

ABSENT FROM THE BODY

II Corinthians 5:1-9

- I. Intro.
 - A. Paul is giving us the reason why he labored with much boldness and steadfastness
 - B. he firmly believed the promises that Christ made concerning the eternal reward for the faithfully
 - C. he knew that our present affliction was light and only for a moment when compared to the eternal glory
 - D. the reason Paul could suffer for the cause of Christ was his joyful expectation after death
 - E. some observation from our text - II Corinthians 5:8
 1. the great future privilege - "to be present with the Lord"
 2. when the privilege will be ours - "absent from the body"
 3. the value Paul set on this privilege
 - a. he wished to be absent from the body - "willing rather"
 - b. for Paul the future benefit was better than this present life and all its enjoyments
 4. the present benefit - "we are confident"
 - a. he received encouragement and assurance
 - b. this is why he was steadfast and immovable through all the hardships and dangers he experienced
- II. when the souls of saints leave the body at death, they go to be with Christ
 - A. they will have the same glorified human nature of Christ - Philippians 3:21
 - B. the place that Christ has gone to - Ephesians 4:8-10 ("up on high" & "far above all heavens")
 1. this is the dwelling place of the holy angels
 2. this world is not our eternal home - Hebrews 11:13-16 & Philippians 3:20
 3. heaven is the saint's place of true rest
- III. when the souls of saints leave the body at death, they receive an immediate, full, and constant view of Christ
 - A. to be absent from one place is to be present in another (immediately)
 - B. when present with Christ, we shall see Him as He is (we shall be in His presence)
 1. while we are at home in this body, He is out of sight

2. when present with Christ in heaven, we shall behold His glory (the glory of His divine nature)
 3. we shall have a clear view of the manifold wisdom and knowledge of God
 4. we shall see the absolute purity and holiness of God
 5. we shall see the unspeakable riches and glory of God grace
 6. we shall clearly behold and understand the eternal and unmeasurable love of Christ
- C. in Christ we shall see...
1. everything that kindles and inflames love
 2. everything that gratifies love
 3. everything that satisfies
- D. all of this will be in the most clear and glorious manner, without any darkness or interruption
- E. when we separate from this body, we shall see our glorious and loving Redeemer instantly
- IV. at death, we are brought into a perfect conformity and union with Christ
- A. our spiritual conformity and union with Christ is begun at the time of conversion
- B. when we see Him in heaven, the process of conformity will be over, and our union with Him complete
1. the sight of Christ will abolish all remaining deformities and sinful unlikeness
 2. as darkness is abolished by the light of the sun, so shall every taint of sin be eradicated in the sight of the Son of righteousness
 3. it is impossible for the least bit of sin or spiritual deformity to remain, when in the presence of Christ
- C. while saints are in the body, there is much distance between Christ and them
1. much indwelling sin, much temptation and many worldly desires
 2. these all keep the soul from Christ, and hinder a perfect union with Him
- D. when the soul leaves the body, all these clogs and hindrances are removed
1. every wall shall be broken down, and every spiritual deformity eliminated
 2. the heart shall be forever attached to Him, by a perfect view of His glory
- V. departed souls shall enjoy glorious communion with Christ
- A. Christ does not receive us into heaven as servants, but as friends, brethren and companions

- B. though Christ be in His rightful place of glorious exaltation, it will not hinder our fellowship with Him
 - 1. He has been made head over all things for our sake
 - 2. when we go to heaven, we shall be exalted and glorified with Him - I Thes. 2:12
 - 3. we shall be near Him, and with a greater intimacy than ever before known - Revelation 3:21
- C. heaven is the place where the most perfect expression of mutual love is shared
- D. in heaven, we shall be a participant with Christ in His glory and blessedness
 - 1. the enjoyment of His Father
 - a. when Christ ascended into heaven, He entered into a blessed enjoyment of the Father - Psalm 16:11
 - b. the saints shall have pleasure in partaking with Christ in His pleasure
 - c. at death, we will enter into a vastly greater privilege than the angels have (angels are servants)
 - 2. exalted to reign with Him
 - a. through Christ we are made kings and priests, to reign with Him over the same kingdom - Rev. 1:6
 - b. the Father has appointed the Son to reign over His kingdom, and the Son has appointed the saints to reign with Him
 - c. Christ sits on the Father's throne, and He grants the saint to sit with Him on His throne - Rev. 3:21
 - 3. praising and worshipping the Father with Him
 - a. the happiness of heaven is not just a passive enjoyment, but it involves our actions
 - b. our activity in heaven will be to serve and glorify God - Revelation 22:3
 - c. Jesus Christ, as head of the whole assembly in heaven, will lead us in the praise and worship of God - Revelation 19:5-6

VI. conclusion

- A. we have looked at a great privilege today, let us all earnestly seek after it
- B. we cannot continue forever in this earthly tabernacle; it is very frail, and will soon decay and fall
- C. our souls must soon leave, and go into the eternal world
- D. how infinitely great will be the privilege and happiness of those that go to be with Christ

E. is not such a privilege worth seeking after?