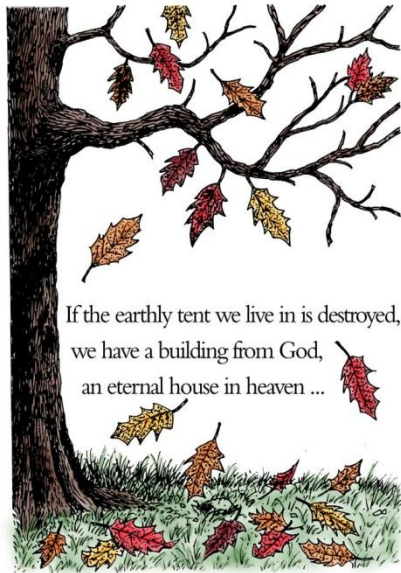


SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 12



A HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS

Scripture Texts: 2 Corinthians 4:14-18; 2 Corinthians 5:1-5

God has both love and wrath in His nature. He is merciful to the repentant but severe with the unrepentant. To be taken to Heaven and have a never-dying spiritual body and live forever with God, we must be saved from sin and be holy in this life.

This life is full of things and circumstances we would like to change. There is poverty, illness, injustice, hardship, irritations, and disappointments. What do these distressing circumstances do to us? Which are master, they or we? It depends upon the strength there is within. Are we sufficient of ourselves or need we other strength? If so, where can we get it? What really makes the difference between despair and victory?

MEMORY VERSE: *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 Corinthians 5:1

The Resurrection

2 Corinthians 4:14 Paul had been telling the church at Corinth of his great care for them and his sacrificial service that they might have the same salvation and blessings which he enjoyed. He described somewhat the life of Christ in his heart which sustained him. He spoke of the hope to which he looked forward in faith.

He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also . . . Christ's resurrection guarantees that His redeemed people will rise also. Christ became **the first fruits of them that slept (1 Corinthians 15:20)**. **Because I live, ye shall live also (John 14:19)**. What great hope we find in this precious promise! How will God raise them? **By His own power (1 Corinthians 6:14)**. We are told that if the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus from the dead dwell in you, then God shall also quicken your mortal bodies by that Spirit (**Romans 8:11**). This is the first resurrection. This is the resurrection from the death of sin. We must have it to have a part in the second resurrection— eternal life in Heaven. See **John 14:19**.

Living for Eternal Values

2 Corinthians 4:15-18 Paul's work was preaching the Gospel. In doing it, he suffered many things. His labors were for a threefold purpose. (1) He worked and suffered for the sake of the people that they might know Christ, (2) that God might be glorified by their thanksgiving, (3) that both he and they might be resurrected to spend eternity with God. By keeping his vision on **the abundant grace . . . the glory of God . . . the exceeding and eternal weight of glory** and **the things which are not seen but which are eternal**, Paul was able to bear and rise above the trials, perplexities, and persecutions of his life. He had continual victory over them. He said, **we faint not . . . the inward man is renewed day by day**. He called his affliction **light**. They were turned about to produce an **eternal weight of glory**. The moment a person is born, his mortal man begins to die. The moment he is born again, the spiritual man begins to live eternally. Paul did as we must do. He lifted his eyes from the daily troubles and fixed them on the invisible, eternal goal. His vision was not an empty wish because he had a living hope within him.

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The New Body

2 Corinthians 5:1 What did Paul tell us he saw as he looked? The time (coming so soon to all of us) when **our earthly house of this tabernacle** would be **dissolved**—when his body would die. He did not feel it to be a loss. He considered it an exchange for something better. **A building of God.** God made Adam's body to not die and placed the tree of life nearby to keep it living forever (**Genesis 3:22**). Only when sin came in did death enter. Because of that, God has to make His children another building, one **not made with hands**. Man's work decays. The new body built by God will be **eternal in the heavens**, living forever.

Death is real. Death is an enemy (**1 Corinthians 15:26**). Why then did Paul face death with such confidence? (**2 Timothy 4:6-8**). The power of death was gone. It meant no more separation from God. It now was the only means by which he could cross over from his labors here to receive his payday. Why do saints look with peace and even joy toward death? It is because of what follows death: **To be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.**

Some fear death for what will follow: **It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment (Hebrews 9:27)**. The heathens, who know not Jesus Christ, look at death with no hope of eternal life, yet they feel that continued existence follows death. They often make what pitiful provision they can for the poor departed one by burying with him articles or images of food, utensils, weapons, etc. These temporal things will be of no help or comfort to him. What hope do YOU have beyond death?

2 Corinthians 5:2-4 The **groan** of pain, of affliction, and failure of the body is heard often in hospitals, homes, and many places. Always, silent cries are going up from the sick, crippled, retarded, aging, and dying. A cry for what? To be freed from the grip of death which is upon us all. **To be clothed** with a new and better body. (See **Romans 8:21-23**.) **Not for that we would be unclothed**, that is, we desire not to lose our body but to gain a better one, not to die but to live after death. **Not be found naked**. Many will be. If, when one lays down to die, there is no treasure in Heaven from which to build or clothe a new one, if no holiness in one's account, then all that remains is nakedness.

Jesus gave John a message for the congregation at Laodicea (**Revelation 3:14-18**). They thought themselves in need of nothing, but Jesus said **Thou art wretched . . . and naked: I counsel thee to buy . . . that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear**. Oh, praise God! Praise Him forever for Jesus Who made it possible for us to live forever.

When the trumpet sounds, and the earth is devoured in flames, and our bodies are changed for never dying ones, will we be found naked or clothed? We can be sure. This old song of Zion expresses it very well: *"When He shall come with trumpet sound, O may I then in Him be found Dressed in His righteousness alone, Faultless to stand before the throne! On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand, All other ground is sinking sand. AMEN."*

JUST A THOUGHT

**Every person is a citizen of two worlds, the natural
and the spiritual world.**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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