

A Change of Address



Topic

Glorification

Theme

Glorified bodies and eternal rewards await believers.

Desired Learner Response

The learner will anticipate eternity by serving God.

Materials

- Resources 1 and 6

Scripture Focus

2 Corinthians 5:1–15

Summary

This lesson emphasizes the truth that someday believers will be free of physical ailments, trials, and troubles. Every believer will receive a glorified body when Jesus raptures the church. This prospect leads us to serve Jesus faithfully.

Outline

I. The Prospect of a Glorified Body (2 Cor. 5:1–8)

- A. The temporal tent versus the heavenly house (5:1)
- B. The groaning and desire (5:2–4)
- C. The down payment (5:5)
- D. The confident believer's preference (5:6–8)

II. The Motivations for Present Service (2 Cor. 5:9–15)

- A. To please the Lord (5:9)
- B. The Judgment Seat of Christ (5:10)
- C. The fear of the Lord (5:11–14)
- D. The love of Christ (5:14)
- E. The lostness of the unsaved (5:14, 15)

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).

GETTING STARTED

Use the following activities to spark your learners' interest in this week's lesson about someday moving from an earthly body to a glorified, heavenly body.

Slogans

Mention slogans that moving companies use: The quality shows in every move we make; The art of moving; Go new places; We love moving you; Movers who care; The mover people talk about. Nicely. Have the class choose the slogan they think is the best and explain what makes it so good.

ASK: What has been your best moving experience? (Q1)

ASK: What has been your worst moving experience? (Q2)

Most moves try our nerves. Paul wrote about a move that requires no truck and no packing and a heavenly address. This move is one we may look forward to with fear but will find nothing but joy when the move is finally made.

On the Move

Explain that more than forty-two million people move annually in the United States alone. It shouldn't surprise us, then, to see so many moving vans on our highways. If moving is truly an adventure, as one company claims it is, millions of adults must love adventure! This lesson examines the ultimate move every believer will make, the move to a heavenly address.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

I. The Prospect of a Glorified Body (2 Cor. 5:1–8)

A. The temporal tent versus the heavenly house (5:1)

In the closing verse of chapter 4, Paul stated that we look for unseen eternal things instead of visible temporal things. In chapter 5 he explained that we value eternal realities highly because we know something far better lies ahead (5:1). He described the believer's present body as *our earthly house of this tabernacle [tent]*. A tent is suited to nomadic life in which people stay in one spot only for a short time before moving on. A *dissolved* tent (5:1) is one that has been taken down.

ASK: What comparisons can you draw between the human body and a tent? (Q3) *Both are temporary, and both wear out.*

ASK: What implications for daily living do you see in the fact that your body is called a tent? (Q4) *Because life is fleeting, Christians should invest their lives in serving the Lord and anticipate a new body.*

ASK: Why are you looking forward to the Resurrection? (Q5)

READ: 1 Corinthians 15:51–53. **ASK:** What characteristic of the glorified body do you find most appealing? Why? (Q6)

Paul described the believer's resurrection body as *a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens* (2 Cor. 5:1). We are not in Heaven yet, of course. We are still living in our *tents* here on earth, and we are subject to many trials and troubles.

B. The groaning and desire (5:2–4)

READ: 2 Corinthians 5:2–4. **ASK:** What evidence of struggle is recorded in these verses? (Q7) *Groaning, desiring to be released from this body, burdened in this life.*

We groan because our bodies are subject to decay and death, a condition resulting from the curse imposed upon mankind at the time of the Fall. God had told Adam, *Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die* (Gen. 2:17).

READ: Romans 5:12; 8:20–22. **ASK:** What two consequences of sin do these passages mention? (Q8) *Death and bondage of corruption.*

FORUM: Present each of the following scenarios to the class, asking them to decide on appropriate counsel in each case.

Scenario 1. Margaret, a Christian, spends far beyond her means to acquire expensive beauty products. Although she is sixty, she wants to look thirty. Her husband tells her she doesn't need expensive beauty products, because he thinks she is attractive without them. She replies that her body is a temple and she wants it to be beautiful.

Scenario 2. Bill's doctor has advised him to exercise to reduce the risk of heart attack. Bill is forty pounds overweight, and his blood pressure is high. But he refuses his doctor's advice. *Don't worry*, Bill tells his family. *Spiritual health is what matters; bodily exercise profits little. When the Lord calls me to Heaven, it will be at His appointed time. My working out wouldn't change anything in God's appointment book.*

Scenario 3. George, who is unsaved, suffers the excruciating pain of severe arthritis. He has admitted to a Christian neighbor that he sees no reason to live. He wonders why God allows such suffering.

The Gnostics, a group of false religionists in the first century, regarded the body as something evil. They wanted to be free from it. The Christian view is far different. The Christian's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. While the body is temporary, we must take care of it and not abuse it. We do not disdain our bodies, but each of us longs for an immortal one.

C. The down payment (5:5)

Not only has God planned a new body for us, but He is also preparing us for our new bodies. *Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God* (5:5). The proof of this is seen in the down payment God has already made. He *hath given*

unto us the earnest of the Spirit. An earnest payment is a down payment, a pledge of more to come.

ASK: What happens when a person backs out of a business transaction after paying earnest money? (Q9) *He loses the earnest money.*

READ: Titus 1:2. **ASK:** How do you know God will keep His pledge to give you a glorified body? (Q10) *God cannot lie.*

READ: 2 Corinthians 5:6–8. **ASK:** How do you know that when a Christian dies, he or she goes directly into Christ's presence? (Q11) *We are assured that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.*

D. The confident believer's preference (5:6–8)

Twice in this section of 2 Corinthians 5, Paul indicated that he was confident (5:6, 8). The word *confident* means *to be of good courage, cheerful, or bold*. Paul was not afraid of what he might have to face, because he knew that even death would serve God's purpose. It would mean simply a change of address. While we are at home in the body, we are away from the presence of the Lord in Heaven. In His glorified body Jesus is seated at the right hand of God in Heaven (Heb. 8:1). Paul wrote that the believer would prefer to be with Christ in Heaven (2 Cor. 5:8), but in the meantime believers walk with Him *by faith, not by sight* (5:7).

II. The Motivations for Present Service (2 Cor. 5:9–15)

In verses 9–15 Paul described a personal evaluation every Christian will receive at the Judgment Seat of Christ. In view of this evaluation, Paul was highly motivated to serve Christ faithfully.

A. To please the Lord (5:9)

In serving Christ, Paul had goals. He described his main goal in verse 9. It was to please Christ, whether he continued serving on earth or went Home to see Christ in Heaven. Paul's goal to please the Lord motivated him to serve the Lord even though He could not see or hear God.

ASK: How would your life change if you could see God with you every moment of your life? (Q12)

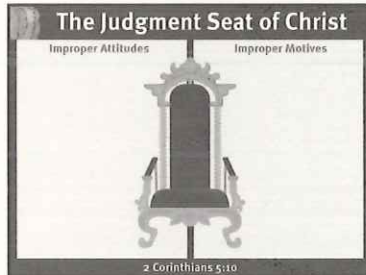
Many Christians believe their lives would change if Christ literally walked with them throughout their days. Paul believed that Christ did walk with him in a spiritual sense. He sensed the Lord's presence and lived daily to please Him. Paul knew that to be absent from the body and to be found pleasing to the Lord, he must first live pleasing to the Lord in his present life.

B. The Judgment Seat of Christ (5:10)

Paul's desire to please the Lord was closely related to his second motivation for serving the Lord, the Judgment Seat of Christ. Paul wrote, *We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ* (5:10). He used *we* because he was addressing

Christians. Only Christians will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and it is an appointment each of us will keep.

At Christ's Judgment Seat we will be rewarded for the things done in the body, according to what we have done. At that point it will be clear not only what we did but also why we did it. Every motive as well as every action will be brought to light, *whether it be good or bad*. What did we do for Christ? What did we do for others? What did we do for self-glory?



RESOURCE: Display resource 6. **ASK:** What attitudes of service would negate a reward for service? (Q13) (Record learners' answers on the left half of the resource.) *An attitude of obligation, self-righteousness, or pride.*

ASK: What motives for service would negate a reward for service? (Q14) (Record learners' answers on the right half of the resource.) *To gain people's approval, to appear to be spiritual, to gain financial reward, and to become well-known.*

C. The fear of the Lord (5:11–14)

Paul had a good understanding of the Lord's character. He responded to what he knew of the Lord by fearing the Lord. Paul's reverential awe of the Lord motivated him to serve the Lord.

ASK: People's fears influence whom or what they serve. If someone does not fear God, what things might he or she fear? (Q15) *Financial insecurity, the dis-tain of others, separation from loved ones (because of serving God overseas), failure.*

READ: 2 Corinthians 5:11. **ASK:** What did Paul's fear of God motivate him to do? (Q16) *Persuade people of the truth and reality of God.*

D. The love of Christ (5:14)

We should serve Christ not only because we fear Him but because of His great love (2 Cor. 5:14). In verse 14 did Paul mean Christ's love for us or our love for Christ? Perhaps we should see both meanings. We love Christ because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). We ought to want to serve Him because He loved us so much that He died for us. Also, we ought to want to serve Him because we love Him.

Paul knew the importance of Christ's love in his life. He wrote that Christ's love *constraineth us* (5:14). Paul was constrained, or *held together*, by the love of Christ.

ASK: People serve what they love. If someone does not love God, what things might he love and therefore serve? (Q17) *Self, pleasure, money, control, the American dream, any number of sins.*

E. The lostness of the unsaved (5:14, 15)

The final motivation for present service is to introduce lost people to the Savior. Paul wrote categorically that they are *all dead* (5:14). Paul viewed people according

to their greatest need—the need for a Savior. Apart from Jesus Christ there is no hope for mankind. Unfortunately, even some of our family, friends, and neighbors may not know they are lost and may, therefore, need to trust Christ as Savior.

God highly values every person. A truth that is abundantly evident when He sent Jesus to die for the world (5:15). Paul knew that God’s sacrificial love for all mankind was to be his love for them too. He served God by telling people of their lostness so they might become God’s children and, in turn, His servants.

READ: 2 Corinthians 5:15. **ASK:** Why does God save people? (Q18) *So they might live for Him.*

Will we fulfill our responsibility to tell the lost how to be saved? If we truly love God, we will live not for ourselves but for Him (5:15).

MAKING IT PERSONAL

Use the following activities to help your learners make firm decisions about serving Christ faithfully.

Road Blocks

ASK: Review your service for the Lord over the past year. What motivations, if any, have kept you from serving the Lord? (Q19)

Getting Motivated

ASK: Which of the five reasons for serving God (covered in class) do you find highly motivating? (Q20)

ASK: How can these five reasons motivate you to serve the Lord this week? (Q21)

Summary and Memory Verses

Use resource 1 to review the response for this lesson: By God’s grace I can anticipate eternity by serving God.

Encourage your learners to memorize 2 Corinthians 5:1. Give them an opportunity to quote the verse in class next week.

Waves of Grace	
By God's grace I can ...	7.
1.	8.
2.	9.
3.	10.
4.	11.
5.	12.
6.	13.

God's Diplomatic Corps

Topic

Ambassadors for Christ

Theme

Believers are ambassadors for Christ.

Desired Learner Response

The learner will exhibit excellence as an ambassador for Christ.

Materials

- Resources 1 and 7

Scripture Focus

2 Corinthians 5:16–6:10

Summary

This lesson focuses on the fact that believers are ambassadors for Christ, seeking to reach a lost world. The apostle Paul's life and ministry provided an excellent example of what it means to serve in God's diplomatic corps.

Outline

I. The Ambassador's Work (2 Cor. 5:16–6:2)

- A. Message (5:16, 17)
- B. Ministry (5:18–6:2)

II. The Ambassador's Example (2 Cor. 6:3–10)

- A. His blameless life (6:3)
- B. His hardships (6:4, 5)
- C. His spiritual qualities (6:6, 7)
- D. His consistency (6:8–10)

Memory Verse

"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" (2 Corinthians 5:20).