Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States

The Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians

Chapter 5

Bishop Youssef

Introduction

- As St. Paul continues describing the nature of his ministry, he explains why he remains "hopeful" in spite of his suffering
- He knows that should his "earthly house" be destroyed, there is a "house not made with hands" that God has prepared for him
- For this he longs, being confident because God has already given the Spirit as a guarantee

Introduction

- So while he must walk by faith, and not by sight, he makes it his aim to be pleasing to the Lord, before Whom he knows he will one day stand to give an account (1-10)
- St. Paul then describes his "devotion" as it pertains to his ministry
- Motivated by his knowledge of the terror of the Lord, he persuades men

Introduction

- He endeavors to serve God and his brethren in a way that the Corinthians will be able to provide a defense to those who judge only by appearance
- It is the love of Christ which constrains St. Paul to live no longer for himself but for the Lord
- Unlike his detractors, he no longer judges people based upon appearances, for he knows that if one is in Christ, he is a new creation (11-17)

Introduction

- Finally, St. Paul depicts the work of God in Christ as one in which God is reconciling the world to Himself
- St. Paul's own role is that of an "ambassador for Christ", who has been entrusted with the "ministry of reconciliation" so he might implore people on God's behalf that they be reconciled to God (18-21)

Assurance of the Resurrection (5:1-8)

- St. Paul now describes the body as only a tent dwelling, a temporary abode, in which we are camping during a journey
- If death should come and the body be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens
- There is another dwelling for us, the spiritual body (1 Cor 15:44), a heavenly and eternal body

Assurance of the Resurrection (5:1-8)

- While in this fragile, suffering earthly body, we long for the deliverance from it and for the house not made with hands (2 Cor 5:1), the spiritual body
- When the spirit leaves the mortal clay, it lays off an old and worn-out clothing, and is to be clothed with, or invested in, its divine clothing
- There was a Greek theory that when the spirit left the mortal body that it remained without a body

Assurance of the Resurrection (5:1-8)

- St. Paul emphasizes the truth of resurrection of the body, if we too, clothed upon with the glorious, shall not be found naked
- We groan because the burden is so heavy
- It is not that we wish to be freed from a body, but we wish a better one; to lay off the old raiment (the mortal) that we may be clothed upon with the heavenly raiment, the spiritual body (the immortal) (1 Cor 15:53)

Assurance of the Resurrection (5:1-8)

- God gave us this longing for immortality
- God not only gave it, but the earnest of the spirit, a proof of the fulfillment of all that he has promised
- We are always confident because of the Spirit
- We are now with God, but we behold him only by faith, and therefore we are absent from Him
- Rather we desire to depart from the body to be with the Lord. This is our happiness and pleasure to be with Him always

The Judgment Seat of Christ (5:9-11)

- Therefore, we strive to live so, that both in this our life here we may please Him, and that at His second coming, we may be pleasing to Him too
- The judgment day is the stimulus to strive so as to be accepted by Christ (2 Cor 5:9)
- The object of this judgment is that we may reap the fruits of what we have done in the body

The Judgment Seat of Christ (5:9-11)

- Fearing the Lord and being accountable to Him, we earnestly persuade men to seek His favor
- God sees our whole life and knows our motives of our ministry as well as our deeds
- St. Paul hoped, too, that it was known to the people at Corinth and that he had a witness in their conscience, in the effect of his preaching

Be Reconciled to God (5:12-21)

- St. Paul does not want to commend himself again unto them, but rather he gives them an opportunity of glorying over his work and life so that they can answer the false teachers who assail him
- If the charge that he was beside himself were true, it is to God: He understands (if men do not) the emotion which Himself inspires and it is for God
- If at other times he was the opposite, of sound mind, it was all that he might reason with them

Be Reconciled to God (5:12-21)

- It was the love that moved him in all his conduct
- If Christ died for all, all in Christ have died with Him to a life of sin
- Baptized into His death we must be dead to sin
- He died with this end in view, that those for whom He died and had life through Him should not live for themselves, but for Him who died for them
- Thus St. Paul lived
- His life was a consecrated life

Be Reconciled to God (5:12-21)

- As all have died to live new lives for Christ, they are not to be known as belonging to the old fleshly races but as members in Christ's body
- Knowing Christ after the flesh: to love Him emotionally, to glory in having conversed with Him, and to expect temporal benefits from Him
- St. Paul here shows the true aim should be to know Him spiritually as new creatures and that outward relations towards Him profit nothing

Be Reconciled to God (5:12-21)

- We are new creatures: we are crucified and buried with Him, and risen to walk in a new life
- The old life ended when we died and were buried
- The affections, the motives, the thoughts, the hopes, the whole life have become new
- And all things are of God. According to His will
- Before we were at enmity with God
- Through Christ we have been brought to love God, to love His will, and hence to obey him

Be Reconciled to God (5:12-21)

- The ministry of reconciliation: The object of the service is to transform men, and to bring them to peace with God (the ordination of the priests)
- In Christ we are offered peace by forgiving our sins and shown the love of God
- The word of reconciliation is to persuade men to accept God's love and mercy, and to repent so that He can forgive their trespasses

Be Reconciled to God (5:12-21)

- We have God's message, we are his authorized messengers, and speak for God, beseeching you for Christ, and in his name, to be reconciled to God by repentance and the obedience of faith
- As a sinless Redeemer, He carried our sins and was made sin to atone us
- That our sins might thus be atoned for, the law satisfied, and we be forgiven
- Since we die with Christ, in Him we are justified

Conclusion

- St Paul gives us two analogies for our earthly body. What are they? What are the similarities between the flesh and these two?
- What is the real motive for St Paul to desire clothing with the heavenly clothes?
- What will happen to our earthly body in the second coming of Christ?
- "God gave us the Spirit as a guarantee". A guarantee for what? How is the Spirit being a guarantee?
- Reconciliation is a great deed. Who did it? Why Him? How did He make it?

Conclusion

- “For we walk by the faith”. How does our faith in Eternal life affect our concept towards the flesh? How do you apply this in your daily life?
- “The love of Christ compel us” (or control us) V.14. Do you think it is an advantage or disadvantage to be surrounded by Christ’s love? Explain
- “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” V. 17. In what ways we should be a new creation?
- “He has given us the ministry of reconciliation” Do you feel responsible for this ministry? What do you do to be a good ambassador for Christ