

**...to be Absent
from the
Body...**

...and to be present with the Lord. Paul tells us that when believers die and leave their earthly bodies, they are instantly with our Lord. He tells us that we are confident, we can be sure of this, because we walk by faith and not by sight.

2 Corinthians 5:6-8

Therefore **we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:** (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) **We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.**

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, **the evidence of things not seen.**

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

We have this confidence because we believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day. That is the gospel that saves us and all believers.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Moreover, brethren, **I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you**, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; **By which also ye are saved**, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that **Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:**

As soon as we believe in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection for our salvation, we are placed into His body—the Church, the Body of Christ. So, at this moment, all of us are in Christ, who is seated at the right hand of God. As soon as we are separated from our bodies, our soul and spirit will instantly be there.

Ephesians 5:30

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

It is not unusual or wrong to be sad at the death of someone we know and love. Even Jesus wept with Lazarus' friends and family after his death. Jesus knew He could bring Lazarus back from the dead and still His compassion and love for His creation caused Him to weep with them in their sorrow.

John 11:32

Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. **Jesus wept.**

Paul tells us about believers who have died. We have a certain hope that Jesus will meet all believers in the clouds, and we will forever be with Him. Friends and loved ones who have died

will be coming back with Jesus, and we will see them again.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, **that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.** For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, **that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord** shall not prevent them which are asleep.

Our current situation is that we are in Christ, who is seated at the right hand of His Father, but our earthly bodies are keeping us here on earth. Our ultimate destination is heaven, where Christ is now.

Ephesians 1:20-23

Which he wrought in Christ, when **he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,** Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not

only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And **hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body,** the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Paul tells us that we should set our affections, our focus, on heaven, and not worry about the things here on earth. It is difficult for us because we still live here!

Colossians 3:1-4

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. **Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.** For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. **When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.**

Paul tells the Philippians that our conversation is in heaven! Think about that! We have conversations about things that we are familiar with. We have conversations with people we are familiar with. So having our conversation in heaven means that we are familiar with heaven

and should be talking about it and helping others know about our hope!

Philippians 3:20-21

For our conversation is **in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,** according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

It may sound a little crazy that we could feel familiar enough to actually have a conversation about heaven. But Solomon tells us in Ecclesiastes that there is no new thing under the sun—that means there is nothing new on earth. So everything on earth is a shadow or a reflection of something found in heaven! There will be a lot of things in heaven that will be very familiar. It will feel like home.

Ecclesiastes 1:9-10

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and **there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See,**

**this is new? it hath been already of old time,
which was before us.**

All believers have the Holy Ghost in their hearts to reveal the wonderful things that God has prepared for us—that we know the things that God freely gives us! That’s how we know that heaven will be a wonderful place.

1 Corinthians 2:9-12

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? **even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.**

We cannot even imagine all the wonderful things God has in store for us!

Ephesians 3:20-21

Now **unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,** Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

We have already have all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ!

Ephesians 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:**

We are already seated in heavenly places with Christ because we are in Christ.

Ephesians 2:6

And hath raised us up together, and **made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:**

Paul knew what it was like to be with the Lord Jesus Christ. He was given a special ministry by Jesus to be the apostle to the Gentiles.

1 Corinthians 14:37

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, **let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.**

1 Corinthians 15:8

And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

Paul wanted to go back and be with Jesus Christ, but Paul also knew he needed to stay in the flesh, to complete his ministry.

Philippians 1:21-24

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, **having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.**

It is important for us to understand, just like with Paul, that we have a job to do for God here on earth.

Philippians 3:17

Brethren, **be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.**

Many believers think about eternal life starting as soon as they leave their bodies, but eternal life starts as soon as a person becomes a believer— here in our earthly bodies, which become God’s temples as soon as you believe.

1 Corinthians 3:9

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, **ye are God's building.**

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

During his ministry on earth, Paul was allowed to visit heaven. Paul did not know whether he was in his body or out of his body when he went. So, even though we have to leave our bodies here on

earth to go to heaven, we will still feel like we have a body. Remember, repetition in the Bible means that something is important and Paul says twice that he did not know whether or not he was in his body.

2 Corinthians 12:2-4

I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, **(whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)** such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, **(whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)** How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Paul tells us that our earthly bodies are like bare grain which must be placed in the earth—die—before they can be quickened, made alive. He continues the seed comparison by saying that, like seeds, the body that is buried—planted—is not the same as the body that will be quickened—given by God.

1 Corinthians 15:35-38

But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? **Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.**

Our flesh and blood bodies are mortal and corruptible. They need to be changed to immortal and incorruptible bodies for us to be able to live in them in heaven.

1 Corinthians 15:50-51

Now this I say, brethren, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.** Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, **and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.**

The Church, the Body of Christ will take its part in the principalities and powers in heavenly places.

Ephesians 3:10

To the intent that now unto **the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,**

Paul calls heaven our heavenly kingdom. The Jews are promised an earthly kingdom with Christ as their king. We are God's heavenly people, Christ is the head of the Church, His body.

2 Timothy 4:18

And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and **will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom:** to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

So if this earthly tabernacle, our body, is destroyed—which is not a bad thing for believers—we already have a house in the heavens, in Christ. All of us know that we are burdened by our earthly bodies with illness, infirmity, injury, and aging and we can desire to be clothed with immortality, life.

2 Corinthians 5:1-8

For we know that if **our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.** For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For **we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.** Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

Paul tells us that no matter what we are suffering through here on earth, it cannot compare with the glory that shall be revealed in us. And it is not just we who are suffering here on earth. All living things have mortal bodies that are corruptible and cause them pain.

All living things suffer from the bondage of corruption. We are all waiting to be clothed with immortality which will take place at the adoption,

the redemption of our bodies from mortal to immortal and corruptible to incorruptible.

Romans 8:18-25

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. **For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.**

Paul calls this, “our hope.” It is faith that allows us to wait patiently for something that we cannot see.

Romans 8:24

For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? **But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.**

This hope is certain, we are not hoping for something that may not happen. Paul tells Titus that God promised us eternal life before the world began, and God cannot lie.

Titus 1:2

In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

Titus 2:13

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

Titus 3:7

That being justified by his grace, **we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**

Here is our hope!

1 Thessalonians 4:16

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then **we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.** Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

There are a lot of things that we cannot know about the glorious life we will have after our death. It can cause anxiety at times for even the strongest believer. Paul tells us that we know about the future is like seeing it through a dark glass, but when we get there, we will know everything like we are known by God!

1 Corinthians 13:12

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

God knows the number of hairs on your head.

Matthew 10:30

But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

God formed each of us in our mother's womb!
He knows everything about us.

Jeremiah 1:4-5

Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, **Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee;** and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

And we are promised that, in the future, we will know everything that thoroughly! What a wonder thing to look forward to!