

Moving Out of Our Tents

One of the great glories of being a Christian is that we do not have to share in one of the greatest fears men have: the fear of death. We look at these bodies we are wrapped in now and understand that they are corruptible, mortal, perishable, natural (**I Corinthians 15:42-53**). It gets sick. It gets old. It gets feeble. In time, it will be wracked with tremors. Our eyesight will grow dim. Our teeth will fall out. Our backs will stoop. Our legs and arms will tremble. Then eventually our heart will give out (**Ecclesiastes 12:1-8**).

But **II Corinthians 5:1** gives us great hope: “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” (ESV). The body we have now is merely a tent. It is a transient dwelling. It was never intended to be our permanent residence. Rather, God has a permanent dwelling for us that is not made with hands. **Hebrews 9:11** explains what “not made with hands” means saying, “not made with hands, that is, not of this creation” (ESV). Please understand; this isn’t referring to a mansion in heaven. Paul isn’t talking about an actual building in which we will reside in eternity. He is talking about our resurrected bodies.

I certainly don’t want us to have a morbid fascination with death bordering on suicidal tendencies. But I’m often amazed how fixated I can become on preserving this body. We fight to hang on to these tents like we have no hope. Certainly, like Paul in **Philippians 1:19-26**, we may desire to remain in this life because of the work and service we can do for the Lord and His people here. But I know that my desire to stay usually has to do with a fear about what comes next. I don’t want to let go of this body. But Paul demonstrates that this would be a lot like a homeless man, sleeping in his pup tent on the streets, being offered a real house and yet struggling to hang on to the tent. I do that. How about you?

God has promised us a house/body not made with hands/not of this creation. When we move out of this tent, Paul goes on to say, we do not become unclothed, rather we become further clothed. Not only that, this further clothing is our mortality, that is, our death, being swallowed up in life (**II Corinthians 5:4**). We will have bodies that are full of life. They will not grow old. They will not sag. They will not tremble. They will not wrinkle. They will not get cancer. They will not have heart attacks. They will not have diabetes. They will not develop aneurisms. They will never die.

But there is more. We have an even better reason for wanting to move out of the tent and into the house. **II Corinthians 5:6** says, “So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord” (ESV). The implication is once we are no longer at home in these bodies, we’ll be with the Lord. When we are in our permanent house, we’ll be with God. As **I Corinthians 15:50** says, “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (ESV), but our new bodies will.

So, Paul concludes, we aim to please God (**II Corinthians 5:9**). We long to be with Him. We want to do what draws us near to Him. When we put off this tent, we want to be in His presence, not away from it. We long to be clothed in the permanent dwelling, we long to be clothed with life, we long to be with God. So, let’s do our best to be with Him even now.

Certainly, don’t put the tent off on purpose. But don’t be afraid of it either. Only once we get rid of this tent can we have something better. And trust God, it is better.

--Edwin L. Crozier