

## Beautiful Bodies

Written by Bob Stone

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In my last reflection, we took a look at beautiful pain. We discussed how often our perspective is focused only on the external, the painful process in which we are involved. But God sees the internal result that comes at the end of the process. We see pain as an intruder, an enemy, but God sees it as the brush, the sculpting tool for the masterpiece.

Consider what the masterpiece will look like if we cooperate with the Master Designer! The promise of God is that *“He will make everything beautiful in its time.”* But how can that be when the ending of life is often anything but beautiful? The answer is obvious; this earthly life isn't all the life that we as believers will enjoy. We are assured of an eternal life in Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:5 affirms that truth. In this passage Paul shares three great reasons why we know something more beautiful is coming.

**The first reason** to indicate something beautiful is coming is the daily renewal that all true believers experience. Verse 16—*“We do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.”* That's disturbing and exciting. All of us have to face the fact that the outward man is deteriorating—growing weak and feeble. But whatever the length of my life, I don't need to become discouraged, nor do you . Why? All believers who are allowing Christ to be Lord of their lives, and are allowing Him to do His work of renewal in their life, have an opposite process to aging and pain going on in them at the same time. While there is a slow, or sometimes fast lessening of our power which leads to death, there is at the same time, a contrast in action taking place as well. There is an increase in wisdom, a mellowing of the spirit, the growth of love, the development of patience, and a harvest of the fruit of the Spirit.

Oh, the body may tremble as we grow older and feel increasing pain, but the spirit will broaden, grow and be renewed day by day.

So in other words, the outer man—the body, will lose the battle, but the inner man will be renewed and grow in strength and beauty and wisdom. That's great news to the believer.

Now why is life lived this way? It doesn't make sense on a natural level. It seems all of life has been put together backwards, from an earthly perspective. In fact, we might say: *“life must be lived forward, but we understand it backwards*

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.” Think of it. By the time we learn to live, it’s over.

**About the time the face clears up, the mind gets fuzzy.□ We grow too soon old and too late smart.**

Why? What’s the point of life? Here’s the point. All who know Christ are getting ready. We are being prepared for the real life to come. God has something more in mind for us—something beautiful and glorious. What is the basis for this beautiful renewal and preparation? Paul gives it to us in 2 Cor. 4:17

—*“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”*

**The second reason** we as believers know something more beautiful is coming is by observing our trials and hardships. There is a direct tie between the trials of our faith and the eternal glory and beauty we will achieve. Paul is saying that these trials are achieving (creating) the glory. Did you hear that? Our response to the trials and troubles of life, in the strength of the Spirit, is preparing our eternal home! That is why Paul calls his trials light and momentary. So the greater the trials, the troubles, and the test, the greater the glory—the greater the home God has prepared for us. Life then is a grand building project. Our destination is secured by our faith and submission to Christ.

Our eternal home

is built by our response to the trials and tests of our life.

Therefore, **the third reason** we know something more beautiful is being achieved is found in 2 Cor. 4:18--

*“So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”*

The visible is only temporary (my body, the stuff of life) is momentary. But what is unseen however, is eternal. What will be beautiful in eternity? 2 Cor. 5:1-4 says,

*“Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.*

2]

*Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling,*

3]

*because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.*

4]

*For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.”*

What is beyond life? Listen carefully to what we know. **We know** we live in an earthly tent. It’s our physical body and it’s temporary.

**We know**

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the building we are moving to is not made with human hands.

### **We know**

this new building will take over when this earthly tent is destroyed.

### **We know**

this building is from God, and is built by the Spirit working in us.

### **We know**

this building is eternal in heaven.

So when a Christian believer dies, it's an object lesson to all of us. Their life is reminding us that how we live this life, even up to the end is accomplishing something for the believer in eternity . God is building us a new and beautiful body!!

As you look at all the theories you might have about death and life, ask yourself: 1) Am I ready to face eternity and meet the Lord? 2) Are the light and momentary trials of my life achieving something in eternity? 3) Do I have a beautiful and new body being prepared for me right now?