**Transformed: 2 Corinthians wk 5 – Make Me or Break Me**

**In 2 Corinthians, Paul is writing an ongoing conversation with a struggling and growing church - but we are only hearing his response.**

**Last wk - chap 3, Paul responds that they are a result of God starting a work in their lives. They are being changed and their lives are being written new, like a letter. A new story is developing.**

**2 Cor 3:18And we all, (Christians) who with unveiled faces (the blinders are off – we now see Jesus) contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed (Gk. “metamorphoo”) into his image with ever-increasing glory, (glory to glory – day by day) which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (Changing by the HS)**

**2 Cor 4:1 Therefore, having this ministry (knowing Jesus) by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. (I won't get discouraged or walk away and quit)**

**I look in the mirror and see a letter still being written - a life daily becoming more like Christ. I will not give up even when I stumble.**

**Twice in this chap, he says – “we do not lose heart” (1,16)**

**And twice he says – we are of “good courage” (6,8)**

**Do not lose heart - do not be discouraged!**

**4:2 But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing** **the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (btw – the divinity of Jesus is clearly expressed)**

**If you’re wondering if you're growing - Paul tells you how it looks**

**Spiritual growth looks like this - This is how you know you are growing**

**1. Are you confessing and turning from sin?**

**“we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways” (NIV “secret & shameful)**

**Being teachable - God’s word to reveals, corrects and changes us.**

**2. Are you becoming a person of integrity?**

**“We refuse to practice cunning” (NIV - we do not use deception)**

**Honest in your dealings with people/work/school/family/friends.**

**3. Are you learning to handle God's Word correctly?**

**“or to tamper with God's word” (distort the word of God)**

**You read it to find out what is meant. You don’t just snack on it.**

**2 Tim 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.**

**4. Are you beginning to see the need for Christ in those around you?**

**“if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.”**

**Our family and friends – co-workers and classmates. We see their fallen state and need for Jesus. A new urgency for their souls.**

**5. Are you starting to understand the reality of the Spirit realm?**

**“the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers”**

**We covered this last week. Some are blinded (veiled – eyes covered from the truth). The gospel is foolishness to them. But to the unveiled it is life (1 Cor 1:18-31)!**

**6. Are you secure in the person and purpose of Christ?**

**“the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”**

**The gospel is clear, and the deity of Jesus is clear.**

**5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. (If I am the star, I’ve failed - this is through, for, and by – Jesus) 6 For God, (who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,”) has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (The light, the glory of God is Jesus)**

**The veil – is removed… (last week)**

**Aren’t you glad Jesus showed up in your darkness?**

**OR - Are you blind? Do you see a shimmer of light? Can you see the light of God’s face?**

**Paul follows up on the work of Christ in us - 4:7** **But we have this treasure (the knowledge of Jesus revealed and the HS) in jars of clay, (in us - common clay containers) to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.**

**I wouldn’t secure diamonds in a clay jar. They would be kept in a safe. But God does. We are an unlikely fragile safe.**

**He deposits the gospel truth (a priceless treasure) in this lump of clay. A jar to be filled and poured out.**

**What is man that you are mindful of him?” (Ps 8:4-9)**

**Don’t let old newspaper the wrapping fool you.**

**2 Cor 4:8 We are afflicted (pressed) in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;**

* **Pain and Suffering is real - even for a Christian**

**You cannot escape it... no matter who you are**

* **But in Christ, you are not defeated**

**Life without Jesus is just glimmers of momentary happiness.**

**Though we are like weak, fragile jars of clay – we are not crushed and destroyed – and will not be defeated!**

**Paul wrote in Galatians 6:9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.**

**Are you losing heart?**

**Pressed But Not Crushed: How?**

**2 Cor 4:8 (as Christians we) We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 We always carry in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. (manifest in our life)**

**\*\*\* Paul was not defeated because he saw a bigger work**

**The physical pains of this life reveal Jesus in me & His work to others.**

**Life is not a cafeteria. We do not get to choose our troubles—they often choose us—but we do choose how we will respond.**

**God allows and even ordains suffering for our sanctification. Strange as it may seem, Paul viewed his troubles as part of God’s plan to renew him spiritually. Always dying, ever living.**

**11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, (put to death for serving Jesus) so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you. (we are willing to go through pain for the sake of others and for you to know Jesus – bring it on!)**

**\*\*\* Paul was not defeated because he saw a larger plan**

**Even though it is hard, you met Jesus – it was worth it!**

**Paul's perspective was - Every stripe on my back, every beating, every limp, every scar... was worth it when I see you with Jesus. \* i.e. Missionaries.**

**13 Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, “I believed, and so I spoke,” we also believe, and so we also speak, (we do the same – and cry out to God in our troubles)**

**Quote from - Psalm 116 (ESV) 8 For you have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling; 9 I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living. 10 I believed, even when I spoke: “I am greatly afflicted." Acknowledging pain is not a lack of faith.**

**(we acknowledge it) 14 knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.**

**\*\*\* Paul was not defeated because he saw a greater life**

**Death is not the end! Eternity awaits everyone – but in Christ, we will see the kingdom of heaven. As Christ is raised, so are those in Him.**

**We never quit, never give up, and endure trials for the eternal life with Christ that awaits us – this is not our home.**

**Knowing this brings great boldness and courage!**

**15 For it (their trials) is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people, it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. (The troubles we encounter are for the advancement of Jesus. 16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.**

**I might get sick or beat up – tortured or have chronic pain – but I’m not discouraged – I won’t give up when my body does work right.**

**Outwardly, we are dying, but inwardly, we are growing.**

**God is at work in me… God’s is making me new (inside).**

**Reality check: Pain is real, and death is imminent. We all have a date with destiny (“death came to all people, for all have sinned” - Romans 5:12)**

**Pat Conroy in “South of Broad”- a sobering description of how death is woven into our existence: “The moment you are born your death is foretold by your newly minted cells as your mother holds you up, then hands you to your father, who gently tickles the stomach where the cancer will one day form, studies the eyes where melanoma’s dark signature is already written along the optic nerve, touches the back where the liver will one day house the cirrhosis, feels the bloodstream that will sweeten itself into diabetes, admires the shape of the head where the brain will fall to the ax-handle of stroke, or listens to your heart, which, exhausted by the fearful ways and humiliations and indecencies of life, will explode in your chest like a light going out in the world. Death lives in each one of us and begins its countdown on our birthdays and makes its rough entrance at the last hour and the perfect time (p. 10).”**

**2 Cor continues - 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, (an eternal glory that far outweighs them all - NIV) 18 as we look (fix our eyes) not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient (temporary), but the things that are unseen are eternal.**

**Paul is not saying trials are not hard, but that they seem slight and light in comparison to the weight of our future glory.**

**\*\*\* Paul was not defeated because he saw a superior reward**

**Our eyes are fixed on the kingdom of Heaven – not this life. This is not our final destination – we are on a journey home. And we are to take as many people with us as will come.**

**If I walk alone, still I will walk – if it gets hard, still I will walk – If I lose my life, still I will walk – For it will all be worth it.**

**Sitting at the bedside of my friend Randy… at the time, a new believer in Jesus – dying of cancer… we prayed… I pleaded with God to spare his life… I cried… he encouraged me… He was knocked down but not knocked out… I am reminded - this life is frail, brief, and special.**

**Light and heavy - temporary and eternal. When we feel the weight of sickness - we fix our eyes on our new body. When we feel the stink of loss – we fix our eyes on the resurrection. When we feel the burden of sin and habits – we fix our eyes on Jesus.**

* **Ask the person next to you- What are you looking at?**

**Paul then talks about this eternal body that awaits us (similar: 1Thes 4 / 1Cor 15) 2 Cor 5:1 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home (current body) is destroyed, we have a building from God, (a new body) a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this tent we groan, (this life is literally painful) longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, 3 if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. (Naked represents the needs in this life that leave us bare – but we will be clothed in a new and perfect body - clothed in God’s glory)**

**We live in a tent – they wear out, sag, get weathered, wrinkle, creaky, gravity is pulling at it - but one day we get a new home.**

**Salvation isn’t just for the soul or spirit, but for the body also.**

**Buddhism teaches that the body is the enemy, and freedom is getting rid of the body - to nothingness.**

**But God created Adam and Eve flesh and blood – and said it is good. Jesus approved the essential goodness of the body by becoming a physical man and physically rising from the dead. If there was something inherently evil in the body, Jesus would never have added humanity to His deity.**

**The body is not a negative. The problem is not the body but corrupt sinful desires. Our current body may be a prison, but our new body will be glorious!**

**4 For while we are still in this tent, (this body) we groan, being burdened - not that we would be unclothed, (with God’s glory) but that we would be further clothed, (in God’s glory) so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.**

**To be clothed in the glory of our resurrected new self.**

**In medieval times, some would ask to be buried in the clothing of a monk, hoping to look better on judgment day dressed like a monk! Jesus offers us a far better garment – his glory!**

**5 He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. (The HS – a down payment – a pledged promise)**

**\*\*\* Paul was not defeated because he was comforted w/ the Holy Spirit**

**When trials hit, it can be hard to take comfort in a heavenly destiny. God knew this, so He has given us the HS as a deposit.**

**He has backed up the promise of heaven with a down payment right now, the Holy Spirit. A piece of Heaven, a promise of heaven. Like an engagement ring – that secures a future wedding.**

**We are given a taste of heaven – the HS!**

**No more hatred. No more abuse. No more hurricanes. No more crime. No more sadness. No more cancer. No more sickness. No more fear. No more death. We know because we have the HS.**

**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. (This world is not heaven! We are not there yet, and we don’t and have not seen it yet…) 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. (I live with heaven in mind – with eternity in mind – new eyes)**

**1 Cor 2:9 But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him” - 10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.**

**To be honest, I’m prepared for heaven – but I’m not sure if I am ready to go in heaven - I’m pretty attached to his life… these people… I still struggle to see the greater glory. Lord give me kingdom eyes.**

**2 Co 5:8 Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. (for a Christian – we are instantly with the Lord) 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.**

**Similarly, he writes - Phil 1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose, I cannot tell. 23 I am hard-pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. 24 But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith.**

**\*\*\* Paul was not defeated because he knew Jesus!**

**I am Jesus – he will never leave me nor forsake me – He will carry me to the end. I do not need to be afraid! And – neither do you.**

**2 Cor 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat (Bemma seat) of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. (A day is coming for every one of us…)**