

**“Locating Glory”**  
**2 Corinthians 5:1-10**  
**July 10, 2016**  
**Faith Presbyterian Church – Morning Service**

You might have noticed the title to my sermon this morning. I just want to relieve everyone’s mind that this will *not* be a sermon about me losing my youngest child. When Rachel and I named our third little girl “Glory,” while I have no regrets about that decision, I’m not sure we thought through the alternate meanings it would give to some of my sermon titles.

Anyway – I’m continuing my occasional series from 2 Corinthians this morning. The last sermon I preached in this series was back in January, so a bit of re-orientation may be in order.

Second Corinthians, you’ll remember, is a letter written by the Apostle Paul to the church in Corinth over several issues, and to combat the influence of several false apostles in that church who opposed Paul. Paul deals with a number of topics in it, a central one being the place of suffering, struggle, and crosses both in his own ministry, and in the Christian life. And then in chapter four, in the verses right before our passage this morning, he explains this – he says:

“this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”

Paul ends the last point, which we looked at back in January, by referring to the eternal weight of glory that God is preparing for his people.

And in our text this morning, 2 Corinthians 5:1-10, Paul goes on to elaborate on how we should think about that weight of glory. In fact these ten verses are something of an aside in Paul’s argument, a break in the case he has been making, in order to address in more detail what that glory is that God has prepared for us, where we should locate it, and what that will mean for our lives right now.

So with that in mind, please hear from our text, 2 Corinthians 5:1-10. The Apostle Paul writes:

<sup>1</sup>For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. <sup>2</sup>For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, <sup>3</sup>if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. <sup>4</sup>For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. <sup>5</sup>He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

<sup>6</sup>So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, <sup>7</sup>for we walk by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup>Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup>So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. <sup>10</sup>For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

This is God's Word.

Our text this morning is a somewhat complicated one, and we're going to have to look at it from a few different angles to unpack it. I think the best way to approach it is maybe to ask three questions:

First, what problematic views is Paul addressing here?

Second, what alternative view is Paul advocating?

And third, what difference does Paul think it makes in our lives one way or the other?

So what problematic views is Paul confronting? What alternative view is he putting out there? And why does he think it matters?

So first: What problematic views is Paul addressing?

What we see in our text is that Paul is addressing two false views of where we should locate ultimate glory. Paul is responding to the fact that we tend to either locate ultimate glory in the here and now, or we tend to locate ultimate glory in a future escape from this physical world.

We tend to either locate ultimate glory in the here and now, or we tend to locate ultimate glory in a future escape from this physical world.

Let's take those one at a time.

So first, Paul is addressing our tendency to locate ultimate glory in the here and now.

We see this in verse 6 – Paul points out “We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.” Commentator Paul Barnett points out that in both his letters to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul seems to be repeatedly combatting an over-realized eschatology among the Corinthians – in other words, he is repeatedly responding to a view they hold that overstates how much glory can be achieved in the here and now of this life. And so, what we see here is that Paul seems to be emphasizing that as long as we are here in these perishable bodies – these tents, as he calls them in verse one – then we are *not* fully in the presence of the Lord, and therefore we have *not* achieved the ultimate glory the Lord has in store for us. The implication of him making that point is that some in Corinth may have been teaching that ultimate glory really was achievable in this life – in the here and now.

This view, this position that argued that glory was achievable in the here and now, seems to have had a particularly spiritual element to it in Corinth. And while we do not see many self-identifying Christians today saying that ultimate glory can be reached in *this* life through Christ, I wonder if we do not have our own form of that view in our secular culture. And I wonder if it is not a false view of glory that many of us Christians fall prey to as well. Maybe more often than we think.

Because the truth is that we are being promised glory in the here and now everywhere we look. Think about most ads that you see. Think about the images they present to you. As James K. A. Smith frequently points out, the ads that surround us in our culture do not primarily hold out claims about the products they are promoting, but the primary thing they seek to depict is an image of “the good life.” In other words, they present us with a little promise of glory in the here

and now. Whether it is the latest style, the newest piece of technology, that new car, that dream house, or something else, for many if not all of us, there are products or objects out there that seem to offer, in our imagination, some taste of ultimate glory in the here and now. They create a deep longing in us. We imagine what our lives might be like if we had that thing. And we imagine that thing granting us just a taste of glory in the here and now.

But of course it does not stop with products and advertising. It is really all around us. In our careers we imagine what success might look like, we hunger to climb the ladder, and we daydream about ‘arriving’ – about reaching our career height. And if we’re honest about how we imagine it, we have to admit that it most resembles a dream of achieving glory in the here and now.

You can find it other places as well. In our culture we are surrounded by images of idealized bodies – often finely toned, sometimes surgically enhanced, and almost always airbrushed and photoshopped to apparent perfection. They are all around us in our culture, on screens, billboards, magazines, and more, whether we look for them or not, and of course far more are available if we do decide to go looking. And if we are honest, we will recognize that those images each try to offer us some form of glory in the here and now. If we are honest, we can recognize that what often draws us to these images is a belief, deep down, that if we could either look like those images ourselves, or possess someone who looked just like those images, then we would find some kind of ultimate glory in the here and now.

And it is present beyond that. In the perfected looking houses, meals, and crafts on Pinterest or in a magazine. In the promises of the latest self-help or child-rearing book we are reading. In the vacation pictures of others on social media we are feeling envy over. Everywhere are promises of glory in the here and now. If we just had that thing, if we just looked like that, if we could just have that experience, if we could only achieve that goal – then we too could have glory in the here and now. Or so we so often think.

Of course, when we step back for a minute, we know it’s a lie. If we think about it critically we know these things cannot deliver what they seem to offer. We know the promises are hollow. We know they will not give glory in the here and now.

But so often, without thinking, often unconsciously, we begin to live as if they could. We begin to live as if these areas of life could give us ultimate glory in the here and now.

This is, of course, is what the Bible refers to as idolatry. And idolatry has a number of traits, but one consistent trait in our setting, as, in a way, with the Corinthians, is that it promises glory in the here and now. Another trait, however, is that it cannot really deliver.

So the first problematic view that the Apostle Paul points out is our tendency to locate ultimate glory in the here and now.

The other problematic view is its opposite. Rather than look for glory in the here and now, we locate ultimate glory in a future escape from the physical world.

This point comes out in verses 1-4 where Paul makes it clear that while his hope for glory is not something he expects to achieve in the here and now, it is also *not* merely a hope for spiritual escape from this world. It is not a hope for future disembodiment.

We see this in verses three and four, where Paul talks about how we groan, not to leave this world, not to leave our bodies – not, as he puts it, to be “found naked” or “unclothed” – but rather that what we desire, what we groan for, is an even more solid and substantial physical body. We’ll consider that more in a little bit, but for the moment, let’s observe that just as Paul points out the flaws in the view that glory is achievable in the here and now, so Paul is also certain to identify and oppose any view that would seek to locate glory in an escape from the physical world. Paul’s future hope is *not* located in a future disembodied existence.

But historically the church has struggled with this error even more than the first one. Historically we Christians have tended to disparage the physical world, and along with it, our physical bodies.

One example that immediately comes to mind for me is the gospel song “I’ll Fly Away.” Now, I should say, that Rachel and the girls and I love that song musically. It plays at times in our home, on one of our Pandora stations. Olive and Rosie like to dance to it. But the words at some points make me cringe.

“When the shadows of this life have gone, I’ll fly away  
Like a bird from these prison walls I’ll fly, I’ll fly away  
Oh how glad and happy when we meet, I’ll fly away  
No more cold iron shackles on my feet, I’ll fly away”

“Shadows”? “Prison walls”? “Cold iron shackles”? I’m pretty sure the song is talking about the physical world and our physical bodies. The song is about what we will leave behind upon death, and it seems to celebrate being freed from a physical body. And the views expressed in it are not new, they’re not original. But they are highly problematic. They come from early Greek philosophy that disparaged the physical world and the body, and that view still exists today in the outlook of many Christians. We far too easily look at the physical world negatively – as a thing to be escaped.

But here’s the thing – as you read 2 Corinthians 5:1-5, it is very clear that when it came to the physical body, Paul did NOT want to fly away from it. Yes, to be sure, he longed to be with the Lord. But his ultimate hope was that his body would be renewed and remade, swallowed up in life, further clothed, made more solid and substantial – not discarded as if it were a cold, shackled prison.

Unfortunately, the Christian Church has suffered from this negative view of the body and the physical world on and off for much of its history. We are interested in the spiritual world (by which we usually mean the non-material world), rather than the physical. We don’t bother ourselves with maintaining this physical world, as we concern ourselves with the spiritual realm. And since the splits between the liberal and conservative churches in America, beginning in the early twentieth century, conservative Christians have far too often tended to just focus on the spiritually hungry and needy, and left tending to the physically hungry and needy to others.

What mattered, Christians seemed to say again and again, is the heart, the spiritual, the non-material. The physical world was far less important.

Of course, history, in God's providence, often has a way of showing us our own errors. And so the Church that once responded to a modern materialistic world by sometimes overemphasizing the importance of the non-material world over the physical world, and by sometimes overemphasizing the heart, while disparaging the meaning of the body, that same Church, a few generations later, now finds itself arguing with a postmodern secular culture that bodies and their physical realities *do in fact matter*, and what we do sexually, whom we marry, and how we identify ourselves as individuals, cannot be determined wholly by the heart, but must take seriously the importance and the meaning of our physical bodies.

And as we deal with those new cultural challenges, more and more Christians are beginning to see what Paul already asserted 2,000 years ago, that the physical, that the bodily, *does* matter. That this physical world is not just a ship that will one day sink, and that therefore our works in this world are not just polishing (or defacing, as the case may be) the brass on the Titanic. That this world matters. Because ultimate glory is *not* found in a future escape from this physical world.

And so we see in answer to our first question – “What problematic views is Paul addressing?” – that Paul is bringing to our attention our tendency either to locate ultimate glory in the here and now, or to locate ultimate glory in a future escape from the physical world.

If Paul is against these two options, what then is his alternative?

To answer that question, we need to look a bit closer at our text. Let's look at it in two halves. First, hear again from verses 1-4:

Paul writes: “<sup>1</sup>For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. <sup>2</sup>For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, <sup>3</sup>if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. <sup>4</sup>For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.”

What exactly is Paul talking about here?

Well what he's laying out are three different states of being: our current bodies, our future resurrection bodies, and the disembodied state we will experience between our death and the final resurrection. Let's look a little closer to see how he is doing that.

Let's look first in verse one. Here we see that Paul contrasts “the tent” – a phrase often used for our current human bodies, with “a house” from God, referring to our resurrection bodies. Now, there is some debate about whether the “house” described here is a reference to the renewed physical bodies we will receive at the resurrection, at Christ's future return to earth, or whether it is a reference to our disembodied state directly after death.

But there are several reasons to believe that Paul here is referring to our future physical resurrection bodies, and not our state right after death. For one thing, in verse one he speaks of these bodies as if they are more substantial than our current ones, not less. If our current bodies are tents, this future body is a house built by God, something eternal. It sounds more solid, not less. Secondly, Paul contrasts this house we look forward to with being “naked” in verse three and “unclothed” in verse four. In other words, he seems to be intentionally distinguishing between this future “house” and any disembodied non-physical state where just our soul will dwell with God. And third, the language at the end of verse four, where he speaks of receiving this “house” in terms of us being “further clothed,” and saying that “what is mortal” will be “swallowed up by life,” seems to parallel his language in 1 Corinthians 15, where he described the physical resurrection as “the mortal” putting on “immortality” and “death” being “swallowed up in victory.” So it appears that Paul’s focus in verses 1-4 is not on our disembodied state right after death, but on our future hope of being physically resurrected in a renewed physical world, at Christ’s return.

Now, some might point to the fact that in this passage Paul speaks of this new body being currently in heaven, in verse one. If it is in heaven, we might ask, doesn’t that seem to imply that the focus is on our spiritual life in heaven, instead of our future, physical, resurrected lives?

N.T. Wright is helpful here. He points out that when Paul speaks of “heaven” in his letters, he is less often speaking of it as the place we go to live once we die, and much more often speaking of it in terms of being. Wright explains, “*the place where the divinely intended future for the world is kept safely in store*, against the day when, like new props being brought out from the wings on stage, it will come to birth in the renewed world.” (Wright, 368). In other words, Paul does not say our new bodies are in heaven in order to assure us that that is where we will enjoy them, but to assure that those new bodies are being kept in a secure place, where we can know they will be safe up to the day they are given to us at the resurrection. Wright explains it like this – he says: “If I assure my guests that there is champagne for them in the fridge I am not suggesting that we all need to get into the fridge if we are to have the party.” Similarly, he explains, “The future body, the non-corruptible (and hence ‘eternal’) ‘house’, is at present ‘in the heavens’ as opposed to ‘on earth’ [...] but it will not stay there.” (Wright, 368).

So Paul speaks of our current life in perishable bodies, he speaks of our ultimate hope, in renewed and incorruptible physical bodies, at the resurrection, on the day when Christ returns to this world, but he also has something to say about where God’s people go between their own death and Christ’s second coming.

In verses 6-8 he explains:

“we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord,<sup>7</sup> for we walk by faith, not by sight.<sup>8</sup> Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.”

In these verses, Paul wants to assure us that at the time of death, God’s people are safe, happy, and secure, with the Lord. We can and should be encouraged and comforted by this. Paul assures us that in many ways this state of being with the Lord is far better than our current one. He says directly: “we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.”

But we also need to remember that earlier, in verses 1-4, Paul makes it clear that this disembodied state is *not* his ultimate hope or our ultimate glory. Because he also speaks of it as being “unclothed” and “naked.” Contrary to the Greek thinking of his time, and contrary to some of the sentimental thinking of our own day, Paul had no desire to be disembodied. Paul recognized that he was not just a spirit but a spirit and a body, and he did not look forward to the severing of spirit from body that comes at death, even if he *did* look forward to the comfort he would receive in God’s presence.

And so when all of this is put together, the Biblical picture of our future hope, the Biblical location of ultimate glory, begins to emerge.

What we learn here is that upon death, as our perishable bodies rest in their graves, our souls are present with God, and with him we experience peace, joy, and security. And that is good. And yet, Paul makes it clear that this is *not* where our ultimate hope is. For Paul, our ultimate hope comes with what follows that: The day when Christ will return to earth, when the trumpet will sound, and when all of Christ’s people will be raised from the dead – when our bodies will be resurrected and transformed into glorious, indestructible, eternal bodies, and our souls and bodies will be reunited, never to be separated again. And then, when God renews all things, and when heaven and earth reunite as one, we will live in God’s presence, and we will live in our renewed and incorruptible physical bodies on a renewed and an incorruptible earth. That is the Biblical hope, the Biblical description of ultimate glory.

So if, as we said, our tendency is to locate ultimate glory in the here and now, or to locate ultimate glory in a future escape from the physical world, Paul’s alternative – the Bible’s alternative – is to locate glory in the here but not yet. The Bible tells us to locate glory *in the here* – in the renewal of this physical world – but in the *not yet* – it is a future hope we wait for with the return of Christ.

So we see what problematic views Paul was addressing, we see what alternative view Paul was advocating; now we need to ask our third question: What difference does Paul think this makes in our lives?

What does any of this matter?

Is this just fun Bible trivia? Another topic for Christians to debate about? Does it mean anything at all for our day-to-day lives right now?

Paul seems to believe that it does.

Take a look at verses nine and ten again. After reflecting on these things, Paul writes, “So whether we are at home or away [meaning whether we are with God after death, or in this perishable body before death], we make it our aim to please him [that is, the Lord]. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”

Paul here sees a connection between these realities and how we are to live now. After indicating that our hope for glory is the hope of a bodily glory, Paul then reminds us that when we stand before the throne of Christ, we will be judged according to what we have done in the body in this

life. In other words, as our future is a bodily future, so in a sense the judgment is strongly connected to our bodily life.

So what exactly does that connection look like?

We said a minute ago that, for Paul, our ultimate glory is located in the *here* but *not yet*. And it turns out that both of those elements – both the “here” and the “not yet” – shape our Christian walk now.

So first, because our ultimate glory is *not yet*, we wait patiently rather than grasp for it now.

Because our ultimate glory is not yet, we wait patiently rather than grasp for it now.

And this news – this news that ultimate glory is unattainable in this life – should actually be a relief to us. This reminder that those promises for glory in the *here* and *now*, that we spoke about earlier, are a lie – that should actually bring us peace.

About a mile off the coast of northeast England is the small tidal island of Lindisfarne. And if you walk to the coast of the mainland closest to Lindisfarne, during high tide, you will see an island – an island that, if you sat down and thought about it, you would *not* try to get to on foot or by car. And yet, if you wait by the shore until the tide goes down, in a few short hours, a walking path and a causeway for cars would emerge as the water level dropped down below them. And once the tide was low enough, cars and pedestrians would travel back and forth, to and from the island easily.

In other words, when it comes to getting to Lindisfarne, timing is key.

And yet, despite this obvious fact, despite the many signs and postings about the importance of timing and when it is safe and not safe to cross on the causeway, according to certain tourist websites, a car gets stuck on the causeway in the water during high tide about once a month, and it is not uncommon for rescue crews to need to be dispatched by boat or air to rescue the car’s occupants. You can actually find pictures and videos of such rescues online. And it always happens because someone decides they do not need to take the timing into account. They decide that they or their vehicle are strong enough to make it to the island on their own power right now, regardless of the timing of the tides, and they try, and the water rises, and the rev the engine, and the car floods with water, and soon they and their family are on the roof of their car, waving frantically for help.

If you want to get to Lindisfarne, accepting that the tides dictate to you when you can get there is key.

If you refuse to accept the timing dictated by the tides, your attempts to reach Lindisfarne might just destroy you. But if you accept the timing dictated by the tides, you will not only be safe, but also free to use your time and energy for something good and productive, as you wait for the tide to drop, rather than wasting both on an exercise in futility.

And the same is true of the glory that God has prepared for us. If you refuse to accept the timing of God, and the future-ness of glory, it might just destroy you. You could pour your life out

trying to grasp at glory in this life. You can drive into the ocean waters, you can rev the engine, you can persist in your conviction that you can make it by your own effort, but like those who try to drive to Lindisfarne at high tide, you will fail.

But if you accept God's timing for glory, if you accept that you will not get there now, but that your calling is simply to wait patiently, and use your time and efforts in service to Christ in the meantime, then you will experience not only safety but peace. And when the time is right the path will open up, and you will stroll there on dry ground.

Where are you trying to grasp glory in this life? Where do you think you can reach some form of glorification now? Is it with your family, or your career? Your home or your body? Your possessions or the physical possession of someone else? Where are you trying to grasp at glory now? And what would it look like, in your life, if you ceased that striving and devoted that effort to enjoying God's good gifts now, and working instead for His glory? How would that change your life? What would that look like? Where do you need to back away from the flooded causeway, and submit to God's timing for glory?

That is the first implication of Paul's point here – that because our ultimate glory is *not yet*, we wait patiently for it rather than grasp at it now.

But second implication is that, because our ultimate glory is here, in the body, in the physical world, the good works that we do now, in the body, in the physical world, matter.

Because our ultimate glory is here, in the body, the good works that we do now, in the body, matter.

And this is important, because much of the work that many of us do, day in and day out, is physical – is bodily. It might be acts of love and service to a parent, a child, a spouse, or a friend. It might be a job or career, where we either do physical work with our own hands, or where we manage physical things for an objective. Our entire lives are bodily and physical. Much of our labor, and especially our works of love, are bodily and physical. So it *matters* whether the bodily and physical really matter to God or not. And we can often doubt that they do.

There is an episode of the Twilight Zone from 1961 called "The Rip Van Winkle Caper." In it, four men in 1961 rob a train of a massive quantity of gold. They know they are wanted by all law enforcement, and so their plan of escape involves fleeing to Death Valley, and using special glass caskets and a special combination of gasses designed by one of their members – a professor of chemistry and physics – to put them in a state of suspended animation for 100 years, so that when they wake up in the future, in 2061, they will be forgotten as criminals, but still rich with a large pile of gold.

In other words, these men leave everything of their former lives behind, and base their lives around the value of this gold. The suspended animation works – for most of them. But soon the men are at each other's throats. They are constantly fighting over the gold. They make the value of the gold a central priority, and are willing to sacrifice other things for it. As they try to trek out of Death Valley to the nearest town, one by one they perish. At the end, one man is left, walking along the road, clutching the gold he can still carry.

Finally, he keels over. And as he lay dying, a futuristic car finally pulls up, and a man from 2061 gets out and comes to the dying thief's side. The thief offers him a share of the gold in exchange for water and a ride to town. And before the man from the future can answer, the thief dies. The other man picks up the gold bar that the thief had been holding, and walks back to his car where his wife sits waiting for him.

"Who is it, George? What's the matter with him?" she asks. "Some old tramp." he answers. "That's what he was. He's dead."

She points to the gold bar in the man's hand.

"What's that?" she asks.

"Gold," he answers. "That's what he said it was. He wanted to give it to me in exchange for a lift into town."

"Gold?" she replies, "Now, what in the world would he be doing with this gold?"

"I don't know," the man answers. "He was probably off his rocker. Anybody walking in the desert this time of day would be off his rocker. Can you imagine that?" he goes on "He offered this to me as if it was really worth something."

His wife nods in response, also puzzled. "You know," she says, "wasn't it worth something once, George? I mean, didn't people use gold for money?"

"Sure," he says, "about a hundred years or so ago, before they found a way of manufacturing it."

And with that, the man tosses the gold onto the ground as if it were worthless, and drives on.

I think we are sometimes worried that this is how Jesus will one day treat our physical work, our bodily lives lived for his kingdom. We are worried that we will pour ourselves out in physical and bodily works of service, in deeds of love for God and those he has put in our lives, and that on the judgement day we will present that physical and bodily work to Jesus and he will look at it toss it aside, and say "Can you imagine that? ... This person is offering me this physical and bodily work as if it was really worth something. I know those kinds of physical things might have once seemed to matter; now it is only the spiritual and the non-physical that have any value in my kingdom."

I think, though we might not articulate it, we often feel this way. We far too often look down on physical and bodily works. We assume they have less kingdom value than something non-physical, something intellectual, or spiritual.

But Paul here tells us that that is NOT the case. Christ will *not*, on the judgment day, disregard our physical, bodily lives and labors. Both our good works done in the body and our sins done in the body will matter to him. The physical world will not pass away but be renewed. Our bodies will not be discarded but remade, just as Christ's body was not discarded but remade. And he will care what we did with our bodies in this life. He will *not* cast it aside as meaningless or worthless.

Francis of Assisi comes much closer to the truth Paul expresses here. Shortly after his conversion, when Francis was laboring to repair a local church, his brother saw his poverty and his financially unprofitable labor, and mockingly said to his friend, "You might tell Francis to sell you a penny's worth of his sweat." When Francis heard this, he replied enthusiastically, "I will sell that sweat to my Lord at a high price." ["Legend of the Three Companions," VIII, p. 83]. In other words, Francis knew that his Lord valued his physical work more, not less, than those around him. And Francis similarly encouraged the women who formed their own order in

response to his ministry, telling them that though he knew they were weary, they should also have peace, because, he told them, “You will sell this fatigue at a very high price.” [“The Canticle of Exhortation for the Ladies of San Damiano” p. 115].

Now Francis’s point was not about purchasing salvation, but about how our Lord values things. Francis knew that our Lord does not despise what is done in the body, he does not despise our physical work, he does not cast it aside like a worthless substance, but he values it far above any worldly employer, and he treats our sweat shed in righteous deeds like gold.

Do you think of your deeds in the body that way? Paul does. How would it change your daily mindset if you began to think as he did?

Paul here, in this text, has sought to give us a right view of our future hope, a right view of where the glory God has prepared for us is located, so that we might better live out this life now, in this body.

And he is not the only one who saw that connection. During his earthly ministry, our Lord always had not only his death but also his bodily resurrection in mind. And with that future hope in view he was able to give himself fully to those around him in love – to serve the physically sick and the spiritually sick, the physically needy and the spiritually needy, the physically hungry and the spiritually hungry, the physically dead and the spiritually dead. That was how our Lord lived his life, and he was rewarded with a name that is above every name.

With our eyes also on the fact that we too will one day be raised, just as he was, according to his grace and mercy, to everlasting resurrection life, let us now, in this life, seek to follow in our Lord’s footprints, living lives in the body that will please him on that great day when we stand before his throne.

Amen.

**This sermon draws on material from:**

Barnett, Paul. *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. NICNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997.  
Wright, N.T. *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003.

**Sources for illustrations and examples:**

**Regarding the island of Lindisfarne:**

<http://www.visitnorthumberland.com/coast/holy-island/crossing-times>  
<https://www.lindisfarne.org.uk/general/travel.htm>  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lindisfarne>

**The Twilight Zone:**

“Rip Van Winkle Caper” Written by Rod Serling. Season 2, Episode 24. Aired April 21, 1961.

**From Francis of Assisi:**

“The Canticle of Exhortation for the Ladies of San Damiano (1225)” in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, Vol I: The Saint*. Edited by Regis J. Armstrong, et al. New York: New City Press, 1999. Page 115.

“The Legend of the Three Companions (1241-1247)” in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, Vol II: The Founder*. Edited by Regis J. Armstrong, et al. New York: New City Press, 2000. Pages 82-83.