

The Importance of “Knowing”

We are being bombarded with so much information- good and otherwise, that it is difficult to know what to believe. Even if we are able to shift out the chaff for a few kernels of truth, it remains difficult to discern how to respond accordingly. It is, indeed, a confusing time. And for many if not most of us, confusion leads to anxiety, anxiety leads to fear, fear leads to panic, and panic leads to problems- either in the form of paralysis or pursuing wrong courses.

Please (re)read 2Corinthians 5:1-10. Go ahead, I’ll wait here until you’re finished. Before proceeding, please understand that what follows is not meant to be a contextual explanation of this passage, but merely some observational considerations from it.

Perhaps because of all that is going on around us, and all the “information” (true and otherwise) that we’re being given concerning our world, did certain words from this text resonate for and with you? Words like “groan” and “longing” from v.2, “burdened” from v.4, “absent” in vv.8-9, or even “recompensed” from v.10? We certainly feel “burdened” with our current situation, both from health and economic concern. We’re also likely “groan(ing)” from the restrictions we’re being forced to endure and all the people and places from which we are “absent.” And, surely we’re “longing” for things to return to some level of normalcy. Perhaps these things have even left us feeling a bit “naked” or exposed, v.3, or that our “earthly tent” or “house” is being “torn down,” v.1.

Now notice, from the same reading, some different words: “clothed with our heavenly dwelling” in v.2; “prepared” and “pledge” in v.5, “always of good courage” in v.6, “faith” in v.7, “at home with the Lord” in v.8, and “pleasing to Him,” v.9.

What’s the “key” to moving from the first set of words and feelings to the second set? We might be tempted to say, “Walking by *faith* rather than by *sight*” from v.7, and indeed that’s a substantial factor. But answer one important question: “What must precede faith?” Or stated differently, “On what must faith be built?” While Romans 10:17 provides the answer as “*hearing by the word of Christ*,” what does our text in 2Corinthians 5 say?

Please reread v.1, and realize that everything in this passage is predicated on “knowing” something. What is it? That “*we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*” Therefore, “walking by *faith*, not by *sight*” in v.7 (and everything else associated with in this passage) is dependent on this *knowledge* from v.1.

Do you “know”- not just tacitly acquiesce to as in “Yeah, everyone *knows* that,” but at your very core and without any doubt whatsoever, do you “know” that YOU “*have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*”? That YOU have been endowed by YOUR Creator with an immortal soul that will continue to live after your body (that *earthly tent/house*) is dead (*i.e. torn down*)? If YOU really “know” this, then:

- You will “long to be clothed” with that “*eternal dwelling from heaven*,” v.2;
- You will “not be found naked” (exposed) when that time comes, v.3;
- You will “groan” and “be burdened” in and with the “*earthly tent/house*” until then, v.4;
- You will recognize that such is the “*purpose*” for which God has “*prepared*” you, v.5;
- You will be “*of good courage*” and “know” that “*while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord*,” v.6;

- You will *“walk by faith, not by sight,” v.7;*
- You will *“prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord,” v.8;*
- You will *“have as our (read YOUR) ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him,” v.9;* and,
- You will be confident that at the final *“recompense,”* YOU will receive the *“good”* rather than the *“bad”* eternal destiny; because...

You *“knew”* that day was coming all along, and lived accordingly. Now, do you *“know”*- really *know*, that *“if YOUR earthly tent/house is torn down”* (and it will be- either *now* or *later*), YOU *“have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”*? If so, then *“walk by faith, not by sight”* and *“always be of good courage”* and *“prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord”!* (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)