

***Bible Study Notes- 2 Corinthians***  
***By Fr. John Brown***

Date of writing: about 55 AD.

Themes: Patience in suffering, Paul defending himself against false accusations, forgiveness, alms to suffering fellow Christians, human weaknesses vs. heavenly glory.

*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother...*

Paul was already well-known to most of the faithful in Corinth. The Greek for “Apostle” is ἀπόστολος, which means, “a messenger, one sent on a mission.” Paul’s authority is derived from Christ, who is the Head of the Church.

Timothy was Paul’s protégé, and is mentioned frequently in Paul’s writings. Two of Paul’s epistles were addressed specifically to Timothy.

*To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia...*

Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians was addressed to that church only. This second letter was addressed not only to the church in Corinth, but also to all the churches in the Roman province of Achaia.



This second letter was sent to a much larger area, and intended to reach a much larger audience. This also indicates that there were more churches being established in those areas since his first letter.

*<sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Paul began many of his Epistles with these words.

*<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

Paul does not offer details of the sufferings he had recently endured for Christ's sake. But Christ warned that, in order to follow him, we must be prepared to carry a cross.

*<sup>12</sup> But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake... <sup>16</sup> You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. <sup>17</sup> And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. (Luke 21)*

The book of Acts records many of Paul's sufferings for Christ's sake. The lives of our saints were often marked by persecution and martyrdom.

<sup>5</sup> For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.

With suffering comes consolation. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ said,

<sup>10</sup> *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

<sup>11</sup> *Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.* <sup>12</sup> *Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven...* (Matthew 5)

<sup>6</sup> *Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.* <sup>7</sup> *And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.*

Paul is saying that his sufferings, and resulting consolation are both of benefit to the Corinthians. At first glance, this is unexpected. Why would his sufferings and consolation be of benefit the Corinthians, who were not even involved in what was happening to Paul? But the question is answered when we consider that Paul and the Corinthians are all part of the Church, the body of Christ. In his first Epistle to the Corinthians, he wrote,

*But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, <sup>25</sup> that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup> And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.* (1 Corinthians 12)

This sharing of suffering and consolations, between members of the Church, extends to the saints. One of the reasons we honor them is, long after they reposed, we are still benefiting from their sufferings, and we are still sharing in their glory. The prayers of those who suffered and are now glorified are actually part of our salvation:

*Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation **and salvation**, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation **and salvation**.*

<sup>7</sup> *And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.*

The Corinthians had not experienced suffering for Christ yet, but they eventually would in the future.

*<sup>8</sup> For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. <sup>9</sup> Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, <sup>10</sup> who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us,*

Paul's sufferings for Christ were still ongoing. The sufferings had been so severe that he considered them life-threatening, and his deliverance from them a form of resurrection.

*<sup>11</sup> you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.*

Paul thanks those who were praying for him, and the "gift" he mentions may have been a financial gift.

*<sup>12</sup> For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you. <sup>13</sup> For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end <sup>14</sup> (as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

Paul is recounting "the simplicity and sincerity in the world," i.e. in his ministry in Asia Minor. He also reminds the Corinthians that this was also his behavior in their presence ("towards you"). He is beginning his defense of himself against slanders by some in the church there.

*<sup>15</sup> And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit—<sup>16</sup> to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No?*

In 1 Corinthians, Paul had written that he intended to visit them, to address some serious problems within that church. He apparently made that visit after writing 1 Corinthians but before writing 2 Corinthians. He describes that visit as sorrowful in 2 Corinthians 2:1,

*But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow.*

He had told them that he planned to come again ("a second benefit") but some people in Corinth were accusing him of being fickle, ("Yes Yes and No No"). Here Paul is defending the change in his itinerary.

*<sup>18</sup> But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No. <sup>19</sup> For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me, Silvanus, and Timothy—was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. <sup>20</sup> For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. <sup>21</sup> Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, <sup>22</sup> who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.*

Paul is saying that the delay in his next visit to Corinth was the result of circumstances that were under God's control.

*<sup>23</sup> Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth.*

Paul and the Corinthians had hurt each other at the last visit, and he was not eager to repeat that experience.

*<sup>2:1</sup> But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow.*

What are we to do when we find ourselves in painful dispute with those we love, like Paul and the Corinthian church? Paul gives us the answer: we give, and ask for, forgiveness:

*<sup>2</sup> For if I make you sorrowful, then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me?*

Paul and the Corinthians had made each other sorrowful at their last meeting. Paul wanted to be at peace, not sorrowful. And more important, he wanted the Corinthians also to be at peace and not sorrowful. He wanted mutual reconciliation, not to "win."

*<sup>3</sup> And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all. <sup>4</sup> For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.*

Paul is letting the Corinthians know that they had hurt him "with many tears." He acknowledges that he has hurt them also ("... not that you should be grieved.") He reminds them of, "the love which I have so abundantly for you."

*<sup>5</sup> But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but all of you to some extent—not to be too severe. <sup>6</sup> This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man,*

Translation: You Corinthians have grieved me to an extent. You punished me, and that is enough. "Such a man" is Paul himself. He is saying,

*"This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for **me**."*

Paul continues to refer to himself in the third person:

*<sup>7</sup> so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. <sup>8</sup> Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him.*

With Paul referring to himself in the third person as “him,” he is actually saying,

*“... you ought rather to forgive and comfort **me**, lest perhaps **I** be swallowed up with too much sorrow. <sup>8</sup> Therefore **I** urge you to reaffirm your love to **me**.”*

He is asking the Corinthians to forgive him for any offense he caused them.

*<sup>9</sup> For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. <sup>10</sup> Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive.*

Paul is forgiving those at Corinth who had offended him.

*For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ,*

Paul’s forgiveness of the Corinthians, “... in the presence of Christ...” is a reminder that Christ’s forgiveness of us is affected by our willingness to forgive others.

*“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”*

Christ: *“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”*  
(Matthew 18:21-22)

There is an outside force that loves to foment strife between Christians:

*...<sup>11</sup> lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.*

Satan was the original source of sowing dissention among God’s beloved – The Fall

When we allow ourselves to fall into disputes with others, and are reluctant to ask or give forgiveness, we are falling prey to the devil and his plans:

*<sup>16</sup> These six things the LORD hates,  
Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:*

*<sup>17</sup> A proud look,*

*A lying tongue,*

*Hands that shed innocent blood,*

*<sup>18</sup> A heart that devises wicked plans,*

*Feet that are swift in running to evil,*

*<sup>19</sup> A false witness who speaks lies,*

***And one who sows discord among brethren.** (Proverbs 6)*

*<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, <sup>13</sup> I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother;*

The unexpected opportunities in Troas may have been what delayed Paul's visit to Corinth.

Titus, mentioned here, was a close associate of Paul's. An epistle addressed to Titus is included in the canon of the New Testament.

*<sup>14</sup> Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ...*

The word Paul uses, "triumph" (θριαμβεύοντι) had a specific meaning familiar to everyone in the first century Roman world. When the Romans conquered an opposing army or country, they often held a "triumph" which was a victory parade usually in Rome itself. The conquering general rode in a chariot, led by his own army. The people lined the streets, cheered and threw branches, like we throw tickertape. Behind the conquering general were prisoners of the defeated army in chains. On carts were the loot taken from the conquered country.

After the Roman General Titus conquered Jerusalem in 70 AD, he had a triumph in Rome, and an arch was built to commemorate the event. Here is a part of that arch showing the parade of the menorah taken from the Temple:



So when Paul writes,

*<sup>14</sup> Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ...*

He says that we are part of Christ's victory parade. The devil is already defeated and in chains. In Colossians 2, Paul writes,

<sup>14</sup> *having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. <sup>15</sup> Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, **triumphing** over them in it.*

*...and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.*

*<sup>15</sup> For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. <sup>16</sup> To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?*

First, notice that Paul uses the phrase, “those of us who are being saved,” not “those of us who have been saved.” This is a reminder that salvation is a process, and that process is ongoing. It is not a one-time event.

Also, the same “fragrance” of the Gospel is wonderful to those who are being saved, but a stench to those who are not. But it is the same fragrance that has such different effects on two different classes of people.

Smell of peanuts to those who love peanuts, and those with peanut allergies.

*<sup>17</sup> For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.*

According to this verse, there are “many” who peddle the word of God. This was true in the first century, and is still true today. For example:



# Televangelist says God told him he needs 4th private plane



**William Cummings**  
USA TODAY

Published 6:30 p.m. ET May 29, 2018 | Updated 9:07 a.m. ET May 30, 2018



Falcon 7X Business Jet on the Ramp. JamesReillyWilson, Getty Images/iStockphoto

Jesse Duplantis, a televangelist with viewers across the globe, says God told him he needs a new jet.

“Prosperity Gospel” vs. the real Gospel

*3:1 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you?*

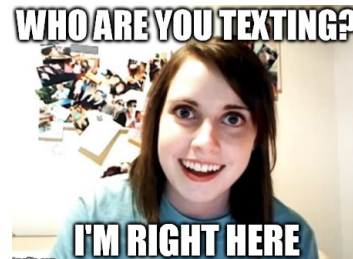
Even though Paul was well-known to the Corinthians, and was an Apostle over them, apparently some of them wanted letters of recommendation for Paul. Paul now begins a discussion of letters and the written word vs. the presence of the Holy Spirit:

*<sup>2</sup> You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; <sup>3</sup> clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.*

Written letters can be important – this and several other books of the Bible were written letters. But as important as written letters can be, they are not a substitute for the person, or the Person. Paul calls the Corinthians “epistles... written on the heart by the Holy Spirit.”

Christ was an example of this duality. St. John called Him “the Word” who was also a divine Person.

Written letters are no substitute for the person sending, and the person receiving those words, both in relationship to one another.



The value of the written letters is their role in maintaining that relationship. Christianity is a relationship – with God and each other - not so much a religion.

*<sup>4</sup> And we have such trust through Christ toward God. <sup>5</sup> Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God...*

Paul states that most important relationship is between us and God, not with him or anyone else.

*<sup>6</sup> who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; **for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.***

By the “letter,” Paul is referring to the Old Testament Law. The Old Testament began when God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mt. Sinai.



The giving of the Law to Moses was a major moment in Hebrew history. It is still commemorated each year in the major Jewish Feast of Shavuot. One of those commandments was “You shall not make any graven image or fall down before them worship them.”

*32:1 Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, “Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him...”*

*<sup>7</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, “Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. <sup>8</sup> They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, ‘This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!’”...*

*<sup>19</sup> So it was, as soon as he [Moses] came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing. So Moses’ anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. (Exodus 32)*

The Law of the Ten Commandments did not save the idolatrous Israelites. It only condemned them. They broke the Law, and so Moses symbolically broke the tablets of the Ten Commandments right in front of them.

The Law that gave to the Israelites taught Who God is, how He had made a covenant with their ancient ancestor Abraham. The Law gave the Israelites a good understanding of how God expected them to behave towards Him and each other. There were eventually 613 laws that God gave to His people, but it was clear that no one could come close to keeping all of them. This has been their enduring dilemma.

The Law was like an x-ray that can reveal to the patient what is wrong with them, but the x-ray cannot cure the patient. The Law did give provisions for what to do when people committed sins. That required the sacrifice of certain animals, but that only “covered” the sins, and did not “remove” them. Furthermore, the animal sacrifices had to be repeated often.

*<sup>7</sup> But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, <sup>8</sup> how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? <sup>9</sup> For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.*

Since the fundamental problem with the Old Testament Law was nobody could keep it, the coming of the Holy Spirit was the fundamental solution. The presence of the Holy Spirit in us, and His constant increase in us, is our salvation. That is what deification is all about. At Pentecost, the onlookers witness the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and asked,

*<sup>37</sup> Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “**Men and brethren, what shall we do?**”*

<sup>38</sup> Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; **and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** <sup>39</sup> For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” (Acts 2)

When we receive the Holy Spirit at our baptism and chrismation, He removes our sins instead of only covering them. He does not need the help of sacrificed animals. Our reception of Him does not need to be repeated over and over. In comparing the system of Old Testament sacrifices to the Holy Spirit, no wonder Paul writes,

*<sup>11</sup> For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious. <sup>12</sup> Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech.*

Paul again refers to Old Testament Moses to teach of New Testament principles.

*<sup>13</sup> ... unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away.*

Here is the story in the Old Testament that Paul is referring to: We have already read Moses had gone up to the top of Mt. Sinai and received the tablets of the Ten Commandments from God:

*<sup>7</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, “Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. <sup>8</sup> They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, ‘This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!’” ...*

*<sup>19</sup> So it was, as soon as he [Moses] came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing. So Moses’ anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. (Exodus 32)*

Remember that Moses saw them breaking the Law’s commandments against worshiping false gods and making idols to them, so he smashed the new tablets of the Law. This symbolized the essential problem with the Old Testament law – that it was glorious, but nobody could keep it. It could only condemn. It could not permanently save.

But Moses was called up to the top of Mt. Sinai a second time, and received another pair of tablets containing the Ten Commandments:

*<sup>1</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, “Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I will write on these tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke. <sup>2</sup> So be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there on the top of the mountain. <sup>3</sup> And no man shall come up with you, and let no man be seen throughout all the mountain; let neither flocks nor herds feed before that mountain.”*

*<sup>4</sup> So he cut two tablets of stone like the first ones. Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him; and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone.*

*<sup>29</sup> Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. <sup>30</sup> So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him (Exodus 34)*

This is what Paul was referring to in 2 Corinthians 3,

*<sup>13</sup> ... unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away.*

The supernatural shining face of Moses symbolizes the presence of the Holy Spirit in Him when he had been in the presence of the Lord. The first time He came down from the mountain, there was no visible presence of the Holy Spirit; only the Law. And the result was failure, condemnation, and despair. But the second time Moses came down from the mountain, he again brought the law. But this time the Holy Spirit was visibly within him. Notice the different result:

*. <sup>31</sup> Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses talked with them. <sup>32</sup> Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them as commandments all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. <sup>33</sup> And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. <sup>34</sup> But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. <sup>35</sup> And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.*

Instead of failure, condemnation, and despair, the people listened to the words of God as delivered through Moses. But the shining face of Moses frightened them. They could only hear the words of God through Moses if he covered his face with a veil. Paul mentions this in 2 Corinthians 3:

*<sup>14</sup> But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. <sup>15</sup> But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. <sup>16</sup> Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.*

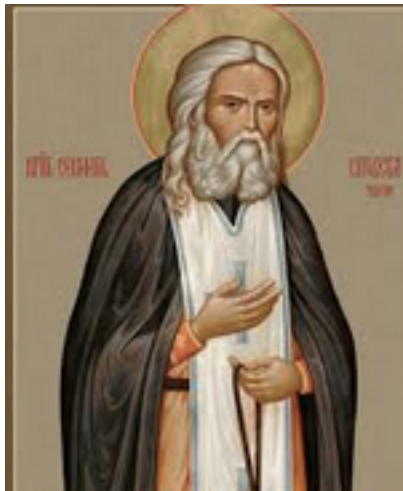
In the synagogues of Paul's day, the Hebrew Scriptures are publicly read to all. Paul is saying that the veil is still over their hearts because they are frightened by the radiance of the Holy Spirit, so they run away from it. They only hear the words of the Law which can only condemn. They do not hear the words of the Holy Spirit, and do not receive it. But we Christians need no such veil. It has been "*taken away in Christ*" (v.14) Instead of fleeing from that light, we run TO

it, absorbing it, and being absorbed by it. As we hear in the first words of Pascha, “*Come and receive the light that is from the Light that is never overcome by darkness.*”

The radiance of Moses’s face on his second return from Mt. Sinai is related to the Transfiguration:

*<sup>1</sup>Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; <sup>2</sup>and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. <sup>3</sup>And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.* (Matthew 17)

This miracle of radiating the “Uncreated Light” has occurred with several saints down through the ages. For example, it happened to the 18<sup>th</sup> century Russian Saint Seraphim of Sarov. This saint always spoke of the Holy Spirit and our constant need to further acquire Him:



Ivan Tikhonovich witnessed this miracle He wrote, “*Fr Seraphim became silent and bowed forward slightly. His eyes were closed and his head was bowed. He gently massaged his breast around the heart with the palm of his right hand. His face began gradually to change and to give forth a wonderful light. Finally it became so bright that it was impossible to look on him. Such joy and heavenly rapture were expressed on his face that he could be called an earthly angel or a heavenly man.*”

This miracle was also witnessed by Motovilov, a friend and admirer of St. Seraphim.

*“The elder then firmly took him by the shoulder and said to him, “We are both now, my dear fellow, in the Holy Spirit.” It was as if Motovilov's eyes had been opened, for he saw that the face of the elder was brighter than the sun. In his heart Motovilov felt joy and peace, in his body a warmth as if it were summer, and a fragrance began to spread around them. Motovilov was terrified by the unusual change, but especially by the fact that the face of the starets shone like the sun. But St. Seraphim said to him, “Do not fear, dear fellow. You would not even be able to*

*see me if you yourself were not in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Thank the Lord for His mercy toward us."*

*Thus Motovilov understood, in mind and heart, what the descent of the Holy Spirit and His transfiguration of a person meant."*

*4:1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.  
2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully..*

In our time, we often use the word "transparency." By this we mean conducting our affairs out in the open, in plain view of all. We understand that this is often a good practice because transparency is the opposite of secrecy. In the above verses, Paul highlights the negative aspects of the lack of transparency, calling the result "hidden things of shame" and "handling the word of God deceitfully."

Now Paul contrasts the secretive practices of others by pointing out the transparency in his ministry:

*...but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

Earlier in 3:14-16, Paul mentions the "veil" that exists over the hearts of many Jews of his day that prevents them from following Christ. He returns to the metaphor of the "veil."

*3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,*

That "veil" is not limited to some Jewish people. It exists over the hearts of many people. And its effects can be deadly ("perishing").

*4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*

The veil of unbelief is nurtured and cultivated by the devil ("god of this age").

*5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

The Gospel is often described throughout the New Testament as "light" in an otherwise dark world. For example:

*28 he [Simeon] took Him [baby Jesus] up in his arms and blessed God and said:*

<sup>29</sup> “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,  
According to Your word;

<sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen Your salvation

<sup>31</sup> Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

<sup>32</sup> **A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,  
And the glory of Your people Israel.**” (Luke 2)

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “**I am the light of the world.** He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” (John 8:12)

Christ is the ultimate Light of the world, but we are called to be His Light bearers:

... that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom **you shine as lights in the world...** (Philippians 2:15).

The light of Christ that has been given to us is a gift that we are called to share with the world. And it is the gift that that world desperately needs.

<sup>13</sup> And leaving Nazareth, He [Christ] came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup> that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

<sup>15</sup> “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,  
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,  
Galilee of the Gentiles:

<sup>16</sup> **The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light,  
And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death  
Light has dawned.**”

<sup>17</sup> From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matthew 4)

If you have ever been in a power blackout, or in an underground cave, or were blindfolded, what did it feel like? That experience reminds us how much better light is than darkness is.

We act out this principle in the first moments of Pascha: “Come and receive the light...” and the procession.

<sup>6</sup> For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Here Paul is hearkening back to Creation itself.



<sup>1</sup> *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* <sup>2</sup> *The earth was without form, and void; **and darkness was on the face of the deep.** And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

<sup>3</sup> ***Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.*** <sup>4</sup> *And God saw the light, **that it was good...*** (Genesis 1)

<sup>7</sup> *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.*

Whenever a person “receives the Light,” they are being re-created.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is **a new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.* (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Orthodox Baptism is the Sacrament of new creation. Water was part of the original creation:

<sup>1</sup> *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* <sup>2</sup> *The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. **And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.***

The prayers of the blessing of the baptismal waters recall the original creation at considerable length:

*Great are You, O Lord, and wondrous are Your works, and no word will suffice to hymn Your wonders. (3) For by Your Will have You out of nothingness brought all things into being and by Your power sustain all creation and by Your Providence direct the world. You from the four elements have formed creation and have crowned the cycle of the year with the four seasons; all the spiritual powers tremble before You; the sun praises You; the moon glorifies You; the stars in their courses meet with You; the Light hearkens unto You; the depths shudder at Your presence; the springs of water serve You; You have stretched out the Heavens as a curtain; You have founded the earth upon the waters; You have bounded the sea with sand; You have poured forth the air for breathing; the angelic Powers minister unto You; the Choirs of Archangels worship before You; the many-eyed Cherubim and the six-winged Seraphim, as they stand and fly around You, veil themselves with fear of Your unapproachable Glory* (the Baptismal service)

As the primordial waters were an essential part of the first Creation, water is an essential part of individual re-creation in Baptism.

*You have bestowed upon us regeneration from on high by water and the spirit. Manifest Yourself, O Lord, in this water, and grant that he/she that is to be baptized may be transformed therein to the putting away of the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and **to the putting on of the new**, which is renewed according to the Image of Him that created him/her.* (the Baptismal service)

Now Paul recounts his experiences as an Apostle. It is sadly common that some Christian confessions imply to potential converts that becoming a Christian means you will not suffer or struggle. For example, here are the words to a favorite Protestant hymn:

*There's within my heart a melody  
Jesus whispers sweet and low,  
Fear not, I am with thee, peace, be still,  
In all of life's ebb and flow*

*Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!  
Sweetest Name I know,  
Fills my every longing,  
Keeps me singing as I go*

*Feasting on the riches of His grace,  
Resting 'neath His shelt'ring arm,  
Always looking on His smiling face,  
That is why I shout and sing*

*Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!  
Sweetest Name I know,  
Fills my every longing,  
Keeps me singing as I go*

*Soon He's coming back to welcome me,  
Far beyond the starry sky  
I shall wing my flight to worlds unknown,  
I shall reign with Him on high*

*Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!  
Sweetest Name I know,  
Fills my every longing,  
Keeps me singing as I go*

However, Orthodoxy teaches us that to follow Christ involves struggle. All our problems are not solved. We are called to carry a Cross. Paul recounts his experience as an Apostle:

*<sup>8</sup> We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;  
<sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—<sup>10</sup> always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. <sup>11</sup> For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. <sup>12</sup> So then death is working in us, but life in you.*

These words reflect the reality of the Christian life. They neither deny or despair.

<sup>13</sup> And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed and therefore I spoke,” we also believe and therefore speak,

“I believed, and therefore I spoke” is a quotation of Psalm 116:10. John Chrysostom writes,

*Paul reminds us of a psalm which abounds in heavenly wisdom and is especially fitted to encourage us in dangers. The psalmist uttered these words when he was in great danger, of which there was no possibility of escape except in the power of God. In similar circumstances, Paul says that we, who have the same Spirit, will be comforted likewise. Thus, he shows that there is great harmony between the Old and the New Testaments; it is the same Spirit that is at work in both. The men of old were in danger, just as we are. Like them, we must find a solution through faith and hope. (Homilies on the Epistles of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians)*

*Moreover, our Mediator, when revealed to us, wished the sacrament of our regeneration to be manifest. But for the just men of old it was something hidden, although they also were to be saved by the same faith which was to be revealed in its own time. For we do not dare to prefer the faithful of our own time to the friends of God by whom those prophecies were to be made, since God so announced himself as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, as to give himself that name forever. If the belief is correct that circumcision served instead of baptism in the saints of old, what shall be said of those who pleased God before this was commended, except that they pleased him by faith, because, as it is written in Hebrews: “Without faith it is impossible to please God”? “But having the same spirit of faith,” says that apostle, “as it is written: I believed, for which cause I have spoken, we also believe, for which reason we also speak.” He would not have said “the same” unless this very spirit of faith was also theirs. For, just as they, when this same mystery was hidden, believed in the incarnation of Christ which was to come, so we also believe that it has come. (Augustine: Letters to Dardanus)*

*Those just men also were saved by their salutary faith in him as man and God. They, before he came in the flesh, believed that he was to come in the flesh. Our faith is the same as theirs, since they believed that this would be, while we believe that it has come to pass. Hence, the apostle Paul says: “But having the same spirit of faith, as it is written: I believed for which reason I have spoken: we also believe for which reason we also speak.” If, then, those who foretold that Christ would come in the flesh had the same faith as those who have recorded his coming, these religious mysteries could vary according to the diversity of times yet all refer most harmoniously to the unity of the same faith. (Augustine: Letters to Optatus)*

*Paul the apostle says that he has the same spirit of faith which the blessed David had, which the holy Moses received, just as he himself testifies, saying, “Since then we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written: ‘I believed, therefore, I spoke.’ We too believe and therefore speak.” How did they have the one spirit of faith, if they believed differently concerning the faithful God? For a difference in belief is great if what Paul says, “There is no injustice with God,” differs from what Moses and David say, “There is no iniquity in God.” And if, as Paul says, he has the same spirit of faith which the prophets also had and yet his belief is different from their faith, let the apostle be declared a liar (God forbid), he who testifies that Christ speaks in him. “You are looking for proof of Christ speaking in me?” But since Christ has truly spoken in Paul, Paul is not a liar. And when he says that he has the same spirit of faith, he does*

*not lie; the belief of each is in agreement so that what Moses and David have said....This is also what Paul says. (Fulgentius: To Monimus)*

*Accordingly the apostle Paul says: "Since we have the same spirit, as shown in that which is written: 'I believed, and so I spoke,' we also believe and so we speak." Therefore, it is one and the same Spirit who is in the prophets and in the apostles. He was, however, in the former only for a while; whereas he abides in the latter forever. In other words, he is in the prophets but not to remain always in them; in the apostles, that he might abide in them forever. He has been apportioned to the former in moderation; to the latter, he has been wholly poured out. He was sparingly given to the one; upon the other, lavishly bestowed. (Novatian: The Trinity)*

*<sup>14</sup> knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.*

*He who raised Jesus from the dead will raise us also if we do his will and walk in his commandments and love the things which he loved, abstaining from all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of money, evil speaking and false witness. (Polycarp: Epistle to the Philippians.)*

*Once again, Paul fills the Corinthians with lofty thoughts, so that they may not feel indebted to the false apostles. (Chrysostom: Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians).*

*Paul believed that through the work of Christ, he and all believers were made greater than death and that they would all be brought before the terrible judgement seat. (Theodoret of Cyr, Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians)*

*<sup>15</sup> For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.*

*God does not want anyone to be excluded from his gift. But because not everyone had received the word of faith, God's apostle, who knew God's will, was not afraid to suffer persecutions and perils as long as he could preach to everyone faithfully, so that more people might believe. (Ambrosiaster: Commentary on Paul's Epistles.)*

*God did not raise Christ from the dead for the sake of one person only but for the benefit of us all. (Chrysostom: Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians)*

*<sup>16</sup> Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, <sup>18</sup> while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

*In times of persecution the soul advances. Every day it adds something more to its experience of faith. Even the damage done to the body becomes conducive to immortality through the merit of the soul. (Ambrosiaster: Commentary on Paul's Epistles.)*

*The body decays by being scourged and persecuted, but the inward man is renewed by faith, hope, and a forward-looking will which braves those extremities. For the hope of the soul is in direct proportion to the suffering of the body. (Chrysostom: Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians)*

*The renewal of human kind, begun in the sacred bath of baptism, proceeds gradually and is accomplished more quickly in some individuals and more slowly in others. But many are in progress toward the new life I we consider the matter carefully and without prejudice. As the apostle says: "Even though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day." He says that the inner man is renewed day by day in order that he may become perfect, but you would have him begin with perfection. Would that you really did desire this! But you seek to lead the unwary astray rather than to uplift the weak. (Augustine, The Way of Life of the Catholic Church)*

*A man who has his own best interest at heart will therefore be especially concerned for his soul and will spare no pains to keep it stainless and true to itself. If his body is wasted by hunger or by its struggles with heat and cold, if it is afflicted by illness or suffers violence from anyone, he will pay little attention to it, and, echoing the words of Paul, he will say in each of his adversities: "but though our outward man is corrupted, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." ... But, if a man would also have mercy upon his body as being a possession necessary to the soul and its cooperator in carrying on the life on earth, he will occupy himself with its needs only so far as is required to preserve it and keep it vigorous by moderate care in the service of the soul. (Basil: Homily 21 on Detachment.)*

*5 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. <sup>2</sup> For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, <sup>3</sup> if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. <sup>4</sup> For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. <sup>5</sup> Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.*

*<sup>6</sup> So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. <sup>7</sup> For we walk by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup> We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*

<i>5:1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.</i>
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What do you think is the difference between a tent and a building?

*Our present body is our earthly home. Our resurrection body is our heavenly one. Ambrosiaster, Commentary on Paul's Epistles*

*Paul is talking here about two different worlds. One is the earthly, made with hands and visible. The other is invisible, made without hands and heavenly. On earth, our soul is clothed in flesh and blood, which is the visible and organic body. But once this body is left behind, the soul will*

*move to the heavenly realm, where it will receive its body back, but one that has been transformed into a heavenly body. Didymus the Blind, Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.*

*Once again, Paul is alluding to the resurrection, which many of the Corinthians did not understand or accept. The earthly tent is our body. Admittedly, it was not made with hands, but Paul is simply comparing it with the houses we live in. He was not trying to make an exact contrast between the earthly and the heavenly but rather to exalt the latter in every possible way. Chrysostom, Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 10.1*

*In regard to our bodily nature we must understand that there is not one body which we now use in lowliness and corruption and weakness and a different one which we are to use hereafter in incorruption and power and glory, but that this same body, having cast off the weaknesses of its present existence, will be transformed into a thing of glory and made spiritual. The result is that what was a vessel of dishonor shall itself be purified and become a vessel of honor and a habitation of blessedness. And we must believe that our body remains in this condition for ever unchangeably by the will of the Creator. We are made certain of this fact by the statement of the apostle Paul in which he says, “We have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” Origen, On First Principles 3.6.6.*

The image of our earthly existence as a tent is used elsewhere in the Bible:

*And the Word became flesh and **dwelt** among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)*

The Greek word for “dwelt” is *eskenosen* (ἐσκήνωσεν), a variation of the word *skenoo* (σκηνόω) which means to “live in a tent.”

The Apostle Peter used this same imagery:

Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in **this tent** (σκηνώματι), to stir you up by reminding you, <sup>14</sup> knowing that shortly I *must* put off **my tent** (σκηνώματός), just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. (2 Peter 1:13)

In the opening prayers of most of the Church’s services, that word is also used:

“O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, everywhere present and filling all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of Life, come and **abide** with us, and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O Good One.”

The word here “abide” is “σκηνώσον” another variation of “to live in a tent.”

*In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (John 14:2)*



<sup>9</sup> Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” <sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, <sup>11</sup> having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. <sup>12</sup> Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: <sup>13</sup> three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

<sup>14</sup> Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup> And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. <sup>16</sup> The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. <sup>17</sup> Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. <sup>18</sup> The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. <sup>19</sup> The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, <sup>20</sup> the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. <sup>21</sup> The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. (Revelation 21:9-21)

“And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand **furlongs**. Its length, breadth, and height are equal.”

The Greek word translated into the English “furlong” is “stadion” (σταδίων):

**στάδιον** • (stádion) n (genitive [σταδίου](#)); [second declension](#)

1. ([architecture](#)) A 600-[foot track](#) for [footraces](#) and the [surrounding stadium](#).
2. ([sports](#)) A 600-[foot footrace](#).

3. ([historical](#) units of measure) A [stade](#), a [unit](#) of [distance based](#) on the length of a [racetrack](#), [equal](#) to 600 [Greek feet](#) ([variously](#) 150–210 [m](#) at [different places](#) and [times](#)).

If one stadion is 600 feet, then twelve thousand stadia is 7,200,000 feet. Divided by 5,280 feet per mile, then heaven is a 1,364 miles cube.



Of course, the Book of Revelation is full of symbols, and this description may be one of them. This description of heaven may not be literal. But symbols convey meaning. And the meaning we can infer from John's vision is that heaven is VERY large.

<sup>2</sup> For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, <sup>3</sup> if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. <sup>4</sup> For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.

*The heavenly dwelling is the incorruptible body which we shall put on in the resurrection. We are groaning now because what is to come is far better than what we now have.* Chrysostom, Homilies of the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 10.2.

*Our groanings are like those of a woman in labor, awaiting a new birth.* Pelagius, Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

Elsewhere, Paul states that all creation also “groans” “stenazo” (στενάζω) in anticipation of the new heaven and new earth:

*For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now* (Romans 8:22).

This should not be too surprising since creation was affected by the fall. Examples?

Our future “*building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*” is as far above our current “*tents*” as being clothed is above being naked.



*People are earnest in their prayers that they should not be excluded from the glory which is promised. This is what being found naked means. For when the soul is clothed in a body, it must also be clothed with the glory by which it is transformed into brightness. Ambrosiaster, Commentary on Paul's Epistles.*

*When we discard our present body, we shall receive in heave the same body in an incorruptible form. It is however possible to be clothed in this body and yet still be found naked, that is, without glory or security. The resurrection is common to all, but the glory is not. Some will rise to honor and others to dishonor, some to a kingdom and others to punishment. Chrysostom, Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians. 10.2*

<p><sup>5</sup> Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.</p>
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The Greek word for guarantee is ἀρραβών, “Of Hebrew origin ([arabown](#)); a pledge, i.e. Part of the purchase-money or property given in advance as security for the rest -- earnest.”

arabown is also used in Ephesians 1:13-14,

*In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the **guarantee** (arabown) of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*

*Here Paul shows that these things were prepared from the beginning. It is not now that they have been decreed but from the moment of creation, when he fashioned Adam. God did not create the first man in order that he should die but in order to make him immortal. To prove this, Paul adds that we have been given the Spirit as a guarantee. God is presented as having made a commitment to us to fulfill his promises. Paul does this in order to make what he says more credible to those less attentive. Chrysostom, Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 10.3.*

*Since God the Creator foresaw the sin of Adam, he prepared a remedy for it. For he himself has given us the first fruits of the Spirit, so that by the miracles which the Spirit does in our midst we may be reassured that the promises of future glory are true. Theodoret of Cyr, Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians 314.*

*For this period in God's plan, in which the Lord has deigned to appear in time and visibly as a man and has given to us as a pledge the Holy Spirit, by whose sevenfold working we are given life (apostolic authority having been added like the seasoning of a few fish), what else therefore does this period in God's plan effect but the possibility of attaining the prize of the heavenly calling without [our] powers failing us? For we walk by faith and not by sight. Augustine: Question 61.7.*

<sup>6</sup> So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. <sup>7</sup> For we walk by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup> We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

*On the one hand, our corruptible body may be a burden on our soul; on the other hand, the cause of this encumbrance is not in the nature and substance of the body. Therefore, aware as we are of its corruption, we do not desire to be divested of the body but rather to be clothed with its immortality. Immortal life we shall have a body, but it will no longer be a burden since it will no longer be corruptible.* Augustine, City of God 14.3.

*The heavenly body is not some different one but the one we have now, which will be transformed.* Theodoret of Cyr, Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians 313.

## **The Judgment Seat of Christ**

<sup>9</sup> Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. <sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. <sup>11</sup> Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

Note that Paul balances the desire to leave his earthly tent and embrace his resurrection body against the Judgement Seat of Christ, which he calls a “terror.”

Elsewhere in Paul’s writings Paul describes this same balance of “terror”...

*...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; (Philippians 2:12)*

*But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:27)*

... while also maintaining confidence:

*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup> Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:6-7)*

For us, the Church offers the same balance:

*And let us ask for a Christian end to our life, peaceful, without shame and suffering; and for good defense before the awesome judgment seat of Christ. (Divine Liturgy)*

*However, now we see obscurely but then face to face; now we see partially but then completely. But the present ability to see in the Scriptures obscurely and partially something which, nonetheless, is in accord with Catholic faith is the work of the pledge which was received by the*

*virgin church at her bridegroom's lowly coming. She will be wed at his final coming when he will come in glory and when she will then behold face to face, for he has given to us a pledge which is the Holy Spirit, as the apostle says. Augustine, Question 59.4.*