

# A CERTAIN HOPE

## THE LESSON: 2 CORINTHIANS 4+5

For most people, death is a frightening prospect. We fear losing to death those whom we love, and we fear dying ourselves. But Christians believe that the victory of Jesus has taken the “sting” out of death. He gives us eternal life (John 3:16). This means that believers see death differently, “walking by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). Scripture tells us to remind one another of these things often.

So when a believer dies, Christians grieve. But we do not “grieve as others do who have no hope” (1 Thessalonians 4:13). The words spoken at the grave-side remind us of the promise to which we hold:

“[We commit this] body to the ground... in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our mortal body, that it may be like unto his glorious body”.

(BCP p. 602)

“We meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that, when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him... and that, at the Resurrection in the last day, we with him may receive that blessing, which thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all that love and fear thee, saying, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”.

(BCP p. 603)

Though death may separate us from our loved ones for a little while, we have assurance that those who belong to Jesus will one day be reunited with each other and with him. Though death may bring an end to the life we have known in “our earthly home”, we can hardly wait for what we know comes next.

## AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Spend some time asking God to comfort and encourage those who are grieving or dying, especially anyone who is known to you. Ask him to help you to point others to the real hope that we have. Close your time with the following two prayers:

*O heavenly Father, whose Blessed Son Jesus Christ did weep at the grave of Lazarus, his friend: Look, we beseech thee, with compassion upon those who are now in sorrow and affliction; comfort them, O Lord, with thy gracious consolations; make them to know that all things work together for good to them that love thee; and grant them evermore sure trust and confidence in thy fatherly care; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies and giver of all comfort: Deal graciously, we pray thee, with those who mourn, that casting every care on thee, they may know the consolation of thy love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

(PRAYERS FROM THE ORDER FOR THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD, P. 600)

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## 2 CORINTHIANS 4+5: **A REASON TO TAKE HEART**

**4**<sup>13</sup>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, <sup>14</sup>knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. <sup>15</sup>For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

<sup>16</sup>So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

<sup>17</sup>For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,

<sup>18</sup>as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

**5**<sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, <sup>3</sup>if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. <sup>4</sup>For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. <sup>5</sup>He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

<sup>6</sup>So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord,

<sup>7</sup>for we walk by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup>Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup>So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.