

**1210 Preaching Christ, hearts renewed day by day, by faith, new creation - 2Co(4)1-(5)21  
(by Whirlwind)**

First, we discussed that Paul did not preach himself but Christ Jesus as Lord—He is the light, the glory of God, revealed on the face of Jesus Christ, while we are like treasures in earthen vessels. Second, he spoke of "though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day," and our focus is on eternal things. Third, we see that we walk by faith, not by sight. This briefly explains Paul's fearlessness in the face of death and discusses the difference between "before the Christ's judgment seat" and "before the judgment seat of Christ" in the Bible. It also citing a previous article for further discussion of the topic that the Bible teaches that our logic deduction aligns with God's but our axioms are fundamentally different. Finally, it addresses the Christ's love motivating us and the new creation. In salvation, God caused the sinless Jesus to take the place of our sinful selves—that is, God reconciled the world to Himself in Christ, making us a new creation in Christ. It also discusses the fact that all have sinned, citing a previous article.

Please note that this article is an expansion of the topicwise Bible study held on Sunday (10/4/26). Unless otherwise specified, verses refer to those in NASB95. If this article refers previous articles, they can all be found on our website, '<https://a-christian-voice.com/>'; click on 'Understanding Spiritual Life'.

**1. Paul did not preach himself but Christ Jesus as Lord**

"Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh."(2 Corinthians 4:1-11)

Paul knew that he had received the apostleship through God's mercy, and he deeply understood that "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life."(1 Timothy

**1:15-16) He called himself the worst of sinners, for the Scriptures make it very clear: "...you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it."(Galatians 1:13) Finally, he was saved when he saw God in a blinding light (cf. Acts 22:4-16 and 1 Corinthians 15:3-8). It is a fact that he did not lose heart; we have discussed this and will discuss it again later. The result was that "...we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."(2 Corinthians 4:2)**

**He said, "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."(2 Corinthians 4:3-4) The "god of this world" refers to Satan, because the Scripture clearly states regarding Jesus' temptation by Satan (the devil): "Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.""(Matthew 4:8-9) Satan often uses lies to deceive people, which is why Peter said, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."(1 Peter 5:8) Paul was very clear: "...Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake."(2 Corinthians 4:4-5) He hoped that through his preaching, others would choose to believe in the Lord.**

**He said, "For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."(2 Corinthians 4:6) Isn't this exactly what Jesus Himself said? "I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness."(John 12:46) Look, what did Jesus say to Philip? "..."Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"(John 14:9) This is what He meant by "I and the Father are one."(John 10:30). Therefore, the glory of God will undoubtedly be revealed in the face of Jesus Christ.**

**When he told us, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, ..." (2 Corinthians 4:7), this refers to "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?"(1 Corinthians 6:19) That treasure is the indwelling Holy Spirit, and that earthen vessel is us. The reason for this arrangement is "...so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves."(2 Corinthians 4:7) The result is that "we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed."(2 Corinthians 4:8-9) We will be weak; we will stumble. But as long as the Holy Spirit has not yet determined our time of death, we can rise again from our falls through the Holy Spirit. Paul's attitude was, "...with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."(Philippians 1:20-21) Thus, we're "always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live**

are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh."(2 Corinthians 4:10-11)

## **2. Though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day**

"So death works in us, but life in you. But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore we also speak, knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."(2 Corinthians 4:12-18)

We see that Paul believed and declared, "So death works in us, but life in you."(2 Corinthians 4:12) Indeed, "For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day."(2 Corinthians 4:15-16) For "...it is appointed for men to die once ..." (Hebrews 9:27), so it will be that "...though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day."(2 Corinthians 4:16) And "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."(2 Corinthians 4:17-18) We set our minds on eternal things, certainly not on the relatively fleeting and light afflictions of this world; moreover, we have Jesus' promise: "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."(John 16:33)

## **3. We walk by faith, not by sight**

"For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord— for we walk by faith, not by sight— we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of

**Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. We are not again commending ourselves to you but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have an answer for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart."(2 Corinthians 5:1-12)**

**The Lord Jesus Himself spoke of an eternal dwelling in heaven: "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."(John 14:2-3) In these passages, He also clearly indicated His second coming.**

**Because Paul was in Christ, he could say, "For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."(2 Corinthians 5:1) This earthly tent refers to our mortal bodies, and he then explains the difference between the earthly tent and the eternal home in heaven. Longing for that home from heaven, he says, "For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life."(2 Corinthians 5:4)**

**I used to think Paul said, "...because we do not want to be unclothed ..." (2 Corinthians 5:4), because he was afraid of death, but now I realize—how could he possibly be afraid of death! He was in Christ and even knew that his time to die was drawing near, as the Scripture says, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come."(2 Timothy 4:6) He truly was "...but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life."(2 Corinthians 5:4) But he was a man on a mission; knowing his time had not yet come, he explained why he remained on earth: "yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith."(Philippians 1:24-25)**

**He knew clearly, "Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge (G728)." (2 Corinthians 5:5) A pledge is like the down payment made when buying a house; the remainder, plus interest, must be gradually paid off within a set period. Therefore, the indwelling Holy Spirit that Christians receive is a pledge—it signifies justification, not sanctification. To achieve sanctification, one must walk the path of sanctification to ultimately be conformed to the image of Jesus. There is no set timeframe for achieving this; it depends on individual circumstances. It is even possible that some may never achieve it in their lifetime. Thus, the similarity to a mortgage ends here since the mortgage has to be paid off in a fixed amount of time. But we must understand that God is just, as the Scripture says, "...From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more."(Luke 12:48) He knew this was only the beginning; having set out on the path of sanctification, "...we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth ..." (2**

**Corinthians 4:2) In fact, as we just mentioned, walking the path of sanctification is what every Christian should do; Christ is the Lord of every Christian.**

**He said, "Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord (G2962)." (2 Corinthians 5:6) The "Lord" referred to here is the Lord Jesus, consistent with this passage, which uses the same word, "Lord (G2962)." The passage is "Therefore when the Lord (G2962) knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus (G2424) Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were)." (John 4:1-2)**

**Regarding "for we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7), the Bible gives us a good example where we can see the results. When, "...in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea," (Matthew 14:25) "Peter said to Him, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:28-31) As long as Peter kept his eyes fixed on Jesus in faith, walking on the water posed no problem at all; but as soon as he focused on his immediate environment, he had no choice but to rely on Jesus to reach out and help him! Therefore, a Christian's conduct must be based on faith—but do not confuse self-confidence with faith; you must be able to discern between the two! Another point to note is that although Jesus called Peter a man of little faith, Peter was at least initially walking on the water by faith. We, however, may sometimes lack even the faith Peter had at the beginning!**

**Please note: this passage is not saying we should not rely on what we see, nor does it mean—as some people think—that we cannot use logic! Quite the opposite: we rely on our logic every day to navigate life; it's just that our "personal, changeable axioms" differ, leading to different decisions in the same situation. Previously, in "260828 The Bible says that our logical deduction is the same as God's—so where is the difference?", we clearly explained these "personal, changeable axioms" and illustrated with examples how God's axioms are absolutely different from ours. We also noted that He can open our eyes at any time and in any place to transform our personal, changeable axioms. Please look up that short article.**

**He put it well: "we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him." (2 Corinthians 5:8-9) It goes on to say, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10) We must examine this term "judgment seat (G968) of Christ," because it is often misunderstood; we must interpret its meaning based on "what God tells through the Bible is consistent."**

**According to Strong's Concordance, the term "judgment seat (G968)" appears 13 times, with 9 of those occurrences in the Book of Acts. Its meaning is quite clear, as in this**

passage: "On an appointed day Herod, having put on his royal apparel, took his seat (G968, judgment seat) on the rostrum and began delivering an address to them." (Acts 12:21) Then let us look at this passage: "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them." (Revelation 20:11) "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son." (John 5:22) Thus, the One seated there is the Lord Jesus Christ; in other words, before the great white throne is indeed before Christ's judgment seat, but it is not the same as being before the "judgment seat of Christ." This indicates that the two are different, so we might ask, "Is there a distinction between them?" Let us see what the Bible says.

The Book of Revelation says, "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."" (Revelation 7:9-10) These people were already in heaven before the great white throne appeared, but the Scripture also say, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10) Those people must have already been judged before the "judgment seat of Christ"; otherwise, it would contradict "what God tells us through the Bible is consistent." Therefore, "before the Christ's judgment seat" and "before the judgment seat of Christ" are different.

#### **4. Christ's love motivating us and the new creation**

"For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind (G4993, sober), it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:13-21)

The love of Christ compelled Paul to be utterly consumed with passion for God, to be diligent for the sake of the church, and to serve as an example to them, just as Paul said to the elders of the church in Ephesus: "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He

Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"(Acts 20:35) It is the duty of elders to set an example, as the Scripture says: "shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock."(1 Peter 5:2-3)

God's work is truly marvelous: "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."(2 Corinthians 5:21) We were, as the Scripture says, "...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."(Romans 3:23) This is often difficult for people to accept when the gospel is preached; they might say, "I don't kill or set fires—how can you say I've sinned?" First, the Bible defines sin as disobedience to God. God has commanded us not to murder or lie, among other things; therefore, these are all sins. Previously, in "1096 Yu Hongjie's Discipleship of Newself – Unbiblical Places (1)," under the section "1. Definition of sin," we devoted considerable space to explaining this point. Please refer to that article.

Next, let's examine from both a biblical and experiential perspective whether all people have sinned. First, from an experiential perspective: who has never told a lie? Next, from a biblical perspective: after Adam sinned, when he "...had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth."(Genesis 5:3) Since Seth was like Adam after he had sinned, Seth was born with sin—in other words, this is similar to heredity. We are all descendants of Adam and are therefore born with sin; thus, all people have sinned. In fact, we will discover that, "...I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not."(Romans 7:18) Therefore, unless one is in Christ, one will never have the freedom to refrain from sin.

From an experiential perspective, a person does not need to teach a child to lie; the child will lie and sin on his own. Some might cite the Old Testament account of the Israelites entering Canaan, when the LORD commanded them to utterly destroy the native inhabitants (see Deuteronomy 20:16-17), and naturally ask, "What sin have the infants committed? To kill even infants—Isn't that too cruel?" If you looked at the full picture, you wouldn't say that, because the Lord gave them at least four hundred years until their iniquity was full (see Genesis 15:13-16). During that time, how many infants were born into the same environment, only to grow up and commit the same sins? The LORD is merciful and has already given them so many chances, but "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; ..." (Psalm 89:14). The LORD is all-knowing; how could His righteousness and justice not bring about their final judgment?

The Scripture says, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."(Romans 5:8). We are now "being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."(Romans 3:24) Seeing Jesus' love, how can we not be inspired! He said, "...one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf."(2 Corinthians 5:14-15) This is also what he meant when he said, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in

me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."(Galatians 2:20) "Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh (G4561); even though we have known Christ according to the flesh (G4561), yet now we know Him in this way no longer."(2 Corinthians 5:16)

Truly, "...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."(2 Corinthians 5:17) "Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation."(2 Corinthians 5:18) This is precisely what he emphasized: "Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God."(Romans 1:1) "...God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."(2 Corinthians 5:19-20) He could only plead, hoping that those who heard would have ears to listen and would ultimately make the right decision to believe in the Lord.