



An Eternal Perspective – Part 1

Considering God's Resurrection Plan

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Speaking of parking lots, when I was a kid, I don't know why Christian organizations did this, but every October, a lot of Christian organizations would put on haunted houses. Do you remember when they used to do that? Nobody? Yeah, right down the street from my house. They put one in the Los Altos shopping center there in Long Beach, East Long Beach. And some, I didn't know what it was, some Christian organization. And of course, our youth group at our church would dutifully have it as a youth group outing. I don't get it, because it was really scary. And as a kid I didn't like it, right? I was just not interested, but you can't as a junior higher, as a seventh grader, wimp out, so I would go. And I remember going through, I still think every now and then about just how horrific it was. It's not like the haunted house at Disneyland. This was really scary and there were all kinds of people jumping out at you. The strobe lights, I'll never forget the strobe lights. And I thought to myself this is awful. But I'd get shuffled through it. I remember sometimes you get to a place where they would give you like three or four doors you could choose to go through and you had to pick which door you were going to go through and every door it seemed you went through only one would get you out, others would take you into some dead-end where some guy would jump out in some grotesque mask and, you know, fake blood all over his face yelling and screaming at you. Those were the days when they actually could grab you, it was a different day back then. But it was horrific, things that nightmares were made of and the only door I was interested in walking through was the exit door. I wanted to get out. I couldn't wait to get back to the yellow lights of the Los Altos shopping center parking lot. I just wanted fresh air. I wanted safety. I wanted to get done with this. And I walked through so happy to be out of it.

Well, sometimes in life, and I don't mean to focus on the negative, but certainly sometimes in life we feel like every hallway we go down, every room we go into, every door we open, there's always a lot of disappointment and a lot of frustration and things that make life feel like a haunted house a little bit. And some people think, well, that's true. We open up seasons of life. We think it's going to be good. It doesn't turn out to be as good as we thought it would be. But there's one door that universally, at least among most non-Christians, that they are particularly scared of, and that is the exit door. They think about what's going to happen when I'm finally at the end of this life and I go through the final door, and I die, and I'm done with this world. Now, there's a lot of wishful thinking about that, but if you can get under the surface of people's conversation, you start to recognize that's the thing that really bothers people the most. And we of all people as Christians, I mean we should be the kinds of people who say, well no, we know where we're going. And I think a lot of us in our brain say, well I am a Christian. My theology, my creed, my doctrine, I know that that's supposed to be a door that's good. I've read enough Bible verses to know that's a good door to walk through.

But I want to make sure that when it gets down to it and you find yourself at the end of your life, maybe you won't know it's the end of your life, maybe you'll have five minutes to know it's the end of your life or maybe you'll be for five months knowing it's at the end of your life. But I want to make sure that you take your theology in your brain and you get down to the place



where you say wait a minute I am not afraid of walking through this door, not because I've been on the other side, none of us here have been on the other side. But of course the biblical story of Christianity, the theology of our creed, is that Christ has gone through this door and he's come back and he said what I just did is what's going to happen to you. He told his disciples now go disseminate this message of a risen Christ and you go tell them what's on the other side of this door. And of course we have the written New Testament which gives us more information about the afterlife than we ever had in the Old Testament. And now we have, it's supposed to be at least, a theology that leads us to a great deal of confidence about walking through that last door. And most people think that's going to be the scariest one of all. I don't want that at all to be scary to you. I want you to know the one you're trusting in, I want you to believe in the historic resurrection of Christ. And I want you to have the confidence to say when I get to the end of my life, I know where I'm going.

Now, Paul, has spent a lot of time in the first letter that we have to the Corinthians about the resurrection. But he simply quickly goes into a statement that should, in our minds, take us back to remembering all the things that he said in First Corinthians 15. But in Second Corinthians Chapter 5, as we start this new series on "An Eternal Perspective," we've got to begin by thinking about, okay, when we start this voyage into eternity, what is this all about? What do we know from God? I know he doesn't tell us everything that we may be curious about, but he gives us enough for you and I to sit here today to say, if Christ really lived for us, died for us and rose again, there's no fear when we get to the end of our lives. Now, some of you think you're young. Well, you may be young, objectively, but you know that you're young and you think, oh, this is a long way off. Well, trust me, it gets here faster than you think. Not to mention, James would remind us that we don't know when our exit is, but we better be ready for it. It'd be good for us to think about it today, sitting here on a sunny Southern California morning to say, okay, let's think about this so that when I'm there there's no concern, right? There's no concern. As a matter of fact, there is a sense of anticipation. Christians should die well. We should know how to die well, and I want to talk about this, not just at someone's funeral. It would be good for us to talk about it this morning.

Let's look at three verses in Second Corinthians Chapter 5 that are going to help us prepare, it's going to give us the roadmap, it's going to give a sense of confidence that we know what's going on. Now, I told you that in First Corinthians Chapter 15 he gives us a lot of detail. I think that's one of the reasons he's confident that in what we now know of as Second Corinthians, he can just jump into this really quick assuming we know a lot about it. We're going to have to dip back into First Corinthians 15 in a minute, but let's just look at what he says here that's kind of steeped in almost poetic language. Okay, are you ready? Verse 1. Second Corinthians Chapter 5 verse 1. "For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed." Now again, knowing where we're going, we got to know what we're talking about here is our bodies. So let's talk about your body for a second, as weird as that sentence sounded coming out of my mouth. Let's talk about your body. Okay? Your body is here called in this text an "earthly tent." Okay? And he said, just look about three verses earlier, he talked about though the outer person, the outer man is decaying, the inner person is being renewed day by day. So he's already talked about the wasting away of our human flesh. And he says, of course, it



will be destroyed. Everyone knows, barring some of the eschatological events he talked about in First Corinthians 15, we're all going to reach a place where we're done. We're going to die.

Okay, so it's going to be destroyed because it's destroyable. But, he says, if that happens, we know that when that happens, that our earthly tent, "our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God." Now, don't miss that hard contrast there. The difference between a tent and a building, right? Which shouldn't be hard for you to imagine as we sit outside in the parking lot here under some pop-ups and we're hoping to get in our building soon. Buildings are better than tents. And the tabernacle, the worship center was at one time a tent. That's why it's called a tabernacle, it means a tent, and then it turned into a building. The most important piece of architecture in all of Israel, Solomon built the temple. And so that picture of a permanent structure versus a temporary structure, I mean, that's the contrast. You're going to have a permanent body, which really speaks to the fact that we don't have a permanent body now. That is "a house not made with hands," it's "eternal in the heavens." All steeped in poetic language here, this little, you know, analogy of a building versus a tent. In other words, this is something that God is going to make that's not a part of this temporal structure that we said in the previous chapter, at the very end of it, things you can see are transient. This is eternal. So we don't see it, God's going to give us a building, a body that is eternal. Okay?

"For in this tent," it's speaking about the current body, verse 2, "we groan." And the older people groan more than the younger people. Younger people complain about other things. We complain about our bodies most of the time, older people. I say we, I guess I'm there now. "Longing to put on our heavenly dwelling." That's the way we live, and the older we get, the more we feel that, right? "If indeed by putting it on, we may not be found naked." Okay. We've kind of mixed metaphors here now between a building, just because you walk out of a building you're not naked, but when you walk out of your body, you are, let's just call it naked in the sense that you are disembodied. And so we're going to take those three concepts, disembodied state, sometimes theologians talk about the intermediate state. They talk about that. Our eternal dwelling. Well, let's talk about that, not just being a city and a new earth, but how about the body that we're in versus the body we're in now, which is one that we groan in because it's temporal and transient and wasting away, as he said three verses earlier.

So let's look at those things, even though I got four points this morning, just to torture you out here in the parking lot in the sun, I made sure it was a four-point sermon today. I want to talk to you about those realities. Okay? So let's start with this, with a tent that is our earthly home is destroyed. The only home you know as an encasement in your body is the one that you have, that's your earthly home. You've lived in it your whole life and you were kind of brain jelly for a long time, jello, and then eventually you started to recognize self-awareness, you thought about the fact that you got the body you got and you probably complained about it when you were young, I wish you were that body or a different kind of body and then you had certain problems with your body and you're just like I don't like all that, but this is your earthly home. It's going to be destroyed and replaced, but let's think about it. One thing we learn in verse 2, the beginning of verse 2, is we groan in it. And the older you get, even if you had a perfect 18-year-old body, now you get to be 68 and you start groaning. Well, you start groaning at 48, sometimes you groan at 28, but you groan and it's hard to deal with.



So let's just deal with that. Let's just make a simple observation that should be obvious to you experientially. Jot this down, number one, even though our screens may be hard to see in the bright sun. Are they working this morning? Okay. Number one, "Accept the Decline of Your Present Body." Now, I say that in a culture, in a subculture, that loves to cling to youthfulness. But let me just start with this. You need to accept the fact that your present body is declining. I use a very politically correct term, declining. That's just a euphemism. You're growing older. OK, thanks for coming to church this morning to get insulted about your body. It's not like it was 10 years ago. Would everyone agree with that? Yeah, unless you're 18, and you're happy that it's not an eight-year-old body, most of us wish we could go back 10 years. Actually, I'd like to go back 30 years. It'd be great if I could go back to where I could do and eat and keep the schedule I used to keep. But the older you get, the more you recognize our bodies are declining. And we just need to accept that.

Now, why is that the case? I quote it all the time. But if you're a copious note taker, jot down Genesis Chapter 3. That's when God, because of moral sin, created physical sin. Let's just call it that, moral evil versus physical evil. And in the physical evil, he said "cursed is the ground because of you," Adam. And the ground, of course, you got to go back to the beginning of the story, that's what he was made of. So the ground is going to be cursed, then we immediately go into his garden and thorns and thistles and all the rest. But of course Adam is made of the ground. He's made of physical stuff. And so now his body is cursed. And then he gets kicked out of the Garden, even though he's in a very nice world. Now all of a sudden he doesn't have access to the Tree of Life, and he begins to die. Now he lives for a long time. He's going to live into the 900's. But after the flood, God's tired of the fact that people have 900 years to figure out how to be evil. So he says, no, I'm not going to do that anymore. And he does something to what's over our heads. It would have looked very different before the flood and we would be in this perfect environment with a lot more shielding from the radiation of the sun and all the other things that might be going on even with our atmosphere, maybe even the oxygen that we breathe, whatever. We would be in a different situation. But after the flood all the mitigation of life, the longevity continued to precipitously drop until we leveled out and up and down depending on the health of the particular culture. I mean we're fortunate to live to be 90, 100 years old if we're fortunate. And then some people say I'm not fortunate, I wish I had died when I was 70. Whatever, we don't live more than 100 years generally speaking.

All of that is because of the curse. Now God did that, that was God's decision. That was a judgment on all of humanity and therefore we live in bodies that I don't care how healthy you are right now I hopefully don't have to convince you it won't stay that way and you just need to accept that as part of reality, right? If you have a 20-year-old vehicle, does anybody have a 20-year-old vehicle in Orange County? Probably not. Don't come to me complaining about your car because it always needs repairs and you can't believe it's got dings and dents, and it doesn't drive like it used to, and it's got knocks here and this and that. I'm going to say, well, what do you expect? You got 350,000 miles on your car, and it's 20 years old, what do you expect? Of course, it doesn't smell like it did when you rolled it out. I mean, even the new car smell is gone by like a month, is it not? It smells like last Tuesday's french fries if you eat in



your car which who doesn't in our culture. The idea though is that you can't keep the new car smell, you can't keep your battery turning your car on for more than a year or so, and then it's tires and then it's problems. If you put that much mileage on a car, what do you expect? Because we know something about entropy. We know something about decline. We know something about usefulness deteriorating to non-usefulness. All you need is time and use. So I can ask you what year is the model of your body, and how many miles do you have on it? Those two things, they matter. And you need to know that's just the way it is.

So can I tell you this? Stop trying to cling to youthfulness, okay? I'm all about you changing the oil in your car, getting new tires when they need it. If you get a bad ding, let's get it fixed. Okay, I'm for that. But at some point, you have to recognize, you know, if you have a 1969 body you're going to have trouble. And here's what the Bible would teach us. When people are afraid of the exit door and they don't know what's behind it, all they've got is clinging to youthfulness. Can I give you a reminder from Second Samuel Chapter 19? There was a man named Barzillai. He's 80 years old. He helps David after Absalom takes over and ends up basically kicking his father out. Well, as he's coming back, David is so thankful for many people, including Barzillai, who was faithful to David. And David says, I want to bless you with all these things. And he said come back to Jerusalem and I'll give you all this. It's like, you know, he won the showcase showdown. It's like you get all this stuff. And Barzillai wisely says, here's an octogenarian in the Old Testament who says I don't need any of that. I just want to go back to my home and my senses aren't what they used to be. You know, the stereos don't sound as good. The women singers, he says, the men singers. It doesn't matter. My palate, I can just eat my Cheerios. I don't need all that stuff. I am content. Here you have a man humbly recognizing that his better years were before him. And he realizes this, I'm not trying to cling to youthfulness. I'm not going to try to relive my youth. I accept that I'm an 80-year-old, 80-something-year-old person. And I don't need to cling on to youthfulness.

Here's another one, how about Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes, this one might be worth turning to. Let's look at it. Ecclesiastes Chapter 12. It's important that we just come to grips with the reality of aging, the trajectory of your body being less and less useful and bringing you more and more pain and being much more fragile. It is just a part of life. And in a sense, we look back to our youthfulness and we say, you know what? I wish I would have done more in many ways for the Lord. That's where this whole chapter is going. But in Ecclesiastes Chapter 12, that's why he's saying as an old man, I'm going to look back at younger people and I'm going to command them this. Verse 1 Chapter 12, "Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth," which by the way, there should be some older people working with our younger people in this church to say just that. We don't need to hear all your stories about missed opportunities and you wish you would have had more, but let that at least get you to the place where you're trying to help the younger generation invest in things that matter for eternity. And he says, "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, 'I have no pleasure in them,'" because sadly, and this is the reality of Genesis 3, they'll come to a place where you say I really don't like today very much at all because I'm in a lot of pain or I'm old or there are problems.



There's just a lot that comes with the burden of wisdom, as Solomon said, not to mention all the physical pains of a failing body. "Before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain, in the day where the keepers of the house tremble, and the strongmen are bent, and the grinders cease." All of that is poetic language and it may be speaking of some problems that come in every generation, but certainly it's something as he compares it and contrasts it to youth. So I think a lot of these things are expressions of the problems that come with the trajectory of aging. And you and I ought to just accept that as the reality that you accept about a lot of things in the world like your vehicles. I just know they're going to age. It's not going to be the car it used to be. Just like your house is not going to be the house it used to be. You just live in it for 30 years and you'll see things that you fixed 30 years ago you got to fix again. It's going to continue to be declining. It's going to decline. So we're going to accept the decline. We're not going to cling to youthfulness. And if that makes you think, well, great, you know, I thought Pastor Mike wanted me to, you know, run through the tape, work to the end. I am saying all of that. Let me give you another sub-point here under the first point. Here's how I put it, "Do What You Can With What You've Got." And the Bible is very clear about that, right? You may only have four good hours a day because you're, you know, nearing your death. This is a really encouraging sermon I'm realizing as it's coming out of my mouth. But let's make the most of those four hours then. Let's do what you can with what you've got.

Paul clearly knows in Second Timothy Chapter 2 that he's dying and he's looking back on his life and he says, you know, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I kept the faith," and all that's good because he's looking back. But you know what he's saying right there? I'm ready "to be poured out as a drink offering." Well, that's what he said to the Philippians. He knows that his life, he's willing to pour it out or as he puts it to the Corinthians, "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls." So let's just recognize, even if you don't have the energy, the vigor, the verve, whatever you call it, to get up and do something good, I just want you to say, do what you can with what you've got, and with what you've got, continue to do whatever it is that the Lord is going to allow you to do. And I don't want you to stop. I want you to run through the tape. I want you to be as strong as you can be. Not as strong as you used to be, and use what you can for the Lord. That's going to be something important in an idolizing culture of youth. Our culture idolizes youthfulness, and it'd be great but here's something the Bible is saying, and this is what we're getting to. You're going to go into some other reality and it's going to be good. As a matter of fact, Paul says it's going to be far better. So I know that you're sorrowful about youthfulness and you keep playing the song, Forever Young, and you wish you were forever young, and you're looking at your old photo albums. Don't think that it's never coming back. It is coming back.

You got to hear the whole sermon before you write this one off as a bad one, hear the whole sermon, okay, because that's where we're going. But first I'm going to go to the bottom of verse 3 because I do think we need to talk about the intermediate state before we get to the eternal state. "If indeed by putting it on, we may not be found naked." Now, I'm not naked now because you told me I'm in a tent. And this is a weird analogy and a mixing of analogies. We're not talking about clothes, but we're talking about clothes of my body being a tent temporary and then I get an eternal home. Well, here is a statement, an analogy of



nakedness that there will be a time when I don't have my temporal tent home and I don't have my eternal home. That's called the intermediate state in theology, and that means what are we going to be? And here's where I come to the conclusion, as most theologians do, that we are going to be disembodied. And I know that certainly just by the statements in Scripture about death. Jot this one down, Genesis Chapter 35 verse 18. It couldn't be clearer than this. This is when Rachel is dying, she's giving birth to a child, and she's in the hardest part of her labor, and she is about to die. She gives birth to a son. She calls him Ben-oni, which means "son of my misery, son of my pain." And of course her husband's not going to go with that. So he calls him Benjamin, right? So this is one of the patriarchs and one of the tribe's names. And Benjamin means "son of my right hand, son of my strength." But nevertheless, it says in verse 18, "her soul was departing (for she was dying)." Okay, that's a great statement of definition of what death is. Your immaterial part, your spirit or your soul, is going to leave your body, right? Instantly, we have a definition of a disembodied state, and there's a lot of bad doctrine about the intermediate state.

So let's just think about your death as unpleasant as that may be, for us as Christians it shouldn't be, and I know that's counter-cultural, but when you think about the day that you die, what's going to happen is your conscious awareness that tells your right hand to raise, your left hand to raise, your head to not, all the things you're telling your body what to do, right? That volition, that ability to be rational and intellectual, to feel things, to feel a sense of beauty or justice or love or whatever it might be. That thing that is in the reflection of God, because it's not about your hair and it's not about your height and it is not about your shoulders. The image of God that you're made in is the immaterial part. And at some point, as it says here, as Jesus said on the cross, as he breathed his last and gave up his spirit, his spirit left his body. That's the most clear, simple definition of death. And one day that's going to happen and you will be immediately naked, to use the analogy here of Second Corinthians Chapter 5. You will be disembodied. And you will continue to be, jot this down, Luke Chapter 16, the second half of the chapter, Jesus tells a story about two people. One who is righteous and one who is not, one who is declared righteous by God and one who is not. And they both continue to be conscious. It talks about their bodies being buried but they go to a different place.

So your conscious awareness will go to a different place. This is the disembodied state. And if you think about that, I just want to say it this way, number two on the outline, you need to "Reject Any Fears About That Intermediate State," or that disembodied state. Because there are a lot of people who think if I walk through this door and you leave my body behind, this is a creepy thing to think about. I'm going to exist somewhere consciously aware, but my body's going to be put in a box in the ground at the county cemetery. That's weird. That's scary. Well, I just want to say, yeah, nakedness is not ideal. Nakedness, in terms of my spirit, is not ideal. I'd like to be in a body, and I'm longing to be in my eternal dwelling. But it may be that I'm not a part of that privileged last generation of Christians who will be, as Paul taught in First Corinthians 15, changed at the moment of Christ's return.

Maybe like my grandpa who trusted in Christ who's buried up here in Los Angeles County, maybe he is going to have to be disembodied for a period of time. So far he's been disembodied for, I don't know, 25-30 years he's been disembodied. He's trusting in Christ and



according to the Bible he's without a body. And that doesn't need to be creepy because number one he's not a ghost. So he's not some kind of spirit, right? He's not haunting anybody because according to Luke 16, Jesus is teaching clearly about the intermediate state. And he says, there are chasms fixed. You can't change where you're at. Right? And so my grandpa is somewhere disembodied. And I say somewhere, I know where he's at. The Bible says to be absent from the body, present with the Lord. We'll talk about that next week. Philippians Chapter 1, "to depart and be with Christ ... is far better." So I know wherever Christ is and according to Hebrews Chapter 1 verses 1 through 3 Jesus is now seated "at the right hand of the" Father in some other dimension somewhere and that spirit of a Christian disembodied doesn't have a body. That's not ideal. Angels are fine being disembodied. They were made to be disembodied. We were not made to be disembodied but we will be disembodied around the throne of one who is not disembodied, someone who has a body, his name is Jesus. And so we are going to be there in that place.

And just like it says in the book of Revelation Chapter 6, there will be awareness, there will be conversation, whatever that means, communication, let's call it that. And there will even be a concern about world affairs and you will say in that disembodied state as we get to see what's going on, at least the big picture of what's going on in the timeline, we will say as the psalmist often said in his earthly temporal transient misery, we will say, "How long, O Lord," how long, O Lord, how long are we going to have to be in this disembodied state? How long are these things going to happen here on earth and you're not going to rule and reign and take your great power and begin to rule over the world? So a disembodied state is not ideal but not creepy. You don't cease to exist. Annihilationism is not biblical. Even if you are a rich man and you completely do not trust in Christ or anything, you don't seek the Lord, you're not repentant, he goes somewhere consciously aware. It's a place of very deep unpleasantness and Lazarus goes to a place of comfort. They are not yet in their eternal home. They're in a disembodied state.

Now the thing that would make people afraid of the disembodied state if it's not being creeped out that maybe you're going to be a ghost or that maybe you're going to soul sleep. That's another one. It's kind of like annihilationism except you're going to wake up when your body wakes up. That by the way, let me address that, that's just based on euphemisms. Just like when you say I heard your father passed away. Passed away is a weird way to put it. That's because you don't want to say hey your father died. That's a little crass. So we say euphemistic phrases. Well, the Bible uses euphemistic phrases. The most common one is "to sleep" and certainly that's what happens, your body lies dormant while your spirit leaves. Now the Bible is very clear about that, your spirit leaves and is consciously aware somewhere else in another dimension, in another place. Your body lies dormant. See, and just like that word, by the way, the Latin word for "sleep," it just looks like it's sleeping, but clearly it's dead. Your body will die. It will no longer work, right? That is dormant which means "to sleep," like a dormitory is a place to sleep. And yet it's not a sleep, it's dead. It's a euphemistic term. And when people say whether it's Jehovah's Witnesses or the Seventh Day Adventists, well, there's going to be soul sleep. I just want to correct that, and I can go into more detail on that in my book, I wrote a chapter about that in Ten Mistakes People Make About Heaven, Hell,



and the Afterlife, which is on the back of your worksheet. I'm speaking quickly because I know you're hot. No soul sleep, no annihilationism, right? No ghost realities.

Okay, let's get to a big one, because if you have some Roman Catholic friends they're going to tell you this if they're in faithful Catholic churches and they have faithful priests, and that is, they say you're going to go to a place called purgatory you can go there. And guess what? That's not a fun place. As a matter of fact, that's a place of great pain. And here's the deal. Now, if I'm a Roman Catholic, listening to the Roman Catholic Church, listening to magisterial teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, I'm going to say I don't really want to go there, right? Earth is bad enough. I don't want to go to a place of purgatory. Purgatory comes from the word "to purge," right? You're going to have your sins purged. Now at the Council of Trent in 1551, they came out with a statement about purgatory. Not that they hadn't taught it before that. Now it certainly wasn't an early, early teaching but the concept of being punished for many, many years until you're worthy to be in God's presence, it was so stated at the Council of Trent in the 16th century that if you are a priest, you must be faithful to continually teach this to the saints, that you will go to a place of torment, of suffering, until you are purged of all your sins.

As a matter of fact, I might as well quote it. It says this, the Council of Trent, if anyone says that the whole punishment together with the guilt is always pardoned by God and that the satisfaction of penitence, that means someone who trusts God with a penitent faith, a repentant faith, is nothing other than we trust him, that we have faith by which they perceive that Christ has made satisfaction for them, well, let them be anathema. Okay, so the Roman Catholic Church is saying in their official doctrine, which is not just back in the 16th century, the 1991 official doctrinal statement of the Catholic Church called the Catechism of the Catholic Church states it clearly in the footnote is back to Council of Trent, there is a place that you're going to go when you're disembodied and you're going to suffer there for a long time until you take all the sins that you've committed that are what they call venial sins are burned off and you have enough of the punishment of that. Now there's double talk, because here at Trent, they said it's punishment. The satisfaction for your guilt and your punishment needs to be paid for, right? Sometimes they'll say in doctrinal statements, well, it's not really punishment-punishment, but it's still cleansing and suffering so that you can be worthy.

Now, here's the problem with all that. Once you say that the satisfaction of Christ's work on my behalf which we see clearly in the Bible is appropriated by faith is not satisfaction enough to keep me out of a place of being punished or purged, so that I might be worthy, right? They're saying to hell with you, damn you, that's what it means to be anathema. And I just want to know how in the world you, as a Protestant, can't stand up and clearly say, that absolutely is 100% as opposite as we could ever get in anything we ever read about the doctrine of salvation. Even the word itself, satisfaction, that they use over and over at the Council of Trent, you know that word is in the New Testament. It's translated in the English Standard Version, "propitiation." And every time you see the word propitiation, Jesus is the propitiation for our sins, all of our sins. As a matter of fact, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ." That's why they have to backpedal words like "punishment," because they see those verses like, oh, I guess I can't say it as strongly as



Trent said it. But the reality is, they will tell you and a good Catholic aunt, if she's got a good Catholic priest, the priest has been given the task of faithfully disposing this teaching to the minds of their congregants so that they are taught that when you die, you will go to a place of suffering.

Now, if I go to the exit door and I push through the exit door, and I know that I'm going to suffer for some undetermined amount of time, unless I hope some people are praying prayers of intercession and penance for me, that there's some kind of indulgence given here and there because people are giving or serving or praying the rosary enough, then I'm going to say I'm not really excited about going through the exit door. I'd rather sit in my recliner for another 20 years. I don't want to go there. And I just want to tell you that the doctrine of purgatory is an absolutely heretical doctrine and it's repudiated by Scripture, not by Mike Fabarez, not by the preacher of Compass Bible Church. It is repudiated by the clear teaching of Scripture. Christ has died and qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. It is as clear as it can be. And I can go into great detail about this. I've taught on it in other places, but please do not be afraid of your death because your Catholic friend is telling you that you will go to a place called purgatory. Purgatory is not biblical. And I've sat around with Catholic priests and I've had them in their robes, sitting at a lunch table, and I said to them over and over again, how can you justify this from Scripture? And they say, we don't have to because the church has taught it. And I hope you know that's the real problem that we have between us as Protestants who are biblical Bible-believing Christians and people who say, we don't have to prove it biblically, we've got the priesthood, we have got the Magisterium, we have got the college of cardinals, we got a pope. We don't need that. And I'm just saying, I hope you're thoroughly Protestant here today and I'm not trying to make fun of your Aunt Gertrude or whatever, or Evelyn or Uncle Jim.

Okay, I would love for him to be a really bad Catholic and start to believe more of the Bible and less of the teaching of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. Wow, that was harsher than I thought it would be too, but... Reject any fears about the intermediate state. Can you know that when Jesus said, "It is finished," he meant it? Can you believe that "there is therefore no condemnation," then well, there's no condemnation. If you can believe that an absolute degenerate criminal on a cross can hear from Christ, "today, you'll be with me in paradise," you can get rid of soul sleep, you can get rid of annihilationism, you can get rid of purgatory with just a simple reading of Scripture. It is not hard for us to figure out and God is a good teacher. We don't need someone in a robe to tell us what it really means. Wow, I didn't need that line either did I?

All right, back to our passage. Maybe we do need it. Okay, I don't know. We're outside. It's not being recorded I don't think. Are you back to Second Corinthians Chapter 5? Is anybody still awake? Let's take a look at this. He says this, verse 1, "We have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Okay? That's the promise of God. It's the promise of Christ. It's the promise when he said at a funeral of Lazarus, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live." Okay? So Christ has said, we got something coming and it's good. And he's going to give us a body that's just like his. I mean, certainly First Corinthians Chapter 15 makes that clear. So you



should look forward to, number three, "Look Forward to Your Resurrection Body." And by the way, can I correct something evangelicals say all the time? Compass people say it all the time. You say we're going to get a new body. Stop saying that, please stop saying that. You're not going to get a new body, right? You're going to a resurrection body, a resurrection body included in that definition is the fact that your old body is going to be resurrected. Well, you know, I'm going to have mine cremated. It doesn't matter what you do to it. It's going to be resurrected whatever is left of it. And if we cremated Christ's body and put it in an urn and put it in the sepulcher, Joseph Arimathea, do you think it would be there after the resurrection? No, it wouldn't be there, right? Every bit of it would be gone. Just like Jesus' corpse was gone after being putrefied for two and a half days in a tomb. You understand that, right? This is a resurrection.

As others have said, it's a one-to-one correspondence. One dead body goes in and one new body comes out. But it's not new in the sense that people use the word "new." Like, when I get a new car, well I get rid of the old car. That's not how this works. This is driving it into this thing that God is going to do. Let me just put it this way. Philippians Chapter 3. Can you go there with me real quick as long as I'm thinking of this passage? Philippians Chapter 3, now we quote verse 20 all the time, but let's quote verse 21 with this. Verse 20, "Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ," and I hope that's true for you. We know our home is not here. We're walking through the maze of this life. Maybe it's been good for you. Maybe it has been horrific for others. But we're going to get to the final door one day and we can't wait for that. But right now we know our citizenship is there and we're waiting for Christ to show up because when Christ shows up, the haunted house is over. Verse 21, "Who will transform our lowly body," and the older you are, the more you say amen to that, "to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself." How many things do you think Jesus can subject to himself when he takes his great power and begins to reign? Do you think he can make all these pop-ups we're using for shade to do whatever he wants them to? Do you think you can make these chairs? How about this platform? How about my computer? Do you think he can make every molecule of your body do exactly what he wants it to do? Absolutely. He has all power, all authority has been granted to him. And one day he's going to take that authority and he's going to reign with it. He's going to take whatever's left of the molecular structure of the debris of your body and he is going to remake it.

Now, if you know anything about my beliefs on what is wise regarding the disposal of your body then you will know. I've written a whole chapter on this in my book, *Ten Mistakes People Make*. I think it is a mistake to think it doesn't matter what happens to your body. I think it does. So let's not burn it. Let's not crush it. Let's now grind it. Right? Let's not throw it in the trash can. Let us lay it aside very respectfully, awaiting what the Bible says is going to happen. The same thing that happened to Christ. And that is that it's going to go into some place of repose, of dormancy and God is going to bring it back and remake it. He's going to remanufacture it, as I often say, which is just another way to say he's going to resurrect it. It will be resurrected, and he's going to make it perfect, like his own glorious body. Therefore, you should be, verse 1, "Whom I love and I long for, my joy and my crown, stand firm thus in the Lord." Why? It's a little bit of a reflection of what he says in our passage, right? It's okay.



We look forward, groan in this one it's fine, but it's going to be good, and you need to look forward to it.

First Corinthians Chapter 15, real quick, let me go there and just give you a little preview. Some of you have heard me teach on this passage a long time ago, but let me just remind you of what it says. It starts with this discussion in verse 35. Someone will ask, how are the dead raised and with what kind of body do they come? First Corinthians Chapter 15 verse 35 is what I just read. But drop down when he gets down to it after talking about the glory of one thing, the glory of another, there are all kinds of different glories, well great, the difference between your body as it's resurrected and your body now is the difference between, you know, the heavenly bodies. In other words, the moon, you can look at the moon all night long and not hurt your eyes. You can't look at the sun. The glorious difference between the moon and the sun is big. That's really what's underlying the analogy here. Then he says it's the way it is with the contrast between your resurrection body and the body you're in now groaning about. Verse 42. So it is with the resurrection of the body. "What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable." Let's just put this word down if you're taking notes it will be physically ageless. Now think about this old people, think about it, how nice would it be to have a body that the whole time is physically ageless. Now I'd like it to mature and obviously everything in the DNA code of your body is pushing toward maturity but once it reaches maturity can we stop there please, can we no longer age after that, and that's not what happens. Hair starts falling out, hair starts changing color, skin stops doing what it used to do, eyes stop doing what they used to do. A million things we could talk about, but we're not going to get into your problems or mine.

But the reality is if you had an ageless body where every molecule was glorified and did exactly what it's supposed to do and all the genetic problems were taken out of your genetic instruction manual and everything was made just right, you would be in a state, it says here, of being imperishable. And God is going to make sure you don't perish. We're going to be in a place where you continue to eat, you will eat, there's a lot of feasting in the eternal state, and a place that is going to have for you the Tree of Life, whatever that means. It was in the Garden and it will be in the New Jerusalem and you will be able to have something that God says this is the perfect fuel for that eternally ageless physical body and you and I will live in that body ageless. Which means all the things you don't like about aging will be gone. I mean half the stuff on, you know, the commercials for Fox News or whatever, because a lot of people who are old are watching it apparently, is about trying to make sure you don't age but you're going to age. This is where you're not clinging to youthfulness, right? You need to say, and I need to say we are going to trust God that he's going to give us a body that is ageless.

Next line, verse 43, "It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory." Glory is the word "Doxa." Doxa is often talking about God and the greatness of God. But in the New Testament, it's also talking about the glory of beauty when Jesus says Solomon and all his regalia don't look as beautiful as the lilies of the field, he uses the word glory, their glory. And the glory of something beautiful is in contrast to dishonor. And certainly when we die, and I've been around a lot of death in this job, as some of you in your jobs have, right? There's a lot of dishonor in death, whether it's an accident, whether, you know, whatever, maybe it's just old



age, right? It's not what we would say is beautiful. Death is ugly, it's not beautiful. Well, your body's going to come back beautiful. It is physically beautiful. And that just goes with physically ageless. And if it's all done without all the problems in corruption, of what humanity can fall into and the entropy and deterioration of aging, well, then this is going to be a beautiful body and an ageless body.

Next line, and "it's sown in weakness; it's raised in power." Sown in weaknesses. Here's one thing about us. Jesus couldn't even have us live on this earth, right? Let's just go back to the beginning. God couldn't make the world without saying, I got to give you a pattern of work and rest because every seven days your batteries are going to wear down and you need to rest. Even your oxen need to rest. Well, we have this thing every night that takes place. You and I go unconscious for a number of hours, right? We can't even make it three days without sleeping. We need sleep. And then you read about the eternal state and it says there are not going to be any nights. And I'm thinking, well, this is really a bummer because I love to sleep. And what I'm realizing is I don't need sleep because I'm going to have a body that is full of energy. I'm physically energetic, perpetually energetic. As I'm perpetually ageless, as I'm perpetually beautiful, right? That's the reality of the physical body. It is ageless. It is beautiful. It's energetic.

One more. Verse 44, "If there's a natural body, there's also a spiritual body." And by natural body everything that came after Genesis 3 is subject to futility, including not only the physical realities of it, but even the passions of it. As Peter said, the things that are in our lives, "the passions of our flesh, which wage war against your soul." And all the things in my body, and what I like to call the firmware of my body, are constantly fighting the spiritual software that I am in the Spirit that I've been made new in, the new man that I'm in still fights the firmware on my hardware. And the problem with that is, I sit there and say I can have the godliest intentions for today. But in the end, I might find myself sinning here, there, and there. Well, how does that happen? Well, it could be the tempter, true. It could be the world's cultural pressure, true, but it can just simply be the desires of my flesh. All that's going to be gone. The natural body is gone. And just like you'd use the word "godly," if you met someone in your small group who's super godly, we're going to have a godly body. And that means it's only going to want to do what's right. You never have another passion that is going to lead you to think I want to do the wrong thing. This is good news, and you ought to look forward to that.

Things to look forward to, how about agelessness, beauty, energy, and godliness in your body forever. And it's all going to happen at the moment Christ is dispatched to come and meet his Church in the air, that's coming. And we ought to be excited about that, and we ought to know that if we're in a disembodied state, and we're not in that privileged last generation, at some point when Christ is dispatched to get his Church, we're going to have that body, we're going to live in that body and no longer are we going to be naked.

Back to our passage, verse 2, "For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling." Well, one thing I learned from the previous chapter is that there may be groaning because "our outer self is wasting away," look at verse 16. But "our inner self is being renewed day by day." Here's what I find out about people who are aging but they're not very



biblically informed or they don't have the faith to believe the biblical information, they groan and they don't do much renewal. There's not much interior excitement. I think the contrast here coming on the heels of verse 16 is helpful for me to know that the groaning is not what I'm known for. Oh, yeah, I groan and you groan. And we should groan because we're in a body that is failing. We're in a world that's failing. But particularly today our subject of the body you need to get to the place where you realize this. I'm not clinging to youthfulness. I'm humbly and maturely accepting the aging process. And I know my body will give out one day but I am looking forward, I'm longing, this is a strong word, to put on my heavenly dwelling. And that means this is OK.

It's the illustration I think I gave last week about sitting my kid in a plane when he is little and I'm going to take him to Florida to go to Disney World. Did I give this illustration last week? And the point is I'm going to tell him we're going on this great vacation. Well, it's going to take all day to get there. I don't know. To get to Orlando it's tough. And then we got to check into a hotel. At first we got to start with the airport. We're getting up at four in the morning. This is a torturous day, but we're going to endure it if I keep giving him brochures of Disney World or the water parks and here's where we're going though. This will be okay. You can groan if you want because it's hard to sit in a plane seat for this many hours. But you got to look forward to what's coming. And this reality is one that should drive you to say, number four, "I Can Persevere With Confidence in God's Plan." Just like my kid has to trust that my plan is true, it's certain, and you ought to have a settled assurance that dad is going to take us where he said he's going to take us. And if that's the case, you can put up with an aging body. If that's the case you can die with confidence. This is a guaranteed plan.

And if you need some help with that, you just need to reread Revelation Chapter 21. "I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.'" When God draws close to this world, it's going to be good. "He will dwell with them, and we will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He'll wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." You've heard that in church a million times. Don't let that just go in one ear and out the other. Please take some time to recognize this week that this is what's coming for us. Can you deal with your arthritis? Can you deal with your cancer? Can you deal with your failing energy? Can you deal with all of this and your body falling apart because of where we're going? God says we should. We should believe him. I know this can be a bit of a haunted house and it seems to get worse at the end of this haunted house. But just remember this, the exit door is in front of us all. And it can happen either by Christ coming to meet us in the air when we're going to be changed in the twinkling of an eye as First Corinthians 15 says, or you're going to be in an intermediate state which will be just fine. Talk to Lazarus about it. It's okay. And you will be there in comfort awaiting that nakedness to be replaced with an eternal dwelling, your new body. So we got to focus on the "then and there" and we talk a lot about that. We're okay with it.

One last passage. Let me end with this one. If you could turn there with me. If you're not dying of heat exhaustion. Hebrews Chapter 10. We're not even, this is not even hot. Oh, you're in the shade, Pastor Mike. Well, I wasn't last night and I won't be in the next service. So there.



(audience laughing) Well, to be tortured like half of you. Hebrews Chapter 10. Look at Chapter 10 verse 32. Drop way down in this chapter to verse 32, "But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings." I mean, think about what your Christianity has caused. "Sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated." And I'm saying we're really not in this about persecution. We've been in that in the last series. But in this series, I'm just talking about us struggling with our own mortality. And sometimes we're by the bedside of people who are dying or suffering with cancer or whatever it might be. "You had compassion," verse 34, "on those in prison, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your property." It's okay, you don't mind. You're humbly accepting the cost. "Since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one."

How can endurance, knowing what's coming be so good, keep me moving forward to know that it's okay. If you lose the ability to use your legs for the rest of your life, it's okay. If you can't function with your memory the way it is, it's okay. It's okay. You have yourself a better possession and an abiding one, an eternal one as we've been learning about. "Therefore," verse 35, "do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward." I love that. Your confidence in God's promise will bring a great reward both now in persevering and enduring, as Paul said, gladly, I most gladly spend and be expended, and it's going to bring in a great reward when we get there. "For you have a need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised." Then he quotes, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and he will not delay." That's good news. You just need to remember this with a kind of confidence that can lead you to say it's okay. And if you're aging and you feel elderly, can I remind you of one more passage real quick? Leviticus 19, I think it's verse 32. When we're reminded that as Christians we are not supposed to hide our elderly people, we're supposed to respect them, we're supposed to stand in the presence of the aged, we're supposed to respect and honor the gray hair, it says. Because we realize, in a sense, not only have they lived life and God has granted them life for 80, 90 years, but also that they are nearer to their reward than we are, right? Barring the return of Christ.

If this goes on for another 150 years, everyone here is going to be dead. And the people who are 90 or 80 or 75 are a lot closer than the 20-year-olds. And the 20-year-olds ought to stand in the presence of the aging. We ought to humbly accept that. There's nothing wrong with aging. There's nothing wrong with you getting sick. The whole prosperity gospel is founded on a wrong perception of what God says will be the reality, and one that we should, with increasing anticipation, live out with grace and hope and a godly desire, as Paul said. Can't wait. For now, if God keeps me here, then fruitful labor. Even if it's only three hours a day. Fruitful labor. Right? But to depart and be with Christ is far better, even in a disembodied state, but that's not the end. We're coming to a place where we will see Christ face-to-face in a body like his.

Let's pray. God, help us please as Christians in our day, certainly in our culture where people are absolutely idolizing youthfulness and clinging to it desperately, that we recognize that while it's nice for us to work out or stay healthy or go to rehab to figure out how our legs can work better, whatever it might be, is really not the answer. The ultimate answer is you



remaking and remanufacturing us into a place that is like your Son's body, a body that is eternal, a body that is ageless and beautiful and has a godly heartbeat to it. And we want that God. We can't wait for that. In the meantime, give us an increasing faith in this and for some here who hear me talk about this and they don't even know where they stand with you, may they not feel peace, may they feel a lack of peace, may they come to the place of realizing they need to fall before you as Redeemer, as Savior, as their Lord and that they would come to a place of trusting you. And in trusting you, God may they then share in the hope that we have, the confident hope that we have, that you're going to bring us into your presence and every promise you made is going to be kept.

In Jesus name. Amen.