

SYNC: Cutting The Ties That Bind Us

(II Corinthians 4:16-5:8)

Introduction.

A) In the 1930s, Albert Brumley published a hymn titled, *The World Is Not My Home*. Some of the words included, “*This world is not my home, I’m just a passin’ through, My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue. The angels beckon me from heavens open door and I can’t feel at home in this world anymore.*”

B) I Peter 2:11 says, “Dear friends, I urge you as strangers and temporary residents to abstain from fleshly desires that war against you. 12) Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that in a case where they speak against you as those who do what is evil, they will, by observing your good works, glorify God on the day of visitation.

C) Throughout the Scriptures, we are taught that life is transitory. That is, our earthly existence is only a temporary stage on our journey to eternity. As believers in God we acknowledge that this life under the sun is not all there is.

D) Yet, if we are not careful we may live our lives as if our earthly existence is the only place we’ll ever live! It is so easy to fall in love with this world and to lust for physical things that we can see, and take pride in our possessions, but this world will pass away with everything it craves! (1 Jn.2: 15-17). Thus, while we must live in this world we must not be of this world. As children of God we must be different and our focus must remain different. ([http://www.bible.ca/ef/expository-1-peter-2-11\(2\).htm](http://www.bible.ca/ef/expository-1-peter-2-11(2).htm))

E) William Barclay sums it up nicely: “Jesus never said that this world was unimportant; but He said and implied over and over again that its importance is not in itself, but in that to which it leads. This world is not the end of life, it is a stage on the way; and therefore a man should never lose his heart to this world and to the things of this world. His eyes ought to be for ever fixed on the goal beyond” The Gospel of

Matthew, Vol.I, p. 242,243.

F) Have you noticed that the older you get, the more you endure, and the greater your loss, the more you contemplate heaven. As a youth, your entire life remains ahead of you. Thoughts of marriage, children, things, money, and anticipated experiences loom large and tantalizing. As adults, the older we grow the less luster those things seem to have. Our attention, our longing focuses more on things beyond this life, instead of the things associated with this life.

G) Contextualize this sermon in the series, SYNC.

H) Contextualize this 1 Corinthians 4:16-5:8.

- 1) Note the yearning of Paul for heaven (II Corinthians 4:18, 5:2) as his ties to this earth are severed.
- 2) What brought Paul to the point of groaning for heaven?
 - 4:6 – The treasure of God’s presence
 - 4:7 – Compares our bodies to earthen vessels
 - 4:8-10 – Difficulties beat against him
 - 4:16 – Weary and damaged, he refuses to quit
 - 5:2 – Longing for a new place free of difficulties

J) Without the pains of living, the Apostle may not have longed for heaven so intently. Through the pains of living, God slowly severed the Apostle’s attachment to earthly things, so as to create a longing for the heavenly. God designed experiences of life to serve as a means to “Cut The Ties That Bind Us” to this world that we might become other worldly! Why? The more other worldly we become the more effective we are in this world.

K) Note three means of “Cutting the Ties That Bind Us” experienced by Paul and compares them to your own experience. Is the desired result coming to fruition in your own life or are you resisting the work of God.

I. Debilities (4:16)

Principle – *God designed that sin’s consequences cause our bodies to debilitate so we will long for a new one.*

Illustration – Have you noticed that all machinery eventually wears out. Because of the wear and tear of functionality, they eventually break down. Our bodies will eventually wear out.

Application – When we experience physical limitations and difficulties, we can respond with frustration or surrender, or we can respond by recognizing the circumstances as a work of God to create a longing for Him.

II. Difficulties (4:17-18)

Principle – God allows life's difficulties and pains in order to a desire for a better place in the heart of believers.

Illustration – Paul (II Corinthians 11:22-28)

Application – When difficulty enters our lives, we can respond with resentment or worry, or we can allow God to use it to create a longing for heaven within us.

III. Death (5:1)

Principle – God allows death to enter our lives, accompanied by a promised reunion with believing family and friends to create a desire for heaven.

Illustration – Story of Leola Hooker.

Application – When death crosses our path, we can respond with bitterness or depression, or we can allow the experience to serve as a tool to build a longing for God within us.

Conclusion

Were it not for the hope of heaven sometimes this life would be very, very difficult. Therefore, you have a choice – allow this life to beat you up to use the circumstances to build a great appreciation for heaven and thus defeating the discouraging tactics of our enemy.