***Death, No. 2

The Great Expectation, No. 2 - PH22-02

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 1:19-20***

We are on the third segment of the great expectation which the apostle Paul has introduced us to in the book of Philippians. Paul, while he is in his prison house in Rome, anticipates being released through the prayers of the believers and through the work of God the Holy Spirit. While he looks forward to that release, his prime concern, he has declared, is that the Lord Jesus Christ would in no way be discredited by him during the trial which is imminent for the apostle. He will soon stand in Nero's court. He will soon face Nero for his very life, but the life of the apostle is not the prime thing that concerns him. He is most of all concerned that at that moment, his testimony would ring as clear and as true and as bold as it did when he was a free man and he had no fear particularly of his life being taken. Therefore, the apostle Paul is looking forward to this trial with some anticipation and with the great expectation of being released. Paul, while in his body on the earth, therefore, desires above all to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ through his bold witness. He wants this honoring of the Lord to be true, whatever the verdict may be, whether he continues to live in his body on earth or whether he experiences death itself.

God has made provision for the believer to meet even this experience--the experience of death. Dying is one of the things that the apostle Paul was told that the grace of God would be sufficient for him to meet. If you look back in 2 Corinthians 12:9 and compare that with 2 Corinthians 11:23 you would see how the apostle Paul is told that even death itself, the threat to his life--the moment of dying--God has provided in his grace for that. Many Christians are not prepared for the moment of death because it is a distasteful subject. Therefore, we tend to avoid giving much thought to it, and we don't particularly look forward to church services that are going to be talking about the subject of people dying. Consequently, when suddenly out of the blue we are faced with the issue of death, either for ourselves or for someone in our family or for some good friend, we suddenly find ourselves a little torn up and at sea and find that we are dealing with something that we just don't know how to cope with.

We don't know what our feelings should be. We don't know what our emotions should be. We have no idea what our reaction should be to this thing. Well, that's a bad time to start trying to straighten out your reactions, and that's what we're hoping to do in the next couple of sessions--to give you a crystal clear idea of what God has said to us and informed us concerning this matter of dying. When you approach it, we want you to know one thing for sure, and that is that God has provided grace for this moment as he has provided grace for you all along in your moments of living. Furthermore, you should understand what is taking place in yourself or in some loved one at the moment that those eyes close in physical death.

**2 Corinthians 5:1-10**

I want to direct your attention to 2 Corinthians 5:1-10. Here we have described for us the physical death of a Christian. This is an excellent presentation of what happens at the point of death; what takes place within the soul; and, what the situation is on the other side. This passage pertains to the realities of death. This is preceded by a statement which the apostle Paul makes at the end of 2 Corinthians 4 in which he makes a declaration concerning the relative value of things that are seen and things that are unseen. 2 Corinthians 4:18: says, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

There we have a statement of comparative values which is contrary to that which people normally hold. Most people move through life looking with great esteem upon things they can see; upon things that are material; and, upon things which have temporal value, but which they hold in highest esteem. The things that are unseen seldom enter their thoughts. The things that we do not see are the most valuable things and are the things that we indeed will live with forever. What you have to live with is out there in eternity, and out there it doesn't change. The way you go out is the way you will live there. The preparation has to be made on this side. Therefore, the things that are not seen are the things that are indeed of primary value. It is important that you catch that doctrinal principle, and always remember that what you see is a passing fancy. It has a certain place. It has a certain value. It has a certain use during your period on earth. However, the important things of your life are out there beyond you.

So the apostle Paul, having made this statement at the end of chapter 4, now proceeds in chapter 5 to show how the important things are the things that we do not see. The most important thing is out there beyond us, after we die. Things that are seen are of a temporary nature. Things that are not seen are of an eternal nature.

**Our Earthly Dwelling**

So he begins in 2 Corinthians 5:1 by saying, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." It begins with the word "For" which is the Greek word "gar," This is a little word to introduce an explanation of that 18th verse of chapter 4. He is going to explain what he means by the things that are not seen being the most important thing in a person's life. Therefore, he introduces that with the word "for." The phrase "we know" is the Greek word "oida" that you're well acquainted with. This is the word that means knowing something as the result of learning doctrine. This is not knowing something as a result of something you pick up from experience. It is grammatically in its form a perfect, but in the Greek language, this is a peculiar word. It is always used in the present tense. Therefore, he's talking about something that he continually knows. It's active, so it's something that he personally possesses. It's indicative--a statement of fact. There is something that we (referring to Paul particularly and his associates) know (knowledge which is being drawn from their human spirits), or information about a particular life situation that they have received upon instruction from the Lord Himself.

Paul's knowledge here is particularly referring to physical death. This is a knowledge that every believer needs; we need it in usable form; and, we need it in time. Paul had it; his associates had it; and, now you and I today can have it. Every Christian, I want you to remember, has the same availability of spiritual knowledge that the apostle Paul had. The apostle Paul did not know anything about doctrine except what he learned. He did have a wonderful teacher. God took him out into the wilderness for about three years, and the Lord taught him personally some of the magnificent truths that he was to reveal to us concerning the church age. However, the apostle Paul did not come up with something because he was smart or because he was an educated man. What he came up with was what God taught him. So, you and I are in the same position of having information concerning matters such as death available to us as the result of doctrine that the Word of God now records for us. So, Paul is dealing here with a rather fascinating topic--the state of the Christian soul after death, and all of us have this information available.

So he says, "For we know (as the result of doctrinal information, the same way you're going to know now) that if our earthly house." The word "if" here is a third class condition because he's referring to the fact that a believer may die or he may not die before the rapture. If it should happen that you don't make it to the time of the return of Jesus Christ and the catching up in the air, then this is what's going to happen to you. You might make it, but if you don't (that's third class condition--maybe you will maybe you won't), Paul says, "I'm going to go on and tell you what's going to happen to you." Therefore, if you suddenly find yourself in a hospital bed and you know you're on your way out, you'll know exactly what's ahead of you. You know exactly where you're headed and what's going to happen to you. The people all around you who are informed will know exactly what's taking place and where your destiny is going to lead you, and so on. He's going to inform us of this if that should happen.

He speaks about the earthly house. The word "earthly" is the Greek word "epigeios." "Epigeios" is made up of the preposition "epi" which means upon, and the Greek word "ge" which is a word for "earth." What this means is "an on-the-earth house." The word house is "oikia." When he speaks of "earthly house," he doesn't mean one made of earth. He means an on-the-earth house, and he's referring to your physical body.

So he says, "If our on-the-earth house which is alive as long as the soul and spirit indwell the on-the-earth house, but which at the point of death the soul and spirit leave the on-the-earth house, and then it dies. He describes this on-the-earth house to us in an added description here when he calls it a tabernacle. He says, "If our on-the-earth house of tabernacle." The word "this" is in italics, so you can leave it out. It's a house of tabernacle, and the word "tabernacle" is "skenos" which is a word that the apostle Paul knew very well because he was a tent maker. This is the Greek word for "tent." This is what all the Berean youth club kids on the campouts are going to live in while we're on the campout. They're going to live in their "skenos," their tent. The apostle uses this word which was very familiar to him, and which everybody who knew Paul as a tent maker would know exactly what he meant when he used a word like this. He just meant a tent. This is a canvas structure of a temporary nature that you put up; you use for a while; and, then you take it down. It is a very apt illustration of the nature of the human body house on earth that we live in. Therefore, he uses this word "skenos" to stress the fact that our body is a temporary place of dwelling.

Some of you may love yourselves very much. Some of you perhaps are very pleased with how you look. But, however you look today, please remember that that shell of beauty that we are so enjoying today is a temporary tent. One of these days, like the same thing that happens at the end of a Berean youth club camp out, the leader says, "Strike the tents." They take a pick maddox, and one person goes around and jerks up all the stakes. That beautiful slick straight tent begins to get crinkled and it begins to weave. Finally, the strategic stake is pulled and the whole thing collapses on a heap. If there are people inside, it keeps undulating up and down as these people struggle for the opening to get out. However, the tent has collapsed.

The same thing is told us in 2 Peter 1:13-14 where Peter says, "Yea, I think it fitting, as long as I am in this tabernacle (tent) to stir you up by putting you in a remembrance, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent even as our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me. The apostle Peter was conscious of the fact, at this point, that his time was short in his tent. He was aware of the fact that the Lord Jesus was saying, "Peter, I'm coming around and pulling up the stakes pretty soon, and we're going to collapse the tent. Therefore Peter said, "There are several things I need to do in a hurry before the Lord gets here."

That's the same thing that happens on a campout. When the kids are told we're going to take the tents down, then everybody rushes in and says, "I've got to pack my things and get them out of here. There are things I have to do before they drop this tent or they're going to drop it right on me. Therefore, that's a very apt comparison here. The physical body is a tent.

What's going to happen to this house on-the-earth tent? He says that it is going to be dissolved: "We know that if our earthly house of this tent were dissolved." The word "dissolved" is "kataluo." "Kataluo" is a very appropriate word to describe taking down a tent because it means to loose completely. Then the addition of the preposition "kata" gives you an emphasis. It stresses the fact of the temporary nature of the tent, and of the complete taking down. "Kata" means completely taking down. The Greek here describes the tent as going around and loosening the ropes, and the tent collapses. That's the picture that we have here.

It's an aorist which is signifying the point at which a soul leaves the body tent. It's passive. It's something that happens to a person when death comes. You cannot stave it off. It is subjunctive which means that it's always potential. How much more time you have, no one knows. For each of us, there are different terminal dates for your tent body. What your terminal date is, you don't know. Only God knows. You don't know what anybody else's is. But there is a definite terminal date. You are always potentially subject to this disillusion. When it is dissolved, the tent comes down; the body is folded up; and, it returns to the chemicals of the earth. When you bring the tent down, that's exactly what you do. You stretch it out; you fold it up; you roll it; you stomp on it; you press the air out; you compact it; you take it away; and, it's gone.

**Our Heavenly Dwelling**

OK we understand this. We understand that the body is temporary; that it is a tent; that it's going to be brought down; and, that it's potentially to be dissolved. Now it's gone. What happened to you? It's a tent that you the person (your soul and spirit) have been living in. Now where do you go? That's the next thing he takes up. He says, "If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved." The word "if" here is the third class condition which is usually the Greek word "ean" plus the subjunctive of the word "dissolved." Remember that in a conditional sentence we have two things. First we have a process, the "protasis." That's the "if" part of the sentence. Then we have the "apodosis" which is the conclusion part of the sentence. The "if" part of the sentence, in a third class condition, usually is the word "ean" with the subjunctive of the verb. Then the "apodosis" that conclusion usually is in the future. If this happens (maybe it will and maybe it won't), in the future, this will happen. That's the idea of a third class condition.

However, in this particular sentence, it doesn't have a future tense. When it is dissolved, he says, "We have a building of God." "We have" is the Greek word "echo." It is present active indicative. This is present because it is something that a Christian always has in reserve for his soul and spirit when death takes place. It is active because he himself possesses this personally. It's indicative, so it is a statement of reality. As you see, it is present active indicative. It is the present tense instead of the future tense. We would have expected that it would have been the future, but instead it is present indicative. The Greek grammarians call this a futuristic present. This is a way that the Greek-speaking people had of pounding a thing very emphatically--of making a statement so that there was no doubt in your mind that they meant it. This is the apostle Paul's way of saying with absolute confidence, that if his body is folded up, he has something out there. This is absolute, without any question of a doubt. So instead of using a future for that conclusion of this "if" sentence, he uses a present because he is acting as if the future has already taken place. This is taking the future and jerking it right down here to the present as if it were already a reality. That's what he's trying to convey by using the present tense.

Then he says, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building. This word building is "oikodome." "Oikodome" is a permanent structure in contrast to the body as a temporary structure. It says that we have this building of God. "We have" (definitely) is present. Instead of in the future, we have it as if we had it right now. We have a house (a building) from God, and this is a house. This is an ("oikia"). This is a house (a dwelling place) that is a different dwelling place from the one the Christian gave up in his body. If my body collapses and is folded up, we have another building. This one is a permanent one. This one is not a tent. This one is not a building that's going to come and go. This one is from God, and it's a house (it's a dwelling place) for the soul and spirit. However, it's one which is different from the one on earth in that it is not made with hands. "Not made with hands" is this long Greek word "acheiropoietos." "Acheiropoietos" means "made without hands."

This is used in Mark 14:58 for the first time in the Bible where Jesus Christ is accused of saying that he was going to tear down the temple at Jerusalem, and He was going to build a temple without hands in three days. They knew exactly what He meant. It would be something that was not made in a material way. They scoffed at Him because they were thinking about a material temple being raised instead of the fact of His body being raised. This is a dwelling not of human origin. That's what it means: Not made with hands. It's not of human origin, but it's of divine creation. It's not something of human workmanship. It belongs not to the earthly order of things. The true tabernacle in heaven is also said in Hebrews 9:11 to be made not with hands, in contrast to the tabernacle which was made with hands on earth. It's simply a contrast between what man makes over what God makes, and also with what is earthly over against what is heavenly. That's the primary contrast. The nature of this residence is eternal. It's a permanent residence for believers in contrast to the transient physical house. It is located in the heavens. It is a permanent dwelling that we have in the heavens. It is a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

So the soul and the spirit of a Christian at death enter a house whose builder is God. The Bible compares heaven to a house with many apartments. You have this in John 14:2 where the Lord says, "In my Father's house are many apartments and I'm going there to furnish them (prepare them) for you." The Bible views heaven as a city built by God as the dwelling place of believers. You have this in Hebrews 11:10. The Bible refers to eternal dwellings which are to be found in the heavens (Luke 16:9). Therefore, what Paul is saying here, in keeping with the rest of Scripture, is that if his physical body is dissolved in death, his soul has a permanent house in the heavens to move into, and to move into at once. In other words, death does not deprive the soul of a home. When you die, your soul and spirit do not wander aimlessly out in space. The soul is always conscious, and the soul is always in some house. You have several passages of Scripture that teach this: Matthew 22:32; Luke 16:22-24; and, Luke 23:43. All of these indicate that the soul is constantly in some kind of a house.

The comparison in verse one here in 2 Corinthians 5 is between two kinds of houses--not between two kinds of bodies. These are two forms of existence which are presented. You must get that straight. This is not comparing your body now with your resurrection body later. This is a comparison between two forms of existence. Our existence is one which we make with our hands. We make a house for us to live in. We make our meals with our hands. We earn our money with our hands. It is an apt way of describing our existence now which is by the use of our hands, and by what we produce. That's the kind of existence we have now. However, the existence which we have in the heavens is a totally different kind of life, and a place not made by human production, but by divine production. Therefore, it's a comparison between two kinds of houses. You and I now dwell in our earthly tabernacle. However, after death we will dwell in a heavenly house.

Therefore, let's go on in verse 2. Thus far, what Paul has said is, "I want you to know that when your house is folded up, you've got someplace to go." Paul says, "Don't worry about this. When you die, your soul and spirit are evicted out of your tent body, but God has a place waiting for you in the heavens that He has prepared instead of what man has prepared.

So verse two picks it up and says, "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." "For" is again the Greek word "gar," The word introduces a further explanation of what he said in verse 1. There is another word in the Greek, "kai," which means "also" which is omitted here in our King James translation, "For also in this we groan" or "For in addition we groan." Paul knew that he had a house in heaven made by God. He looked forward to entering that house. When he says, "For in this," he's speaking about his "skenos" that he speaks of in verse 1--his tent house, or his body. "In this tent body we groan." The word "groan" in the Greek is "stenazo." "Stenazo" is a word that means an unexpressed inward feeling of sorrow. We would speak of it as a sigh. Within us there is a sigh. We use it in Mark 7:34 where we read, "And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said unto him, 'Ephphatha,'" that is, be open. It's the same word used there of the Lord speaking concerning the man that he was healing. The word is an inward unexpressed feeling of sorrow. Life in our earth house is filled with afflictions. Therefore we carry certain burdens. There are many times when we are burdened in the form of feeling like we want to sigh, like we are carrying the pressures and we would look forward to some release.

The apostle Paul has amply described this in the previous chapter here in 2 Corinthians 4:8. The apostle Paul is saying, "I know what it is to carry burdens. I know what it is to suffer physically. I know what it is to be deprived of things I need. And I know what it is to look forward to a better life that is awaiting me in the Lord's presence. So as you sit and think about those things, and as you sit and think about the burdens that you carry, it is very natural to let out a sigh. That's the "stenazo" that you have here. It is life in our earth house described with the present tense because it is a continual problem that the Christian carries. It is active. It is our personal experience. It's indicative. It is a statement of reality.

"For in this we grown, earnestly desiring. The word "earnestly desiring" is "epipotheo." "Epipotheo" means a deep soul longing. What is he longing for? He is sighing about the present burdens of this life that every person carries. He is longing however for something which is ahead, and that is for the glory which is before him. In 2 Corinthians 4:17, once more he says, "For our light affliction which is but for a moment works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." That's what he is looking forward to--that eternal weight of glory that is yet ahead of him, and that he is longing to enter.

So he says, "Rather to be clothed upon with this eternal weight of glory. We groan now with the burdens we carry. We earnestly desire to be clothed upon. "Clothed upon is "ependuo." "Ependuo" is aorist middle infinitive. "Ependuo" is a word that means to put on. This is what you do when you take a sweater and you put it on over your head. You "ependuo" it. This is putting on an outer garment. It refers here to putting on your heavenly life and existence over your soul. I realize that you have what's called a mixed metaphor. Here the apostle Paul is talking about a tent body that collapses on earth, and he says, "God has a home (an apartment) waiting for you in heaven for your soul to move into."

Then he describes this building as something that you put on like you do an outer garment. He's mixing the comparison, but this is sometimes done, and it makes it very emphatic. You are putting on a different kind of home. Once your soul (so to speak) put on a physical body. Now you're going to put on an apartment that God has prepared for you in heaven. It is aorist which means you put on this apartment at the point of your death. It is middle in the fact that you yourself are the one who benefits by this. You put it on. It is infinitive. It is the purpose of a Christian to do this. It is the desire that we should be clothed upon; that is, that we should be able to dwell in that better place. He calls this our house which is "oikterion." An "oikterion" is a little different word for a specific dwelling place. This place, we're told, is from heaven. "For we groan (because of what we carry now) earnestly desiring (longing to put over us like an outer garment) our house (our permanent dwelling place which is from Heaven)." This is our heavenly house in contrast to our earthly house. This is a mixed metaphor speaking of putting on the house-in-heaven existence over the soul-on-earth existence.

Then verse 3 says, "If being clothed, we shall not be found naked. This "if" is a first class condition. That means "since," because it is true. "Since it will be that when we are clothed (being clothed)." "Enduo" is aorist middle; that is, at the point of death, we put on this garment of this new dwelling place. It is middle. He himself is benefited by it. Paul at death loosens his tent house, but he is not left unclothed. He is not left naked. The apostle Paul is not here speaking about the evils of being nude. Public nudity is something that is evil. Streaking is something that you should recognize is a demonic-oriented and -originated practice. Demonism constantly promotes public nudity. Anytime that public nudity is taking place, you are in the presence of demonic activity. You know right then (whatever else you know about demons), you can just rest assured that at that point, you are seeing the activity of demon influence. He's not talking about private nudity. He's not dealing with that subject at all.

He is simply dealing with the subject of his soul being clothed with a type of life or not being clothed with a type of life. He's clothed with his house in heaven. It's an aorist participle. Therefore, as an aorist participle, it precedes the action of the main verb which is "to be found naked." First the soul is clothed with its heavenly house, and then the result is that the soul is not naked after leaving its earth house. Naked in the context means the soul being without a house. House from heaven is spoken of as a garment. Therefore, he uses the term "naked" because he's talking about putting it on as a garment.

"If so be (and we will be) we shall be clothed (we shall have put on)" with this heavenly house so that we are not found naked. Then he again begins verse 4 with the word "for." "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan (being burdened), not that we would the unclothed, but clothed upon that mortality might be swallowed up of life." "For" again is the word "gar." This one introduces the reason for the desire which he expressed in verse 2: "earnestly to be clothed upon with his house from heaven." "We that are" is the Greek word "eimi." It is present active indicative. We (present) keep on being alive in the physical body. Active--the Christian is the one who is alive. Participle--it is a principle of truth. We that are in this tabernacle. This tabernacle (literally, "in the tabernacle") is referring to the previous one referred to in verse 1. We are in the tabernacle, the one mentioned in verse 1 and implied in verse 2, the temporary body house--the transient tent-like life and existence. We who are in this status, which you and I are today, do groan. We have the word "stenazo" again, the internal sigh. We who are in this house have reason to sigh, and we do. Why?

He spells it out here. It is because we are burdened ("bareo"). It is present. Our constant state is being burdened in this life. It's passive, so we can't help it. This is something we receive. We do groan because we're burdened. Paul is weighed down in his tent body existence, and so he sighs for relief from this constant burden. This is the kind of thing that Paul speaks of in 2 Corinthians 4:8-10 and 2 Corinthians 11:23-28. There he spells out some of the burdens that he has experienced and suffered. Being burdened--that's his current situation.

Therefore, what does he want to do? You might think as you listen to him, he says, "I'm burdened here. Life is a real problem. I know that when I leave this body I go into a house that God has prepared for me--an apartment that He has waiting for me in heaven. I leave an on-the-earth existence for an in-heaven existence. What is some nut going to conclude? Something nut is going to come along and say, "Do you know what's good? Kill yourself. Go to heaven. Accumulate a lot of debt. Use your charge accounts. Fill it up big, and then leave. That's the way it'll be better, won't it?"

Well, that apparently was quite a problem, and one of the reasons that Paul could have told us a lot more than he is telling us. Notice that he's being very careful. He's making little careful comparisons. He's using restricted language, but he's got a pain in his body that a demon is stabbing him with under the Lord's direction and permission. That pain is reminding him, "Don't go too far, Paul, to tell what you saw in heaven. Just tell them enough for them to know what's ahead. Just tell them enough so that there's comfort for them. Just tell them enough so that there's no panic when they find that they're facing death. Just tell them enough so they know how to go out with dying grace. However, don't tell them more than that."

On the other hand, the apostle Paul himself realizes that somebody is going to come up with the notion that he is suggesting that the thing to do is to hustle off and get yourself killed. Like maybe getting out in the streets of Rome and shouting, "Nero is a fink, and all we Christians are happy to declare that that's what he is." Then you can get picked up and thrown into the lion's den for a little slaughter, and you go right off to heaven yelling, "Nero is a fink." Well, that's not what he means.

Therefore, he says, "For we that are in this tent house, we groan indeed because we are burdened with a lot in this life." However, he says, "Not that we would be unclothed. The word "not that" in the Greek are two little words "epho" plus a negative, and it means "not because." We don't do this because we want to be unclothed. He says, "I am not longing because I want to die." That's the last thing on earth the apostle Paul wants to do. As we shall see when we get back to Philippians, he says, "I know it would be great for me to die. And how well I know. I've been there, but that is the last thing I want to do. Living is the thing, not dying. Any creep can die." It's living that takes the substance of a person and a substantial Christian.

Therefore, what the apostle Paul is saying is not because we would die. The word "we would" is "thelo." It is present active indicate. This is a word describing wish from your emotions. "Unclothed" is "ekduo." It is aorist middle infinitive. It is aorist, so he's saying, "I'm not interested in taking off my body." It is middle. This is my personal loss of my body. It is infinitive. This is not my purpose. Paul is not longing to die to get rid of his earth house because of his burdens. That's morbid, and it's unspiritual. Paul enjoyed the earth stage of his existence, and he knew something much better was coming after death. However, he also knew that God had a purpose for him on this earth, and he was interested in pursuing that purpose. Therefore, the translation here is, "Not that we want to put off the body." Unbelievers often wish to die in order to escape the burdens of life. They have no purpose and no meaning. So they take their life, and think that that will solve it, and then they find how bad off they really are.

So he says, "We do groan. We are burdened, but it is not that we would take off our physical body, but." The word "but" is "alla" which is a contrast. It's an adversative to show a contrast. "But that"--he introduces the opposite to physical death. "We would be clothed upon" ("ependuo"). This again is aorist middle infinitive. Aorist indicates that he would be clothed upon at the point of death. It is middle. He personally would benefit. It is infinitive. This is his positive purpose. Not do we want to put off, but we want to put on. Paul says, "I'm not trying to get rid of my physical life. But what I am looking forward to and longing for is the day when I can put on my life existence style--my heavenly lifestyle. That's what I want to put on.

He introduces this with the word "that" which is "hina." Here's the purpose for which he wants to put this on. He says, "I look forward to the future of putting on that life," for what reason? "In order that mortality" ("thnetos"). Mortality means existence subject to death--your earth life. "In order that my subject-to-death existence might be swallowed up." This is a very appropriate word, "katapino." "Katapino" means to absorb. "In order that my temporary dying status life can be absorbed--completely swallowed up so that you don't see it anymore. It is aorist that happens at the point of the Christian's death. It is passive. You experience it. You don't bring it about. It is subjunctive. It's always potential while you're on earth because death is always potential.

When you die, something is swallowed up that you're glad to get rid of. That is your earth temporary dying existence is swallowed up, and by what? Of life, which is "hupo zoe." This means "under the authority." "Hupo" means "under." To be swallowed up under the authority of life. This is the eternal life--the life that he has been describing in this context of the apartment that God has prepared without hands in heaven for us to dwell in. This is not "psuche." "Psuche" means mortal existence which is animating the body on earth. This is "zoe," so it refers to existence in our eternal heavenly glory.

So we might translate that end of verse 4 with the phrase, "In order that, swallowed up, this mortal may be by the life." That's literally what it says. The point being that what Paul longs for is not death to escape the demands of living, but that this earth-existence life will be swallowed up by something that will be eternal. This eternal life will swallow up the temporary life so that nothing is left of it. It's the same verb for death being swallowed up in victory that you have in 1 Corinthians 15:54. Death is going to be swallowed up and there won't be anything left of it. That's what's going to happen to this mortal life. It's going to be swallowed up by eternal life.

So who would indeed not sigh within for such a happy exchange? Therefore, what the apostle Paul, in these first 4 verses, tells us is that we know from the Word of God on the basis of direct revelation that we have an on-the-earth house. It is in the form of a tent because it is temporary, and it will someday be dissolved or collapsed and returned to the chemicals of the ground. However, we also know that we have a building (a permanent dwelling), a house which has not been made by human origin but by divine origin, reserved for us in the heavens. In this body, we groan because of the burdens that are upon us in this life. Consequently, we earnestly desire to be clothed with our house which is from heaven which has all the blessings; the magnificent life; the immortality; and, the freedom from death that we look forward to. So we will not be found naked at the point of death. Our soul will not be found unclothed. But rather, our soul will move out of its temporary tent, and it will move into its mansion in heaven.

So we who are in this tent have good reason to groan. We have good reason to long to be unclothed in the sense that we want to move on to what God has for us. We do not have ground to long to be unclothed in the sense that we want to get rid of the burdens. The burdens God has given us grace to sustain. I don't care what your problem is. I don't care what your burden is. "My grace is sufficient for you." So God has already met the burdens for us. He solved every problem; every burden; and, everything that we will ever face. His grace has already brought the solution. It's there. It has been provided for. That we can bear. Now we look forward to the time when we are through with our life here and the job that He has called us to do. We're looking forward to that time which is in heaven when we move into a house that He has prepared for us--free of death; no more sorrow; no more pain; and, nothing of the things that are a trial upon us now. That's what happens when a person dies.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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