

TEXT: 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:8

THEME: WE LIVE BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT

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¹³ It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. ¹⁵ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

^{5:1} Now 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. ² Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, ³ because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. ⁴ For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

⁶ Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. ⁷ We live by faith, not by sight. ⁸ We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ^{NIV84}

Dear Gary, Jodi, Justin, family members and friends of our dear departed sister, Linda:

Here at Trinity, we have a form people may choose to fill out called “Funeral Arrangements.” When I received Linda’s form, the word “Funeral” had been crossed out and substituted with “Celebration of Christian Life.” I get that. I understand that. In fact, that’s why Linda wanted me to begin this service with my familiar worship service greeting: **“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24).**

We certainly could celebrate and rejoice in her earthly Christian life. For 50 years she was a Christian wife who encouraged her husband in his walk with the Lord as the two of them faithfully worshiped their one and only Savior from sin, Jesus Christ, right here in church, week after week after week. She was a Christian mother who made sure her children were brought up in the training and instruction of the Lord. She was a grandmother who encouraged and supported her grandchildren in their Christian education, as well as their athletic and musical endeavors. She felt so blessed that two of her grandsons are preparing for fulltime service to our Savior. For more than a decade, she was a volunteer at the McLaren Bay Gift Shop and would always want to know how the Trinity members I was visiting at the hospital were doing. She always said she would remember them in her prayers. Linda served as a greeter for our worship services here at Trinity, helping to make people feel welcome and comfortable with her beautiful, warm smile and genuine concern for folks. She always wanted to look her best at worship, not to show off or gain praise from others, but she wanted to give her best to her Savior-God who had given her his best, his own Son, her Savior, Jesus Christ. Of course, Linda liked to have fun as well, and one of the first signs of spring was seeing Linda drive up to church in her little blue Pontiac Solstice.

So yes, we could say that Linda led a fine, earthly Christian life. We celebrate that because we know it was evidence of her saving faith in God. But that’s not really why Linda wanted me to greet you today with **“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24).** She didn’t want us to mourn today but wanted us to celebrate and rejoice in the Christian life she now has for all eternity...a life we can all have through faith in Jesus as our Savior.

This truth is expressed in the first verses of the text chosen for this message: **“We know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence” (4:14).** For us Christians, death means resurrection. The same God and Father who raised Jesus from the dead after he suffered and died to pay for all of our sins, will raise those who belong to him.

That’s why Paul can say that in this life, **“we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day” (4:16).** Over the last year, Linda was outwardly wasting away. The cancer

ravaged her whole body. No medical means—no medicines or surgeries—could stop it. As horrible and painful as that was for us to watch, how comforting and marvelous it was to see Linda’s faith remain firm and strong in her Savior Jesus! Inwardly she was being renewed day by day, as God used that illness and the sure promise of his Word to make Linda long all the more for her going home to heaven. Those troubles also helped to prepare us for letting go of Linda, for no one wanted to see her suffer anymore.

In our text Paul explains our confidence here as well. **“Now 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” (5:1).** Our life here on this earth is like tenting. A tent is not a permanent structure; it is only temporary in nature. One day our earthly tent-house will be destroyed. That is the result of sin, our own personal sin. **“For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).** We have proof of that before us today. But that does not cause us to doubt or falter. Why? Because **“the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).** Eternal life is God’s gift to us; it is not something we earn with good works or by trying really hard to keep all of God’s laws. It is God’s GIFT to us in Christ Jesus our Lord. You reject Jesus Christ, you reject God’s gift of eternal life. However, with Spirit-worked faith in Jesus, we know that **“we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven.”** Note that God’s promise is so true and certain that Paul uses a present tense verb, **“we HAVE a building from God.”** That is how reliable God’s promises are. If God says it, God’s children HAVE it.

Finally, Paul says, **“We are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord” (5:6-8).** While we are living on this earth, while we are at home in the body we are still living by faith. Faith, the Scriptures say elsewhere, **“is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:2).**

But when we are taken away from the body, when we die, then we will no longer be walking simply by faith, but by SIGHT. We will be **“at home with the Lord.”** If it is a blessed experience to be able to live now by FAITH, how much more blessed will it be to live then by SIGHT! This is Linda’s blessed state right now and so yes, we celebrate and rejoice today. The apostle John expresses this thought in his First Epistle: **“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (3:2).** We celebrate and rejoice that Linda is **“at home with the Lord.”** Amen.

—PASTOR Richard D. STARR