

Paul writes in the chapter just before we just heard, he writes this in verse 16 of chapter 4, Therefore we do not lose heart, though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

So he is physically being very drained, wasting away. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, that wasting away part, but on what is unseen.

Since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. As I said, Paul, his body is literally wasting away. He could lose heart.

He could very easily lose heart, but he doesn't. His light and momentary troubles, we hear about later, aren't that light and aren't that momentary. Being beaten, close to death, whipped, stoned, all sorts of terrible things.

But he says it's all okay because I focus on the unseen, not the seen. That's what Paul says. He says, I live with my eyes fixed on the eternal, not the temporal.

I live for the glory of God and the coming of the kingdom of God on Earth, as it is in heaven. Have you heard that phrase, too heavenly minded to be of any earthly good? Anybody?

I remember hearing my grandfather say that, and when I was taken hold of by the Lord in my late teenage years, and probably just turning 20, I did hear my parents say that to me. Jono, you're getting too heavenly minded to be of any earthly good.

Well, what does that mean when someone says that? Well, at its best, at its best, it means, you know, you're seeming to be quite aloof. You're lost in spiritual thoughts.

You're not taking responsibility for everyday life. You're focusing too much on the afterlife, on the eternal things, not enough on this life.

But at its worst, at its worst, that statement is a complete distortion and undermining of everything Jesus taught about life in the kingdom, isn't it? The Bible teaches that our minds need to be renewed from heaven. Our hearts transformed.

Have you ever heard the saying that Christianity is not about going to heaven when you die? It's about getting heaven into you before you die. That's our prayer.

That's what spiritual formation and transformation is all about. Becoming more and more like Jesus, who is the great example of heaven coming to earth.

Jesus, I would say to you, was completely heavenly minded, yet made of the clay of earth, living it out in a human body, yet completely renewed and obsessed with the kingdom of the heavens.

So I'd put it to you, we must be heavenly minded to be of earthly good. Amen? We must be heavenly minded to be of earthly good.

Paul writes this letter to the church in Corinth, the church that he had planted some years before. He'd spent at least a year and a half teaching there. They knew him well.

He's probably a couple of hundred kilometers north in Macedonia, probably in a place called Philippi. And he's writing to his beloved Christian brothers and sisters, hoping that they could see life through heavenly minded glasses.

And as we come back to the text that Alex read for us, let's look at verse 1. Paul writes, We know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

Meanwhile, we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.

For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed, but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

Heavenly-minded people know several things, and the outline there, you see, I'll spend more time on the first point, so don't get scared. It's always hard, isn't it? There's six points, and it's like, wow.

The first point is a bit long. But heavenly-minded people know that our bodies are temporary and a prototype of what is to come. I think it's very helpful to remember, this is the church that he wrote 1 Corinthians 2.

Anyone familiar with 1 Corinthians? Quite a few of us. Chapter 15 is the great passage on the resurrection.

And so these people are familiar with Paul's teaching that this body that we're living in is not the final container for our spirit. It's not the body that we will live in forever. It actually will be resurrected human flesh.

And by faith, we can receive a resurrected body that will live forever. So 1 Corinthians 15 makes it very clear that resurrection humanity looks just like this body, but it's made of different stuff. Do you remember that?

That when Jesus was raised from the dead, they thought he was a gardener, didn't they?

It wasn't as though he was like some angel with wings, and as though once we die and rise again, we're going to be something new, and no one's ever seen that before. No, he ate fish on the beach. They thought he was a gardener.

Stephen was getting killed, and he looked up and saw the resurrected and ascended to heaven, Jesus, and said, Behold the Lamb of God, I see Jesus. So, it seems quite obvious that we get a new body, those of us who have faith in Christ.

And Paul talks about it like a tent. He says, we're in a tent at the moment, housing this spirit we have.

And he says, if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, so we die, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. It's a resurrected, resurrection body.

Now, to just be clear, there's only one resurrected human being, isn't there? Right now, Jesus Christ. He's the one who was raised, the first fruits from among the grave.

Paul says, in this current body, we do a bit of groaning. It's not our final destination. Verse 2, we long to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, resurrected body, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.

That is, we're not going to be floating spirits that would be naked. Now, it's interesting. Paul says in verse 4, in this body or this tent, we sometimes find the suffering of this life a bit much.

And it's not, he says, that we want to be with God as a spirit. We want the full transformation of a resurrected body clothed with our heavenly dwelling, the mortal swallowed up by life. But later on, he does say, to be with the Lord would be great.

So, just to sort of clarify this somewhat confusing speech that Paul uses, as he often does, the Bible teaches that there is life this side of death. Who agrees? We're all alive.

And then it says there's life after death. Unclothed, spiritual life. We could be asleep or awake, we don't know, but we're not clothed with what we will get in the life after life after death.

Are you with me? So we have life before death, we have life after death, which is a spirit in a place with God.

And then we have life after life after death, which is the resurrected body that is either sent to hell in judgment, or that body is the body we get to live in forever with God on a new earth.

So our bodies are temporary and a prototype of what is to come. So to look at our bodies through heavenly minded eyes of faith, what will we see?

We will see a fragile, clay like structure, a temporary container, look around, these are all temporary prototypes. But yet a house that is filled with glory, because it's the prototype, amen?

We are going to look, sorry if you don't like how you look, it's going to come good. But we get to look like what we look, but perfected. We know that because Jesus is the first fruits from among the grave.

He's the perfect example of humanity. So can I suggest when we see our bodies with eyes of faith, we will look after our bodies as a gift from God, that makes sense.

We'll temper any disordered obsession with the body, and that could come in all sorts of colors and schemes. We can get disordered and obsessed with our body in all sorts of ways.

And we will see other bodies as a glorious prototype of future resurrection glory. And so we'll be driven to treat them well, amen, with the glory that is due them, because that's the prototype of God's design to be lived out with Him forever.

So Heavenly Minded people know that our bodies are temporary, yet glorious, and a prototype of what is to come. And also that we have the Holy Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come in this body.

Verse 5 says, Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose, that's eternal life with God in a new body. He's fashioned us for that purpose. He has given us the Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come.

That word fashioned is really interesting to look up in the Greek. It's a word that carries this idea of preparing, producing, bringing about. In the same way that the famous statue of David was fashioned out of a piece of Carrara marble.

You remember the story. It was set apart for a whole bunch of other sculptors for many decades. And they all thought it wasn't very good marble.

But Michelangelo came along and he could see with eyes of faith a 17 foot perfect David. And he fashioned the David out of that marble. That's the idea.

God is fashioning you and I into the likeness of Christ. He's shaping our lives for the purpose of being trained to reign. Have you heard that before?

Life is training for reigning. We're going to be co-heirs with Christ. We're going to be taken to a new earth where heaven and earth join up, and we're going to manage it forever with Jesus.

So this life, in all that we go through, the challenges of faith, hope and love, are all to fashion us into the type of people who can manage the world with Jesus.

And so that we know this isn't just some religious gobbly gook, all this Paul language, we have the spirit. We have the spirit of God as the guarantee that this unseen world is real.

A young David, not the David of Michelangelo fame, but the real David. The real David was still smelling of sheep in Bethlehem when Samuel came up to him and anointed him to be the king.

1 Samuel 16, but he didn't sit on a throne that afternoon, he still had years of caves and battlefields still lying ahead, but the anointing was the guarantee that God had set him apart. So Paul says, God has given us his spirit as a deposit.

If you're a Christian, do you know you're filled with the Holy Spirit? Do you know you have the power of the Holy Spirit in your life? Or is it some vague notion that other people have?

Anybody know how to surf? It's so funny. I spent 20 years in the Sutherland Shire.

If I ask it there near Cronulla, everyone will go, yeah, we all surf. I learned how to surf when I was about 14 years old. And when you're learning how to surf, I bought a single fin surfboard and you look like that.

You're really thrilled to stand up, but the water around you is all white water. And then I remember this few weeks in, I sort of stumbled upon this. This isn't me, but I was at Queenscliff Beach.

And instead of going along in the white water, I found myself going sideways. And I almost yelled out, I'm surfing, I'm surfing. But that's the beauty of surfing.

If you ever get to do it, that's what you're chasing, not the white water. And I thought of that when I was preparing this message, because that is thrilling. And so is the reality of knowing you are filled with the Holy Spirit.

But so many Christians, they don't appropriate that reality. The Holy Spirit, who is in you if you love Jesus and name him as your Lord and Savior, he will counsel you, comfort you, convict you, guide you, empower you, sustain you.

But you need a little Heavenly Mindedness. Amen. You need a little faith to believe that it's actually God in you, who is speaking to you and guiding and challenging you.

Heavenly minded people know that our bodies are temporary and a prototype. We have the Holy Spirit as a deposit. And they know that faith will always supersede sight.

Therefore, we are always confident, Paul writes, and know that as long as we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord, for we live by faith, not sight. When Moses sent out the spies in Numbers 13, all 12 got to see the same challenges.

The cities were big and threatening, and there were giants in the land, but it was only who that saw with eyes of faith? Joshua and Caleb. They came back and they said, we should go up and take possession of the land.

We can certainly do it. Faith didn't deny there were giants in the land. Eyes of faith just saw that God was bigger.

Do you see with eyes of faith, or just what you see in normal sight? Paul, I think, is suggesting that followers of Jesus are so heavenly minded that they see God's kingdom reality in places that others don't.

They see His fingerprints manifest all over the place, because they know God's kingdom is at work here and forcefully taking ground. Often when you're about 40, your eyesight starts getting not so good, doesn't it?

Maybe we've experienced that before, but about 40 everyone wants a longer arm. It's just this sort of thing. But it also happens that your eyes can grow dull spiritually, can't they?

Over time, you sort of get a bit beaten up. It's been said that to live a heavenly minded life, it will require Vim, V-I-M. Have you heard of that?

V stands for vision. I need to have a vision of what I could live as a life honouring Christ. And the best place you could ever hang out in the Bible is Matthew 5, 6, 7, the manifesto of the kingdom from Jesus.

This is the vision of what it looks like to be filled with the Spirit and living the Jesus life. So we need a vision. Heavenly minded people will see that vision of the kingdom life.

But you've got to have intention, don't you? I stands for applying your will to that vision. And it's only going to be by the grace of God.

But vision and intention, I've got a great idea. I've got like a hope to achieve that in Christ. You need a means, you need means.

And they're often called spiritual disciplines. Bible reading, prayer, silence, community, Sabbath, submission, service, giving. Vision intention means.

Vision intention means. And so, that's often been talked about, about what you need for the full kingdom life.

But as I reflected, and we talked about in our staff team meeting this week, I think there's something else that's very important that affects us as much as those three or more. And it's context. It's context.

If we want to live a life that is through heavenly minded eyes. So we're constantly seeing the kingdom, constantly seeing the fingerprints of God in people and in us.

You need a context that will help you live the way Christianity is meant to be lived. Has anyone ever reflected and thought it's hard to live the Christian life radically in Australia? Because it's pretty close to heaven, you know.

It's pretty amazing. Suffering tends to be the environment that radical Christianity thrives in. Amen?

And I noticed that sometimes we meet different people and some of our community have been refugees and you see the generosity of spirit that's in someone who's had everything taken away.

And you think, wow, sometimes we have to do some work to put ourselves into the context where the Christian life can flourish, amen? Context is so important and we can do work to change that for us.

So maybe to live a heavenly minded kingdom life of immense earthly good, we need to actively change the context of our lives to more effectively live out the Vim principle. Heavenly minded people know, fourthly, walking lightly is walking wisely.

Paul writes, we're confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. What does he mean?

He's saying when we die, there's a spiritual reality that leaves the body, as we mentioned before, life after death, not life after life after death, but life after death. Even that, he's saying, I would love to be there.

Here, Paul is saying, I would prefer to be with the Lord as spirit than struggling in this body that I'm in now. Why would Paul say that? I think it's obvious.

He's suffering. He's really suffering in his context and it's producing in him radical faith. Another, I think, obvious reason that Paul would say, I would love to be at home with the Lord even without a body, naked as it is, as he refers to it.

Because he is so heavenly minded, isn't he? He's just so heavenly minded that he's constantly like, if I could just be with you Lord. Whereas a lot of the time, we're the opposite, aren't we?

We're like, go away, death, go away. I've got lots of things to do here. I'm accumulating.

I'm gathering stuff in my barn. Paul's like, no, I've actually come to the point where I'm ready. I would love to go to the intermediate state.

And why, how? Well, Paul says famously to the church at Philippi, where he's probably writing the letter of Corinthians, 2 Corinthians. He says this, Chapter 1, For to me, remember this, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

If I'm to go on living in this body, in this tent, well, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I don't even know.

I'm torn between the two. I desire to depart and be unclothed with Christ. I'm so heavenly obsessed.

I just want to be with Him. It's better by far. I'm free from suffering and I'm with the one who I love.

But it's more necessary for you that I remain in the body. So He has an intention. He has a reason.

And the other thing, how do you get so heavenly minded that you can say for me to live is Christ and to die is gain? He's been putting into practice Philippians 4, hasn't He?

Verse 8, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about that.

Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me, put it into practice and the God of Peace will be with you.

To walk with a soft touch on this life that you're not just accumulating, you've got to fill your mind with the things of God, amen. Heavenly mindedness is a mind filled with the things of heaven. Walk lightly is to walk wisely.

And then the fifth thought for people who are heavenly minded is to live for an audience of one. I love this verse, it's so clear, it's so punchy. He says in verse 9, we make it our goal to please him.

You want to know what my intention is, he says? To please Jesus. That's my goal.

How clear is that? How profound is that? We, we together in community, we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.

To please Christ is to live for an audience of one, an audience of one. Who are you performing your life for? Who are you performing your life for?

Imagine you're a cello player and you had this opportunity to put on a recital and you chose this piece, Bach Cello Suite No. 1, Prelude. Anyone know that one?

I'm not going to sing it, but can you sing it? Yeah.

So you learn that, you spend three or four hours a day learning it, and you've got it down, it's one of the more famous cello suites, and then you book out this theater, and you advertise it, and you have this seat with the cello ready to go, in the

middle of the stage, and you're waiting behind, not knowing how many people are going to turn up, and you've spent all the money booking the theater, and you're behind, and you're ready to go, and you come out behind the, through the curtain, and you

come and sit down. You can't see a thing because the spotlights are so bright, and you play the da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da, and you play, and you nail it, and then you hear this sound. And you're like, I always thought there'd be more hands

clapping than that. Like, that's all I can hear. And then so you poke your head in behind the lights, and you see there's one person. And the funny reader is like, oh.

That's the heart of compassion I just saw then. You look out and there's one person, and your heart sings, you're like, what? I just did all this work, and it cost me all this.

And then you look closer, and it's an Asian man. And it's Yo-Yo Ma. Yo-Yo Ma, the greatest cello player ever.

Doesn't it change everything? You could play for an audience of one, but if it's the one, that's all that matters. And that's what Paul is saying.

It's like, I've learned to play my life for an audience of one. We make it our aim to please the one that matters. We make it our aim because the final point, verse 10, he knows that our life, our life's work will be assessed for eternal reward.

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Now, if you put that in context of the New Testament and the Gospel, he is not earning his salvation in that, is he? That's done because of what Christ has achieved.

But there is this testing and refinement that happens about what we have done with what we have been given. The word means laid bare. Our life's work revealed all at once.

It's sort of quite interesting that we had a 50 year expose, like we are talking about, you know, what have you been involved with? And it comes before the judgment seat.

This is the beamer, which is a seat that in the first century they knew was for public assessment. Paul says, we all, this is Christians as well, not being judged for salvation, but for reward in the next life.

And again, this is a group of people who are hearing him talk about the judgment seat, but they know chapter 3 of the first letter. It wasn't in chapters, but it was early part of the first letter to Corinthians.

In chapter 3, verse 12, Paul wrote, If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire.

And the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss, but yet will be saved.

Even though only as one escaping through the flames, our life's work will be tested by fire, and then we'll be given rewards.

Now, I don't know what those rewards are, but for me personally, I think the rewards in heaven are somehow a greater capacity for God. Because I feel like, how could there be any reward that's different to God? But, who knows?

But there are rewards. Maybe it's responsibility. We don't know.

But Paul understands this. That there is a reckoning that will come at the end. And he wants to be ready.

He wants to be ready. How do you want to live the rest of your one solitary life, this side of death? Do you reckon being Heavenly Minded might be a good thing?

I reckon. I reckon without being Heavenly Minded, I'm going to struggle to do that which Heaven calls me to live out. Heavenly Minded people know our bodies are temporary, yet a prototype of what is to come.

We have the Holy Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come. Faith will always supersede sight. Walking lightly is walking wisely.

To live for an audience of one is what Heavenly Minded people know to do. And they also know that our life's work will be assessed for eternal reward. May we be Heavenly Minded to the glory of God, His everlasting glory.

Lord Jesus, we stop in this moment and acknowledge your perfection. That you were thoroughly Heavenly Minded, yet you touched the dirty clay in every way.

Would you fill us with a renewed passion to have our minds filled with that which is lovely and admirable and of the heavens, that we might more effectively play our part in seeing the kingdom of heaven come on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.