

2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-9 (ESV) – Heaven: Home

Main point: Heaven is going home.



Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.

Background: Just before this section, the apostle Paul has written that “though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.” (2 Cor. 4:16).

Focus of study:

¹ 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. ...

⁶ So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ⁷ for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸ Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

⁹ So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please the Lord.

Questions:

1. *In verse 1, Paul describes our human bodies as a tent. Who here has ever gone camping? Describe what a tent is used for, how it's made, how it feels, how it works.*
 - a. How it's made: Typically made from some kind of outdoorsy material: canvas or a synthetic waterproof material.
 - b. How it feels: Lightweight, packable and portable (not made of bricks!).
 - c. How it works: Keeps the worst elements out (rain, wind), but not much else (noise, cold).
2. *How long does a tent last, do you think? As long as a house? As long as a stone castle?*
 - a. No; a tent is intended to be temporary, for a short stay.
 - b. A tent isn't bad in a pinch, but it's not where you'd want to live forever.
3. *What are we living in right now that won't last forever?*
 - a. Our bodies! Every human body dies eventually. As Paul says in verse 1, “the tent which is our earthly home is destroyed.”
4. *What happens when our bodies, our “temporary tents,” are gone? What kind of dwelling place has God prepared?*
 - a. v. 1: “We have a building from God.”
5. *How long will our God-built house last?*
 - a. Eternally! “...a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”
6. *Let's move on to verse 6. While we are still in our earthly bodies, where does Paul say we are? And where are we not?*
 - a. v. 6: “While we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord.”
 - b. Right now, it's like we're living in a tent at a campsite: temporary (and sometimes uncomfortable!), not in our forever home.
7. *Now look at verse 8. Paul says that when we die, we will be “away from the body and at home with the Lord.” How would you describe the feeling of being “at home”?*
 - a. Familiar, safe, comforting, comfortable, warm, secure.

8. *Think about what it's like when you've been on a long trip, especially a camping trip. What does it feel like when you're heading home and then finally arrive home?*
 - a. Can't wait to get there, "like a horse to the barn."
 - b. When you arrive: relief and joy to be home with familiar things and people near you.
9. *Best of all, who will be with us in our heavenly home?*
 - a. v. 8: We will be "at home with the Lord."
10. *What virtue do we need before we get to go home to heaven?*
 - a. Back to verse 6: "So we are always of good courage."
11. *Why do we need courage while we're living in these temporary tents?*
 - a. Because we can't see our heavenly home yet. Verse 7: "We walk by faith, not by sight."
 - b. We walk through every single day in faith for what is to come, through all the aches and pains and hardship and tears. That takes courage!
12. *When there's a storm outside and you're huddled in your tent ... or you're hungry and your campfire won't start ... or you've got rocks under your sleeping bag ... or the wolves are howling in the distance ... how does the thought of finally going home help you?*
 - a. The vision of heaven, being at home with Jesus, helps us endure. It's a sure promise of what we look forward to.
13. *How can this picture of heaven affect how we live today? Reread v. 9: "So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please the Lord."*
 - a. We don't just sit around complaining! We trust and obey, following Jesus' instructions to make the camping trip as beautiful and fruitful as possible.

This picture of being at home in heaven can boost our courage. Our life with Jesus is happening now through faith, and when we die, we trade a weak, temporary home for an eternal home with God.

14. Ask for prayer requests for today.
15. Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
16. End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace.

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