

“This Too Shall Pass”—2 Corinthians 5:1-5

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “This Too Shall Pass”, is 2 Corinthians 5:1-5 → *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. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. 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. He Who has prepared us for this very thing is God, Who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

What’s your favorite Bible verse? While this may be a difficult question for some, others may immediately quote you their favorite passage. When I asked one particular man this question his answer took me by surprise. I usually hear passages quoted about God’s love, providence, grace, salvation and His presence in daily life. When this man told me his favorite passage was Luke 2:1 he did not need to quote it as I immediately knew it from memorizing and reciting Luke 2 as a child in our annual children’s Christmas programs.

Puzzled at such a pick, I asked him why his favorite Bible passage was a verse about Caesar Augustus taxing his empire. Most people don't like taxes! Then he quoted his favorite part of the verse: "And it came . . . to pass." While I was thinking of this phrase as stating what was happening next in the Biblical narrative (which the phrase is intended to do), he heard it much differently, especially in light of the fact that the phrase "it came to pass" is used 453 times in the King James Version of the Bible. His point? Everything in life simply comes . . . to pass.

Actually this principle is part of the message of our text. In his first letter to the Christians in Corinth Paul had reminded them that they should not live as people so attached to *the world . . . for the present form of this world is passing away*. (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:31) In the verse right before our text he reminds us to *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*. (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:18) In our text he drives this thought by stressing the temporary nature of life on this earth, referring to our body as a *tent*, a temporary dwelling.

The whole of Paul's discussion concerning the fleetingness of life on this earth is summed up in verse 5 of our text: *He Who has prepared us for this very thing is God, Who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. For what very thing has God prepared us? To live perfectly in His*

presence forever! Your body was created by God to live forever and never die. This was God's Will when He created Adam and Eve, giving them a permanent "home" in their body in a perfect earth. Unfortunately they chose to disobey Yahweh's Will for them, bringing sin and death upon themselves, their posterity and all creation. Romans 18:20 says *the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him Who subjected it.*

However, God's divine Will never changes. (cf. Numbers 23:19; Malachi 3:6) Given the promise of redemption fulfilled in the Person & Work of Jesus (cf. Genesis 3:15; Luke 3:23-38), the Christian confesses that s/he is simply passing through this world with a view to the life of the world to come in the restoration of all things on the Last Day! This is why Paul could describe our confidence and longing in verses 1-2 of our text: *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. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling.*

Yet, because of having to deal with the presence of sin and the devil in our daily lives, passing through this world presents huge challenges to remaining faithful as we wait *in hope* for *the creation itself* to be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God, as well as eagerly waiting for . . . *the redemption of our bodies.* (cf. Romans 8:20-23) In the meantime, you may hear people

say many times, “This too shall pass.” One usually hears these words when calamities, tragedies, adverse circumstances and undesirable situations throw your life into confusion, pain and emotional turmoil.

There is a difference in the way those who trust in Christ for forgiveness of sins—who have *the Spirit as a guarantee* of the life that is to come—and those who do not believe in Jesus use this statement. It is described in verse 4 of our text: *For while we (i.e. Christians) are still in this tent (i.e. our body), 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.* The world longs the passing of adverse circumstances and pain with the phrase, “This too shall pass,” trying to be hopeful and positive so that one may get through it and get on with life on this earth in a desirable manner. The Christian recognizes the passing of all circumstances in life—good and bad—with the phrase, “This too shall pass,” and desires for them to pass so he can enter the eternal life God desires for all people in Christ Jesus.

The real question is where are you in the midst of this life which is passing away? Taking care of this body with its many desires is natural (cf. Ephesians 5:29) and naturally involves much energy and intentionality. However, no matter how much energy and intentionality you invest in this life, it is still coming . . . to pass either by death or Christ’s 2nd Coming on the Last Day. Do you live as if you have control over the

passing of your life and all that fills it or do you *walk by faith* (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:7) in He Who will restore life eternal to your mortal bodies in the resurrection of your body on the Last Day? Do you want only the “bad” things in life to pass so that you can continue living the way you want to live in selfish desires? Or do you desire your life and all that fills it to pass through the hands of your Savior from sinful, selfish desires—hands marked with the nail scars when Jesus died to take on the punishment of hell which your sins deserve and give you eternal life with God? Do you live in a desperate attempt to find peace with life on this earth or do you live life in peace?

Jesus gave much teaching about the passing of this world in its present form. For Him “This too shall pass” was connected with commands to be ready to meet Him at His 2nd Coming **at peace with God**. Such peace can come only as a gift according to Jesus’ words in John 14:27 → *Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid*. His peace is unique because it is grounded in His perfect life and death for the forgiveness of your sins! It is received by faith which *is the gift of God*. (cf. Ephesians 2:8) Notice our text says *God . . . has given us the Spirit as a guarantee* of our hope for eternal life!

Since *the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord* (cf. Romans 6:23), “This too shall pass” is the confession of the Christian that

everything connected to this present world has come . . . to pass.

The stuff and earthly elements will pass into destruction to make way *according to God's promise . . . for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.* (cf. 2 Peter 3:13) Then you will pass into a new home, *a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,* as you walk by faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Amen.

*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Through Him we have also obtained access by faith
into this grace in which we stand,
and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

(Romans 5:1-2)

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