

## Mid-course Correction

- i. Weather News
  - a. From Norman, Oklahoma they guide ships in the Arabian Ocean around storms
  - b. Ships and aircraft make mid-course corrections all of the time
  - c. Do we? Do we know how?
  - d. Occasions such as graduation, marriage and your first child, your first job, loosing your first job, not being able to get a second job like your first job and so on.

## My mid-course correction

### 1. Nancy and I need it right now

- a. The situation with our mothers

### 2. I need it right now

- a. There is something about the reality of aging that can (*though, not always*) re-route your priorities and your ambitions
  - i. "What are the things I want to accomplish or acquire?"
    - 1. To what extent am I drifting toward?
      - a. ". . . let us eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die." (1 Corinthians 15:32)
  - ii. Or, am I intensifying my efforts to please Christ as well as preparing for that day when I stand before His judgment seat? (2 Corinthians 5:10)
    - a. You don't have to wait until you've lived half of a century to do this!

### 3. I need it to refine my grasp of the reality of heaven

- i. Is 'heaven' simply immortality, sort of a 'long-term survival' that everybody deserves, or at least, good folks have coming to them?
- ii. Or, is it far more and much richer than I've thought up until now?
- iii. And, does thinking about eternity make any difference in how I think about here and now?
  - 1. Is 'heaven' sort of a 'storm' that is substantial enough to make 'mid-course corrections' in the way I set my priorities, the values I invest in my family, the way I manage my time and money?
- b. Life now is a vapor

*"You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away."*  
James 4:14

- c. Eternity is *'forever and ever'* (Rev 14:11)

### Reflections on 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:11

#### Recovering Heart

2 Corinthians 4:16–18

*"Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.*

*For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen;*

*for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."*

#### 1. 'Heart' can be an easy thing to 'lose' or 'misplace'

- a. who has misplaced your phone or perhaps a credit card this past week?
  - i. What was the emotion you felt
- b. Do feel that way when you 'misplace' your heart?

#### 2. One means of 'keeping heart' is an ever-growing understanding of eternity with Christ and a maturing ambition for that eternity with Him

### Mid-Course Corrections!

#### Adjusting to a Bold Hope: a new body for the new heaven and earth

2 Corinthians 5:1

*<sup>1</sup>For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

- **Paul refers to his earthly body as a tent,**
  - It is just temporary housing,
  - that will inevitably wear out or be torn down.
  - If we have a mature understanding of the broad wrath of God
    - We know that one day He will exercise that wrath at the final judgment
    - We also know that He is measuring out wrath right now on the sin of Adam's race.

- The unescapable reign of death
- The inevitable futility that travels with us

### The Christian, however, has hope

- There is a house, **a permanent, eternal, enduring one** given to every one of us in heaven.
  - This 'building' is a new, glorified body!
  - God builds that 'house' by resurrecting the old one and entirely remaking it!
    - If God gives you a new body, it will be a physical one, a heavenly one – not an earthly, mortal one that is guaranteed to die again.
    - And, if we have a physical body, heaven must have a physical, 'earthy' character to it that is suitable for our physical bodies.

Heaven is not a cloudy place where our 'cloudy' souls sit and sing forever!

- "When referring to this place, Christians often talk about living with God 'in heaven' forever. But in fact the biblical teaching is richer than that: it tells us that there will be new heavens *and a new earth* – an entirely renewed creation – and we will live with God there." Wayne Grudem, p. 1158
  - *"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind."* **Isaiah 65:17**
  - *"For just as the new heavens and the new earth Which I make will endure before Me," declares the LORD, "So your offspring and your name will endure."* **Isaiah 66:22**
  - *"But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens **and a new earth**, in which righteousness dwells."* **2 Peter 3:13**
  - *"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea."* **Revelation 21:1**
  - *"And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,"* **Revelation 21:2-3**

### Mid-course correcting to the right ambition:

- Paul's primary burden or ambition was for Christ to return while he was alive on earth so that he could be directly transferred from this earth to the new heaven and earth. Thus, there would not be a separation from the body.

<sup>2</sup>*For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,*

<sup>3</sup>*inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked.*

- In his earthly body, Paul groaned and longed to be clothed with the new one from heaven.

- Do we take time to think about matters of mortality, judgment, and eternity?
  - Are we so busy, frenzied by this world, that we fail to think beyond here and now?
  - Do we so medicate our groaning with eating, drinking, and frivolity that we fail to pause and think deeply about both the agony of now and the ecstasy of then?
- “Groaning”, as Paul puts it here, is a very good, healthy, mature and wise thing to do. The wise Christian should be increasing adept at it. For, if we groan well we find our life priorities and focus purged of the shallow and replaced with the **sagacious**.

*<sup>4</sup>For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.*

*<sup>5</sup>Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.*

The early church thought in terms of Jesus returning while they were still alive!

- *“When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.”*  
Colossians 3:4
- They had a word that kept their hope fresh . . . **Maranatha** – ‘come Lord’ (1 Corinthians 16:22)
- Paul poured this eagerness for the Lord’s return into the imaginations of the young Christians who made up these early churches
- He also showed them what to do if Jesus tarries.

Philippians 1:21–25

*“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

*But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose.*

*But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better;*

*yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.*

*Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith . . . ”*

**Hard pressed:**

**Paul’s ambition – his preference - was for Jesus to return while he was alive and to be taken directly from to the new heaven and earth in his new body.**

If Jesus chose to tarry Paul understood that he would die, his soul would be separated from his body, and his soul would enjoy a 'first stage' (to use N.T. Wright's phrasing) in the presence of Christ.

- Paul imagines this as 'being unclothed' or 'naked'
- Theologians use the term 'Intermediate state'
- Then there would be the 'second stage' when Christ returns to earth where He resurrects the bodies of saints who have died.

*"For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord."* **1 Thessalonians 4:15-17**

If Paul had to wait, and to die, he was resolved to use his remaining time for the benefit of other . . . as fully as he possibly could.

He was hard-pressed

2 Corinthians 5:6-8

<sup>6</sup>*Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—*

<sup>7</sup>*for we walk by faith, not by sight—*

<sup>8</sup>*we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.*

Whatever Jesus chooses, my aim is to please Him as fully as possible.

<sup>9</sup>*Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.*

<sup>10</sup>*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

i. **Sometime, after we die, we appear before the judgment seat of Christ** (Rom 14:10 (judgment seat of God)

a. *"And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,"* **(Hebrews 9:27)**

b. *"For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS."* **(Matthew 16:27)**

c. *"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."* **(Revelation 22:12)**

ii. **Each of us is recompensed for his deeds**

a. Does this contradict Eph 2:8-9 and Roman 6:23?

Ephesians 2:8

<sup>8</sup>*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;*

Romans 6:23

<sup>23</sup>*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

- b. **Salvation is earned by the worthiness of Jesus Christ**
- c. **Salvation is received as a gift by faith in Christ's atonement on our behalf.**
- d. **Our deeds are the public evidence of the genuineness of our faith**
- e. **We are rewarded for our faithfulness**

#### Mid-Course Corrections

This understanding

- of salvation by faith in Christ,
- of a new heaven and the new earth,
- of the return of Christ for His faithful saints,
- of the resurrection of their bodies,
- of their rewards at the judgment seat of Christ

was an 'oceanic hurricane' for the early church.

**They were continually making 'mid-course corrections' to align themselves as fully as possible with those things that please Christ.**

1 Corinthians 5:9

*Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, **to be pleasing to Him.***

Prayer