

## **Renewed Daily**

2 Corinthians 4:13 - 5:1

Mark 3:20-35

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### *2 Corinthians 4:13 - 5:1*

But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—"I believed, and so I spoke"—we also believe, and so we speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

### *Mark 3:20-35*

and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, "He has gone out of his mind." And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons." And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

"Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"—for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you." And he replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

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Lights dance across a color coded helix, kid friendly microscopes and hands on 3-D textures make learning about the human body at the SEE Science Center in Manchester a fun and wonderful experience. How our bodies are made, how our bodies work, and even how we happen to share 30% of our DNA with worms is all a part of exploring how each of us came to be here along our family line, and how at both the visible and the invisible level our bodies continually change, grow and renew.

The renewing of the human body is amazing, and the old myth speaks to this as theoretically every cell in our bodies is replaced every seven years. It is a great idea, although far from accurate. Our red blood cells live for about four months, while our white blood cells live for just a few weeks. Immersed in acid our stomach cells are renewed every couple of days. Our skin cells live about two or three weeks, while our bone cells regenerate every decade. Yet other parts of our bodies are as old as us as our brain cells, the lenses of our eyes and our tooth enamel are never renewed. With the renewing and replacing of so much of our bodies on this cellular level we are still aging, still as Paul wrote, “our outer nature is wasting away,” as aging is both biological and biblical. It is an oxymoron that we are wasting away as we are renewing.

It is fascinating to observe the complex intricacies that work together for our bodies to exist, to function, to grow, to heal and to be renewed in some ways, yet Paul reminds us that, “Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day.”

Our ‘outer nature,’ that which is physical and visible about us---not only our bodies, but also our homes, our jobs, our financial status, our health, our possessions—are all finite, are all time limited. They will bring pleasure and pain, challenge and celebration, delight and disdain, yet ultimately they will all waste away. It is our ‘inner nature’—the image of God within that is lasting, that is being renewed every single day. In spite of outer circumstances and situations God is continually working, renewing and restoring at a much deeper level within us, at a place where hope, peace, trust, mercy, justice and faith live. The depth and the wisdom of our inner lives—our identity in the image of God—is being renewed every day no matter what happens to us on the outside. So we do not lose heart as these inner parts of ourselves bear us up and carry us through, as our inner nature is in the image of God. In spite of any outer circumstances, God is working and renewing and restoring at a far deeper level. Paul reminds us to not lose heart, to not lose sight of our inner nature because of distractions, because of interferences, because of outer events.

Paul certainly knew well the impact that losing sight of our inner nature could have. His second letter to the church in Corinth was to a church that was in conflict with him because of misunderstandings that led to a crisis in confidence in him. As he worked to restore their relationship he continued to encourage them in faithful discipleship. Paul acknowledged that it is by our outer nature there will be times of disagreement and trial, so that these are slight momentary afflictions that are only temporary, and our focus is to be on the inner nature, on what cannot be seen.

These inner aspects of ourselves carry us through, because the inner nature is in the image of God. In spite of outer circumstances, God is working and renewing and restoring at a much deeper level. Don’t lose sight of that; don’t be distracted by the outer things.

Paul encourages us to keep proper perspective. Our outer circumstances are part of our lives, yes. They can be difficult and challenging, yes. But they don’t define us or our relationship with God or how God works in our lives.\*

A few decades before Paul had a deteriorating relationship with the church on Corinth, Jesus experienced conflict with both his family and the scribes--the religious authorities--whose focus was on the outer nature. His family certainly did not like the changes they were seeing in him as he shifted from being the son and the brother they knew, as he stopped being the carpenter apprentice, and instead began teaching, healing, speaking in riddles and gathering a band of followers. They could not accept that this was when and how his ministry would be and begin. They attempted to discourage others from listening, from watching, from following, as they dismissed his behavior as mental illness, as an unclean spirit, as “he has gone out of his

mind,” It was easier to diagnose and accept mental illness rather than his radical ministry that he was born, that he was incarnated, to do. The scribes considered him a demon by his outward actions, as though he were possessed by the Lord of the Flies. Jesus' family and the scribes were focused on the outer nature of Jesus as they observed his actions, as they heard his words, as they experienced something radical in their midst, but what they did not do was look or listen beyond what they saw and heard. They dismissed Jesus by how they saw, how they perceived, his outer nature. The crowds that gathered and followed Jesus, that deeply listened to his words and his message, who knew personally, or at least as firsthand witnesses, that he could heal wounds and illnesses followed Jesus for his inner nature. They were renewed by his presence and his teachings. They became the people that Jesus would call his family; “whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.” Whoever does the will of God is living out of their inner nature instead of the outer nature that is wasting away. Whoever does the will of God is renewed daily.

Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. Paul taught that truth to the church in Corinth. Jesus showed that truth to his family, the scribes and the crowds.

We hear it, yet often need to be reminded of it in our day to day lives. We can become so focused on the tasks, chores, responsibilities, and activities of our outer nature that we lose sight of what is happening to our inner nature, our relationship with God and how God is moving in our lives. Our attention is easily drawn to what is seen and we become distracted from what is unseen.

Many cells within our body renew, regenerate, so that we can have the best healthy and functional physical life, and we do all that we can to maintain our outer nature. God renews our spiritual health, our inner nature day by day. For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Amen.

\*Pastor Rob Moss, “Unseen Growth: Expanding our Spiritual Life