and earnestly desire to be clothed upon our house made in heaven.

a. There is a longing believers have for their future glory

We have salvation from sins penalty, and we are continuing salvation from sin's power, we await salvation from sin's presence.

b. We know the limitations of our current body. All of that will change.

4. We will not be bodiless spirits. We will have spirit-bodies. Don't ask me how it all works and what it all be about, because I do not know, but here is what I do know. They will not be corrupted by sin.

5. To God, the body itself is not a negative. The problem isn't in the body itself but in these sin-corrupted, fallen bodies that we live in. Jesus approved the essential goodness of the body by becoming a man. If there was something inherently evil in the body, Jesus could never have added humanity to His deity.

6. Our desire as Christians, is not to be "pure spirit" and to escape the body. Instead, we earnestly desire to have a perfect, resurrected, body that is not subject to sin and death.

7. Pagan philosophers thought that a bodiless spirit was the highest level of existence. They thought of the body as a prison for the soul, and saw no advantage in being resurrected in another body. We know what the Lord says about that.

C. Our confidence and guarantee of our hope, vv. 5-8.

(5) Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

(6) Therefore 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.

1. The one who prepares this for us is God Himself, He has given us His Spirit as our assurance.
2. The word here for “earnest” means a pledge, that is, part of the purchase money or property given in advance as security for the rest: - earnest. In Modern Greek, the word is used to for “engagement ring.”
3. If the Holy Spirit is our guarantee of our future bodies, then the only way for it to cancel is for God to decline it and take back His Word. That we know is not going to happen.
4. This gives the believer confidence!
5. Paul would rather be absent from the body and be present with the Lord. He acknowledged that we walk by faith and not by our sight.
  - a. I want to clarify something, He writes in verse 6 that to be in the home – our current bodies we are absent from the Lord. He is not saying that God is not with us or His presence is never with us.
  - b. The Lord is with us now! We do not physically see this. We know this by faith, however, there will be a day we are in the Lord’s glories presence by sight.
  - c. Because Paul is confident (in part, based on the guarantee of the Holy Spirit) of his eternal destiny, he is not afraid of the world beyond. In fact, he would be well pleased to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

## II. Our endgame to glorify God counts in this life now, vv. 5:9-15.

(9) Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. (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. (11) Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. (12) For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. (13) For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. (14) 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.

### A. What our aim in life should be and why, vv. 5:9-10.

1. We “labour” this means to strive, make it your aim. No matter whether present or absent, we may be “accepted of him” – this means pleasing to Him.
  - a. There is something we can do now in these temporary bodies. We can please God.
  - b. The life of a Christian can be fit into two categories: please yourself, or please God.
  - c. When we get to heaven, there will be no more need for faith, no more need for endurance through trials, no more need for courage and boldness in telling others about Jesus. Now, while we are present in these bodies, is our only opportunity in all eternity to please God in these areas.
2. Why should we do these things? What difference does it make if I’m saved and I choose to do what I think is best for me and not really do things for the Lord. Is it going to matter? After all, this here is temporary.



a. Its true that once your saved, it's a done deal. But what we do now for the Lord does matter.

b. Look again at verse 10.

(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.

c. This is not to be confused with the Great White Throne judgment in the future for unbelievers. God has done many judgments, and there are three future ones to come. 1. Great White Throne after the 1000 year reign. 2. Judgment of the nations often known as the Sheep and Goat judgment. 3. The Bema judgment for believers. This is what v. 10 is referring to. The word Bema is the original word used for judgment here.

d. Now, do not get alarmed, this judgment is not a matter of going to heaven or not, this a judgment exclusively for the believer's rewards.

3. This judgment is for believers to receive rewards, not a lecture or set up for punishment.

4. Because of what Jesus' death on the cross, we are no longer under God's wrath. Believers at this judgment seat will be judged by the things done and our motives for what we have done will be judged (according to what he has done, whether good or bad).

5. We must live understanding that what we have done will be judged. It is possible to have a saved soul and a wasted life and that will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. But its more than that, this should serve as encouragement in our service to the Lord. It should remind us of the principle seen in Hebrews 6:10

“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”

Paul understands that all of his hardships in life are worth it. One reason is because he will be rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ.

6. I have some encouragement for those who ever feel burned out doing ministry and serving. All those things you feel go unnoticed or even unappreciated.

Things like, Awana, teaching Sunday school, nursery, serving donuts, cleaning, setting up tables, greetings, the list goes on. If you are doing these things out love for the Lord, they are not unnoticed by God. These things do matter.

B. God’s love, and righteousness motivates this, vv. 5:11-15

1. Paul understands the terror of the Lord; therefore he persuades men. His heart was for no one to face the righteous judgment of God.

2. “Beside ourselves” is phrase that means crazy or irrational thinking. Paul was considered crazy by many people. And at the human level, he was crazy. He received confirmation that we would get beaten and taken away, and yet pursued anyways. He had so much passion for Christ all he can do is be radically different. People think Paul is insane because of his aim for Christ. These are good reasons to be called insane.

3. Have you ever been called crazy before for being a Christian? I hope it was because your love and passion to please God, but what a blessing!

4. Paul was not truly crazy, he is instead motivated by Jesus’ love. Jesus love was demonstrated at the cross, and He died for all, and since He died for all, we should not live for ourselves. The old you died, and the new you was born again.

III. Our endgame to glorify God is because who we are, vv. 16-21.

A. We are new creations in Christ., vv. 5:16-17.

1. Because of this new life made possible by Jesus, old earthly attachments are far less important. Before Paul understood the gospel and got saved.
  - a. This was a man who hated Jesus and killed and persecuted Christians.
  - b. After on the road to Damascus, Paul saw Jesus as a man no more, but for whom Jesus really is. We ought not to see people according to the flesh, but to regard them according to the spirit.
2. Look around the room. What do you see? If assuming everyone is saved, those are your brothers and sisters in Christ that you're going to be with for eternity.
3. The moment you put your trust in Christ, you became a new creation. We are not aiming to be new creation, it's who you are.
4. Notice it says, "anyone" it doesn't matter what your background is, ethnicity, this promise is for anyone who puts their trust in Jesus to save them.
5. Unfortunately, too often we live after the old man instead of the new.

B. We are ambassadors for Christ entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation, vv. 5:18-21.

1. Reconciliation means to exchange or change and thereby to bring together that which was separated.
2. Rebellious people have been brought back into relationship with God through Christ.
  - a. God exchanged Christ's righteousness for their sin.
  - b. Because of the ministry to reconciliation, God in Christ can have a

relationship with you. Now we as believers have the responsibility to tell others about that truth. We are ambassadors for Jesus.

3. An ambassador is someone who goes into another place and represents their own. It doesn't matter if you like who is in office or not. If you were asked to be an ambassador for the United States, it a high honor! What more of an honor is it to be ambassadors for Jesus? If you are a Christian, you are an ambassador for Him. You are representing Him wherever you go. It's your identity You can be a good one or a bad one.

(21) For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

4. We sang about this in our opening song this morning. Often this is known as the great exchange.
  - a. God the Father made Jesus, who knew no sin, was perfect , to be sin for us. God took our sin and put them on Jesus and He took Jesus' righteousness and put them on us.
  - b. There is not a debt we are to pay off; there is grace we are enjoying. Grace means it can never be paid back! The power of gospel changes us and it is the power of gospel that motivates to love other people! The power of the Gospel is why our endgame is to glorify God and make everything we do our aim to please Him.

### **Application**

We have a relationship with the God of the universe, and He purposes for us to grow more and more like His Son. Every service, trial and hardship we endure is completely worth it because we can glorify God and be more like Jesus Christ. There will be day where we no longer have to

deal with this current body. We will see Christ and we will be made like Him. We will no longer have to deal with flesh, sin, trials or hardships and we will spend eternity with the one who loved us so much and gave Himself for us. That is what Paul looked forward to, this was His hope.

Until then, as ambassadors, let us make it our aim to please God in everything we do.