

# How We View God

*Life in a Tent, Pt. 2*

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## I. PRAYER

- i. Would you humble us underneath yourself and help us to see you as all-powerful, all-wise, and perfectly good.

## II. INTRODUCTION

### a. Imagine a soccer ball..

- i. And that soccer ball was the sun.
  - And we were to scale the size of the sun down to a standard soccer ball.
- ii. If we did that, you know how big earth would be?
  - A grain of rice broken in half.
- iii. And if we wanted to place the soccer ball at the right distance from our half grain of rice on the same scale that earth is from the sun, we would have to place it about 24 meters away.
  - So, maybe past that back wall out on the sidewalk somewhere.
- iv. Now our sun is 150 million kilometers away from earth.
  - You know how far the next closest star is?
  - 4.4 lightyears away.
  - Insert that into our scale model here, we would need to put the next soccer ball in Zurich, Switzerland.

### b. Our universe is so large and so vast, it is incomprehensible to us.

- i. And we believe that our God spoke this universe into existence with the words of his mouth.
  - We believe that he is so powerful, so wise, so genius, that he could craft our universe through speaking.



1. Colossians 1:16-17 – *“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”*
  2. God was there before this universe, God is origin of the universe, and God literally holds the universe in his hand.
  3. And he sustains it and he can end it when he wants.
  4. That’s how big our God is. That’s how wise and all-knowing our God is.
- ii. **So, think about this. How big? How wise? How significant is our nation on the face of that half grain of rice?**
- What about our town? How big is Herndon on the face of that half grain of rice?
  - What about you and me? How big are we? How smart are we in this small slice of time on the face of that half grain of rice?
- iii. **So, let me ask you a question – what do we do when we form opinions and convictions about what is right, true, and good and it disagrees with God?**
- What do we do if we form desires that we want to act upon and those desires are something that God has said are not good.
  - What do we do when a group of human beings that exist on the face of the half grain of rice – a society or a culture – what happens when they form opinions and convictions that disagree with God?
- iv. **That’s what we want to talk about this morning.**



### **III. SERIES RECAP**

#### **a. We are in a series right now called “Life in a Tent.”**

- i. And this is a series where we are studying 2 Corinthians 5 together verse by verse.
  - We are studying one chapter in one letter written by the Apostle Paul to a church located in Corinth, which is in Greece.
  - And in the section of the letter that we are reading, Paul explains to his readers and to us his worldview.
- ii. **Now, two weeks ago when we began this series, we studied the first five verses and we asked the question: How should we view ourselves?**
  - And Paul uses the analogy of a tent.
    1. We should view our lives and our bodies like a tent.
    2. It’s temporary. It’s not really that desirable. It’s fragile. We experience pain and suffering in this life.
    3. We live in a broken world that has been corrupted by sin against God.
    4. And so, as we live our lives in this tent, we long for and we groan for a life that is not like a tent but Paul says is like a building.
    5. Permanent. Stable. Comfortable.
    6. And Paul says that God has promised us, he has guaranteed us as followers of Jesus that one day, after this life, we will get the building.
    7. We will live with Him in His Kingdom where our bodies are immortal and there is no pain and suffering for all of eternity.



- iii. And so, as we move to the next few verses here in 2 Corinthians 5, we are going to be asking the question: How Then Should We View God?

## **IV. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:6-10**

### **a. Read 2 Corinthians 5:6-10**

### **b. So, in v.6-8 here, Paul says that we are always of good courage.**

#### **i. Why?**

- Because although we live in a tent and we long and groan for what is next...for a better life...and we know it's coming!
- We know that this life is not all there is and the best is yet to come...a building from God.

#### **ii. So, Paul says we live this life here by faith and not by sight.**

- To live by faith is to live according to something that you cannot see, you cannot fully explain, and you cannot control.
  1. Living by sight is to live according to something that you can see, something you can explain, something you can control.
  2. As we live life in a tent, we automatically live by sight and not by faith.
- Example: The other night at dinner.
  1. We fixed our family some grilled chicken and broccoli.
  2. Now, my two-year-old daughter loves broccoli. My three-year-old son, not so much.



3. See, my son lives his life by sight. He saw something on his plate that was green and immediately decided that he did not like it, it was going to taste bad, and he wasn't going to eat it.
  4. But, what mommy and daddy were trying to tell him was that we melted some cheese over it and put lots of salt on it.
  5. We doctored it up to make it good!
  6. So, we're trying to get our son to have some faith in us. C'mon buddy, you'll like it. Just try the broccoli.
  7. But our son was determined to live by sight and not eat his broccoli.
  8. So, what happened next?
  9. Well, of course, mommy and daddy bribed our son so he tried the broccoli and guess what, he liked it and ended up eating all of the broccoli!
  10. It turned out that mommy and daddy had a more informed perspective on the broccoli than our son. We made it good!
- Don't we live the same way?
    1. We live our lives according to what we can see, our opinions, our interpretation, our desires, our preferences...
    2. And it is so hard to live our lives according to faith trusting that maybe just maybe the God who holds the universe in the palm of his hand had a higher and better perspective than those of us who live on the face of that half grain of rice.



iii. **So in the first part of the series, we learned that our worldview impacts the way we live our lives.**

- If I live by sight and have the worldview that this life is all there is and I have to make the best of it.
  1. Then I will spend my life trying to construct this building that I long for out of the things of this world.
  2. I will look to the world and the things that I can see and control to satisfy my deepest longings.
- But if I live by faith that this life is not all there is, the best is yet to come, and right now God has sent me to live in this tent on assignment from him...
  1. Then I am free to live this life according to his Word and not fearing that my deepest longings are going to go unaddressed or I am going to miss out.
  2. Having faith that God knows just a bit more than I do about where true joy is found.

iv. **So, this week, as we read our text, we also see that our worldview impacts our view of God.**

- If I live my life by sight as if this life is all there is, then this shows that my view of God is:
  1. He is not there at all – atheism.
  2. He is there but he is not involved nor does he care how I live my life – deism.
  3. Or maybe it just shows a plain rejection of God.



- But, if I live by faith that this life is not all there is, the best is yet to come, and right now God has sent me to live in this tent on assignment from him...
  1. Then this shows that my view of God is that he is a personal God who cares about my life...
  2. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and perfectly good.
  3. He is worthy of my faith and trust.
  4. He is trustworthy to handle my deepest longings.
- v. **Therefore, Paul says in v.9 – “So, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please Him.”**
  - My goal in this life is to live my life in a way that is honoring to him.
    1. I want to live my life by faith. Trusting that God knows more than me. God is a better judge of what is right/wrong than I am. God knows better what will contribute to my joy and what will take my joy away.
    2. I please God by living my life with faith in God not by simply living by sight.

**c. So, this brings us back to the question that we asked in the beginning:**

- i. What do we do when we form opinions, convictions, or desires about what is right, true, and good and it disagrees with God?
  - What do we do when our culture forms opinions and convictions that disagree with God?
  - Let me give some examples...



**d. There is a lot of opinion and debate lately concerning immigration and refugees.**

- i. And there is much disagreement and debate even within the church, believe it or not.
  - And yes, there is space for discussion about what Scripture says about the role of government and its responsibility to protect its citizens.
- ii. But there is no room for discussion about what the Bible says to us about the attitude and heart the people of God should have towards the foreigner.
  - And when we allow our political affiliations, our opinions about government and security, our concerns about the different people moving into our neighborhood...to become the interpretative lens in which we read the Word of God and how God has instructed us to live...
    1. We are living by sight and not by faith.
    2. We are living with a worldview that says this world is all there is, therefore my security, my comfort, my opinions are of utmost concern!
- iii. But see God is clear in Word – *“When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born.” (Lev. 19:33-34a)*
  - Now you or people you know may have an opinion that does not agree with that.



- But this is where we say that the all-powerful creator of the universe has given us this command.
    1. We as small mortal creatures on the face of that half-grain of rice don't get a say in this issue.
    2. This is what's right. This is what's true. This is what's good. This is what pleases our God and Creator.
- iv. **And so, we live our lives in this tent by faith.**
- Loving and advocating for those who are different from us and pleading with God to change our heart when we don't.

**e. Another example: We face in this life a lot of desires for revenge.**

- i. In this sinful fragile world, people hurt us, sin against us.
- We are just tents. Not only are our bodies fragile but so are our hearts.
  - And it's easy for us to develop a desire in our hearts for revenge when we're hurt.
    1. Not a desire for forgiveness and reconciliation, but a desire to take justice in our own hands.
  - Maybe we deal out that justice through slander.
    1. Maybe it's through cutting that person out of our life and refusing to talk to them.
    2. Maybe it's through verbally or emotionally abusing them back.
  - And we all know...this is a strong desire. An emotionally charged desire. A gut level type of pain that's hard to navigate.



ii. **God’s Word says – “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” (Eph. 4:31-32)**

- Listen, it takes faith to approach someone who has hurt us with kindness and a heart that is willing to forgive.
  1. Everything in the world will tell you that this life is all there is, that person has hurt you, so forget them...
  2. That’s living by sight.
- And you will live an angry, bitter, joyless life if you respond to your hurt the way the world tells you to.

iii. **Our all-powerful, good God speaks with higher perspective and wisdom when he says to put on a heart of forgiveness.**

- We can trust him, be filled with good courage, and forgive others as we look forward to the day when our tent will become a building where all hurt, pain, sorrow, and suffering will be a distant memory.

iv. **We can have these desires that don’t agree with God.**

- God says live generously with our money and possessions, but we desire to use it all for ourselves.
  1. God says to share the hope that is within you, but we desire to fit in.
  2. God says to not neglect gathering with the church, but sometimes we want to use our time for something else.



- The question is what is our view of God?
  1. Do we see ourselves as above God when it comes to what is right, true, and good?
  2. Or do we follow His Word in faith?

**f. Last example: Our culture definitely has opinions and convictions that disagree with God.**

- i. Let's just talk about marriage for a second.
  - The Bible is very clear that marriage is between one woman and one man and that sexual intimacy is a gift that God has given to be experienced and enjoyed within marriage only.
  - And right now, our culture does not agree with that statement.
    1. In fact, our culture would say that that belief is an oppressive belief.
- ii. **Now, let me be honest.**
  - I believe that there are many people who are attracted to their same gender and they do not have an attraction to the opposite gender.
    1. People really do wrestle with this and its hard.
  - But here's the thing, when our worldview says that this life is all there is and I have to make the best of it...
    1. Then it makes sense to act upon those desires, to seek to change culture to accept a new definition of marriage, and adopt that sexual orientation as your identity.
    2. To live by sight.



- But if our worldview says that this life is not all there is. True joy. True fulfillment is to come later.
  1. Then now, I have the ability to make sense of my longings and groanings that I experience in this life and I don't have to fear that they'll never be satisfied.
  2. I live in a tent. The building is to come.
  3. I have a reason to walk by faith, not by sight. We have motivation to trust that the all-powerful creator of the universe has a better perspective on what marriage is and isn't.
  4. I can trust that when God says its not good for me to act on these desires, he's not trying to rob me of my joy but he has guaranteed me everlasting joy.
- iii. **And for those of us who may don't struggle with this personally but seem to agree with culture that we should somehow try to re-interpret what the Bible says about this issue...**
  - The reality is that we don't have a say in this matter.
    1. We live by faith, not by sight.
  - The reality is we do more damage when we begin to encourage people away from obedience to God.
    1. When rather, what we could be doing is stepping up to the plate, befriending our brothers and sisters who struggle with this, welcome them into our community, and ensure as the church that struggling with same sex attraction while also following Christ is not a formula for loneliness.
  - And the church has failed at this.



**g. Friends, we're going to have opinions, convictions, and desires that do not align with God.**

- i. The question is, what is our view of God?
  - Who is more wise? Who has the better perspective?
- ii. And is our aim to please him as walk in faith that this life is not all there is?
  - Or are we living our lives seeking just to please ourselves as we walk by sight believing that this is really all there is?
- iii. As Tim Keller says: *"If your god never disagrees with you, you might just be worshiping an idealized version of yourself."*

**V. GOSPEL**

**a. And you might say - it's hard to walk in faith. It's hard to go all in and bet my whole life on the belief that this is not all there is.**

- i. Yes, we must walk in faith but this is not a blind faith.
  - We are not always of good courage because we have mustered up the will power to be of good courage.
- ii. No, we are always of good courage because Jesus Christ came, took up residence in a tent with us so that he could pave the way that we would take to the Kingdom of God.



- Jesus came and accomplished everything that needed to be accomplished so that we could be reconciled with God and guaranteed that building in heaven.
  - Jesus says in John 14:1-3 - *“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.<sup>2</sup> In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?<sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”*
- iii. The gospel of Jesus Christ says that Jesus has come so that we could be made right with God and that Jesus Christ will come again to bring us home.
- So, while we live in between the first and second coming of Christ, we live by faith, not by sight.
    1. Oh, but there will be a day when our faith becomes sight.
  - Paul says it this way in 1 Corinthians 13:12 - *“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully...”*
    1. We long for that day.

## **VI. VERSE 10**

### **a. But we still have to deal with verse 10.**

- i. Read v.10.
- ii. When this life is over, we’ll all face two judgements.
  - The first judgment will be if we are perfectly righteous or not.



1. And if you have trusted in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, God will look upon you and see the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ.
  2. You'll be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven.
  3. If today were the day that you face that judgment, will you be covered by the blood of Jesus?
- But after this we'll face another judgment, the one that Paul refers to here.
    1. Now, this is not a judgement if you'll be able to stay in God's kingdom or not.
    2. Jesus Christ has already guaranteed that.
    3. But this is a judgment on what you did during your life in a tent.
    4. Did you live your life by faith seeking to please God or did you live your life by sight seeking to please yourself?
    5. And the Bible talks about some sort of rewards that will be given in heaven and we really don't know much more than that.
- iii. **But here's the point: As we live life in this tent, God has called us to obedience to his word.**
- Not because he is a hard master, but because he is Lord, he is the creator, he knows better, and he is after our joy.
    1. All of God's commands are for your joy.
  - And this means we will need to live our lives in a way that is counter-cultural and in many ways counter-intuitive to what our flesh compels us to do.



#### iv. How are you doing?

- Where in your life are you living by sight and not by faith?
- My prayer for all of us, is that we would begin to see God as a kind, compassionate Lord who is leading us to life and not away from it.
- And that we would joyfully obey him.

## VII. PRAY PSALM 23

1. The Lord is my shepherd;  
I have all that I need.  
2 He lets me rest in green meadows;  
he leads me beside peaceful streams.  
3 He renews my strength.  
He guides me along right paths,  
bringing honor to his name.  
4 Even when I walk  
through the darkest valley,<sup>[a]</sup>  
I will not be afraid,  
for you are close beside me.  
Your rod and your staff  
protect and comfort me.  
5 You prepare a feast for me  
in the presence of my enemies.  
You honor me by anointing my head  
with oil.  
My cup overflows with blessings.  
6 Surely your goodness and unfailing love  
will pursue me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will live in the house of the Lord  
forever.

