2nd Corinthians

Series: More Than Extravagant

July 1, 2018

Message 1:

**A Fresh Start**

2nd Corinthians 5

*Guests - Handout designed with you in mind - Info and notes especially for you - won’t call or visit -*

*Growth Track*

*Generosity - Motion Conference $$ for 8 - $600 more will add 4 more students - $1000 more will include their leaders & fill up our bus!*

*Notes on Handout and in YouVersion App*

Series Title comes from 2nd Corinthians 9:10-11 MSG - This most generous God who gives seed to the farmer that becomes bread for your meals is more than extravagant with you. He gives you something you can then give away, which grows into full-formed lives, robust in God, wealthy in every way, so that you can be generous in every way, producing with us great praise to God.

The Music Box …

**Big Idea: We’ve been given a tremendous gift and an urgent task.**

T.S.: Let’s see what Paul tells us about this gift and this task -

**> We will live beyond this life.**

2nd Corinthians 5:1-10 - For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands. We grow weary in our present bodies, and we long to put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. For we will put on heavenly bodies; we will not be spirits without bodies. While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it’s not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life. God himself has prepared us for this, and as a guarantee he has given us his Holy Spirit.

 So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord. For we live by believing and not by seeing. Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord. So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please him. For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body.

“When this earthly tent we live in is taken down …”

How much do you think about the end of life - and what comes next?

Paul is talking about the confidence that those who follow Christ can have.

Death is not the end! Death is the passage way to a new life! A whole new level of existence.

I believe there was a way that God intended for us to live - with blessings of intimate communication with Him - that was lost when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the garden of Eden.

Every aspect of our fellowship with God now - even the most powerful times of worship and revelation from God’s Word - fall short of what God originally intended -

But in the next life - when this cursed, fallen, broken life is over - those who have total trust in Jesus will experience the life that God originally intended for us to experience.

A few weeks ago … vacation … phone call … Aunt June … her condition … but unexpected …

In a moment - the term Paul used was “the twinkling of an eye” - she went from a body wracked with pain - to being in the presence of Jesus - and everything for her was changed.

Some people say, “I think when we die and go to heaven our bodies will be like they were when we were 22!”

No! When you were 22 your body was dying! It was still fallen and broken - even when you were in the best shape - compared to how God intended for it to be!

Take 22 and take it up several notches to infinity - and you still won’t comprehend the body you will have - plus that body will be in perfect communion with Jesus - in His presence!

No amount of joy you have experienced in this life can compare with the joy that we will experience in heaven.

* The joy of marriage - wonderful love relationship with a spouse -
* The joy of having children - seeing them born - grow - achievements - home runs - graduations - serving the Lord - making a difference in this world -

None of that compares to the joy we will have!

Peter said it is an inexpressible joy!

This is why when people are filled to overflowing with the presence of the Holy Spirit - there is so much ecstatic joy they can’t express it in their given language - so God supernaturally gives them a new language …

If you have received that experience, and you know the joy of overflowing in that incomprehensible language - the ecstatic joy you have had when the Holy Spirit comes and overflows you - that joy doesn’t compare to what God has prepared for those who love Him!

* This is why Paul said we grow weary in these bodies.

We get tired - we wear out - we’re not as strong as we used to be.

But our heavenly bodies are going to be like a new set of clothes! Clothes that God Himself has tailored for us.

The guarantee of this life to come is the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives right now!

So Paul says we can always be confident no matter what is happening - because we know that no matter what happens in this life - no matter what happens to our bodies - no matter what happens to the people we love who know Jesus - we know that this life is short - temporary - it is not all there is - we have a new life and new body in a realm beyond this that is beyond total understanding and explanation!

Paul even says that for those of us who have this confidence - we would rather be away from these bodies and in the presence of the Lord -

Nellie Thieke ….

So we live to please Him.

Are you living to please Him - or are you living to please yourself?

We live to please ourself when we are all wrapped up in the goals that only this life can give us -

Houses - cars - money - retirement - hobbies - activities - health -

None of that compares to what God has prepared - It’s ok to have all of that - wonderful - do it - no problem - but if something goes wrong with any of it - don’t worry - that’s not what life is all about - we would rather be in the presence of God in the next life than have the best of everything this life has to offer!

My cousin had his house burn down completely last year … lost everything …

His wife has battled cancer … they’ve been living in her dad’s house because he is in a convalescent center near the end of his life -

Tony - “It’s only stuff!”

When they got back after the funeral, they found their storage unit had been broken into - and stuff they had bought for the new house had been stolen.

That breaks people - unless they know that there is a place God has prepared for them - with a body God has prepared for them - with which nothing in this world can compare!

Is this your confidence? Is this your attitude?

When it is - you have influence!

**> We influence others.**

2nd Corinthians 5:11-15 - Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we work hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. Are we commending ourselves to you again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart. If it seems we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit. Either way, Christ’s love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.

Again …. It’s not about us.

Chapter 3 -

* Are lives being changed?
* Is there a maturing lifestyle?
* Is there confidence and recognition from other believers?

Chapter 4 - True Grit -

Perseverance - we hang on! We don’t give up! Why? Just so we can make it?

No! When you give up on your faith - your influence in the lives of others ends.

There are people who have followed Jesus - then they have given up - and people they have had the opportunity to influence - to take to heaven with the - won’t be going because they gave up!

There are people who won’t serve the Lord because a well- known preacher - or a pastor they once knew - or someone they knew in a church - or a co-worker - or a friend or family member - once followed the Lord - then they gave up - they let the desires of this world overtake them. And that had a ripple effect.

Everything we do affects others - and when we give up - others will lose hope as well -

So we persevere in following Jesus even when it is difficult - not just so that we can make it - but so that others will as well!

What would have happened if I would have given up on God when my kids were in their teens? Would they be serving the Lord today? Their chances would be less.

“We work hard to persuade others.”

As much as we talked about the assurance we can have of a wonderful life in a God-tailored body in the next life - the joy - everything and all the ecstasy that heaven has to offer that is coming for us - As sure as we are confident of that for ourselves - not everyone is going to automatically experience that.

Some will have a life after this life that will be totally without the presence of God - the total opposite of the ecstasy and joy we have described for the follower of Jesus.

So - if you’re a believer - you not only signed up for heaven - you signed up for a responsibility - to bring others along with you.

It is a responsibility - but it is also a great joy! A greater joy than bringing a new life into this world - you are bringing people to heaven with you!

We do this here on Sunday morning … bring people!

We do this through our Groups …

We do this through finding our Gifts and serving on Dream Teams …

It’s all to persuade others to come to know God personally through a relationship with Jesus Christ!

Paul says it’s not about having a spectacular ministry - it’s about sharing the love of Jesus with others.

“He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.”

**> We see people as Jesus sees them.**

2nd Corinthians 5:16-17 - So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

Stop and think about this - “We have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view.”

How hard is this? People talk about judgment today - “Don’t judge me!”

Everyone judges everybody all the time!

“Boy - he’s gained some weight!”

“What’s happened to his hair?”

“Why do you think they let their kids get away with what they do?”

We judge people all the time - appearance - hairstyles - clothes - what they do - where they go - everything!

The Miss America pageant recently said they will no longer judge on appearance! Are you kidding me? That’s a joke!

They may not have a swimsuit contest - but try to convince me that appearance will have nothing to do with the Miss America contest!

Paul says - we don’t judge this way anymore - if you’re convicted now for doing that - STOP IT!

Anyone who comes to Christ is a new creature!

When we see others who have come to Christ, we don’t see them as they were before Christ.

My cousin Nathan …

Pastor Dean’s post last week … ??

**> We share the greatest gift.**

2nd Corinthians 5:18-21 - And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!” For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

Each of the words in this statements is very important - (except maybe “the”)

* We

It’s not about us - but it’s been given to us. There is something we have received. We must share it. If we don’t, who will?

If we don’t share this gift with our friends, who will?

If we don’t share this gift with our family, who will?

* Share

It is not a gift to be hoarded! “It was meant to be shared!” The Music Box…

* Gift

It is a gift … can’t be earned or deserved … Jesus wants to give it to everyone.

* Greatest

It is the greatest because it never wears out (like Christmas or birthday gifts …) - it lasts forever

* It gives eternal life
* It gets rid of all the old and makes everything new …

**Invitation** - if watching by video pray with us.

Connection Card - if watching on video - let me know via email.

**Blessing**