

“...Now You Don’t”
June 3, 2007 * 2 Cor.4:7-5:7

I. A review of where we’ve been

- A. Lesson 1 – Let God **be God**.
- B. Lesson 2 – The New Testament worshipper’s experience of God is better than the Old Testament worshipper’s because he or she can have a **relationship** with God through the **Holy Spirit**. As a result, we get to experience:
 - a. **Fellowship with God**
 - b. **Freedom**
 - c. **Fruitfulness** of a changed and changing life

*II. Lesson 3 - In this life, it won’t be one great experience after another, so we must learn to live by **faith** not by **sight**. (2 Cor.5:7)*

The Corinthian church was birthed in the supernatural power of God. But what was their problem?

They made an idol out of experiencing God.

III. Why we must live by faith and not by sight:

First, in this life we will suffer. (2 Cor.4:7ff)

- A. *What’s the treasure Paul is referring to?*

It could be our salvation (in a general sense, see 2 Cor.4:6) or it could be the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (in a specific sense – see chapter 3)

- B. *What is the jar of clay Paul is referring to?*

Our bodies which are fragile, and easily broken.

- C. *What do too many Christians do when they suffer?*

Why?

They assume God has abandoned them. Chances are they have been infected with too much “Left Behind” theology (the idea that God will yank us out before we have to face any tribulation or hardship.)

- D. *In the parable of the sower, why did the seed that fell on rocky ground last only a short time?*

Because it had no root, and when trouble or hardship comes because of the Word, he quickly falls away.

- E. *Why does God bring Christians into wilderness times of suffering?*

“For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.” When we suffer, we feel like we are dying, but seen properly, seen through the eyes of faith, suffering is actually producing the life of Jesus in us. With every storm we weather and every desert we cross, a strength of purpose and character is being birthed in us.

- F. *An analogy from nature:*

When a butterfly is trying to bust out of the cocoon, it struggles in a way that appears almost violent to our eyes. And if you came across that butterfly, seeing that butterfly struggle would awaken pity in you, and you would be tempted to help that butterfly out. To maybe widen the slit in the cocoon so it can just pop it open, with less exertion. And if you would do that, you know what would happen? You would doom that butterfly. It would never learn to fly, and would be dead in a few days. Why? Because it needs that struggle to strengthen its wings.

Hebrews 12:7, 11 – “Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons...No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”

Second, in this life our bodies will wear out and die. (2 Cor.4:16-5:4)

- A. *How does our culture view aging today?*

Our culture today worships youthfulness and idolizes adolescent behavior more than any generation before it.

B. *What does it mean when the Bible calls us to “number our days”? How do I live life well?*

We are given a springtime of youthfulness, and a summer time of great energy and vitality, but then as surely as September comes, the nights start to get longer and cooler, autumn comes, the leaves change color, and then before you know it, winter sets in, and you spend your days peering out the window, longing for a spring which seems so very far away. And so to live life well, you and I need to take stock of these seasons, and utilize them well. You want to have a great summer – find a good career, a happy marriage, rich experiences? – well then you better use your springtime well.

C. *Do Christians get a pain-free pass through all the seasons of life? Can these bodies of ours inherit heaven?*

“Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven.”

D. *What will be true for all of us in this life?*

1. *We won't have perfect health in this life.*

2. *We'll have to experience the grief of saying goodbye again and again in this life.*

a. *Should Christians show all their emotions?*

Walking by faith does not mean that we suppress and push down all the difficult emotions of life. It doesn't mean we put on a happy face. Authentic faith is pouring our hearts out to God and to each other. Letting that emotion flow. (So many of the Bible's psalms are laments.)

E. *How can Christians face death without fear and not let grief cripple them?*

By faith in the knowledge of what is coming.

F. *How do we know that this is not some fairy tale?*

Paul tells us in verse 5 why we can know this is true. “Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.” Paul says, “You know this is true, because you've already begun to

experience the reality of God's Spirit in your lives. The fellowship with God you've known. The freedom that you've tasted. The fruitfulness of a life that is changed and is changing. No, it's not a constant thing. It's not one warm-fuzzy after another. It's like a deposit, a down-payment of something far more glorious that it coming one day. And it's the experience you've had of that deposit which is why you know this is true.

And so in this life we must: Live by faith, not by sight.