

Series: Family Portrait: A picture of God's design for the family.

#5 This Old House

2 Corinthians 4:16 – 5:9

Intro: A little story from the Blood family files as we get started this morning. In 1990, I got out of the AF, we moved out of base housing at Seymour-Johnson AFB and moved to 307 S. Audubon Ave in downtown Goldsboro. Just a few blocks from where Any Griffith lived when he was a teacher. It was an old house. Not as old as some of you have lived in, but old and run down to us. Our first winter we had very little heat...electricity...water situation...Cracks in the walls...squirrels...fireplace...church loaned us money to put in a heat and ac unit...possum.

We have also had the opportunity to build a new house, where we live now. What a difference. But the truth is that this house will be an old house one day. It's kind of like our bodies, we grow old.

Speaking of growing old, here's some advice from retired people

If you are going to try cross-country skiing, start with a small country.

I must walk early in the morning before my brain figures out what I'm doing.

Every time I hear the dirty word 'exercise', I wash my mouth out with chocolate.

STORY: A newspaper interviewed an 80-year-old woman because she had just gotten married -- for the fourth time to a funeral director.

The newsman asked her if she wouldn't mind telling him a little about her first three husbands and what they did for a living. She said she first married a banker just out of college, then a circus ringmaster when in her 40's, later on a preacher in her 60's, and now in her 80's, a funeral director.

The interviewer looked at her, quite astonished, and asked why she had married four very different kinds of men.

She smiled and said, "I married one for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, and four to go."

Now we've all heard of the Serenity prayer that says, "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference." That's the Serenity prayer.

But for the older person, there is a senility prayer. "God, grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked, the good fortune to run in to the ones that I do like, and the eyesight to know the difference".

I heard about two Wal-Mart greeters. They were up in age, and they were sitting on a bench talking. And the one man said to his friend, he said, "Hey, Jim, I'm almost 80 years old." And he said, "I have so many aches and so many pains, and, man, life is just so hard." He said, "Jim, you're about my age. How do you feel?" Jim looked at him, and he said, "I feel just like a newborn baby." He said, "You do? Really, like a newborn?" He said, "Yep, I got no hair, no teeth, and I sleep just like a baby...up every two hours just to go to the bathroom."

As we continue our **Family Portrait series: A picture of God's design for the family, we can't leave grandma and grandpa out of the picture. So, the title of my message today is This Old House**

Jack LaLanne is a name that many people recognize as one of the first fitness guys that hit television. Jack LaLanne wasn't very big. He was 5'6", but he was just a ball of muscle. And that guy could do amazing things. When he was 70 years old, he pulled 70 boats with 70 people, handcuffed and shackled a mile and a half in New York harbor. He just did it as a stunt for turning 70 years old. He lived to be 96 and then he died, **he died**. He got pneumonia and then died of respiratory failure. They said that the day before he died, he worked out. All of us are going to get old and decrepit if we live long enough.

One man asked his dad when he was in his early 80s, he said, "Dad, where do you see yourself in five years?" He said, "Dead!" I mean, that's just what happens. And he was right. He died within that time.

Did you know that in the world today about one hundred, ninety thousand people will die? Sooner or later, unless the Lord intervenes by His second coming, we shall die. I don't want to be morbid with you today--I want to tell you that while death is a reality we must face, it is not a fact to be feared.

Look with me this morning in 2 Corinthians 4:16 to 5:9

The Bible says, "**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, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.**

5 For 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 instead 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 instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who 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 For 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. 9 So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.”

Now, folks, you are not your body, you live in your body--your body is the house that you live in. A dog lives in a doghouse, a bird in a birdhouse, and a man lives in a man house. Your body is merely a house--you moved into it when you were born, and one day you will move out of it.

Somebody asked John Quincy Adams one time when he was quite sick, How is John Quincy Adams today? He said, well, John Quincy Adams is doing quite well, thank you. As a matter of fact, he said, I'm getting along splendidly, but he said the house that I live in is not doing well at all. As a matter of fact, he said, it's quite run down. It's becoming rather dilapidated, and I fear that in just a little while I will be moving out of it. But, he said, John Quincy Adams is doing quite well, thank you.

Now, that's something very good to think about, because that's exactly what the apostle Paul is talking about here in chapter 4 and verse 16. **“Therefore, we do not lose heart;** that is, we keep our chin up...we don't get discouraged, **though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.** What is the outward man? That's our body. Your body is perishing, but your inward man is being renewed day by day. That's the soul's fountain of youth; the inner man, the spirit never grows old, but your body decays and wears out. Your body is like a house, and it's gets run down.

There are several things I want you to think about. **First**, I want you to think about your **God-given desire** for a new house (body).

Look 2 Cor. 5:1-2. **“For 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.”** Note the word groan.

God designed your body to wear out, to run down, and to decay. Why? That you might have a desire to move into another house. You see, if you had perfect health, if you never had any problems, then you'd never have a desire for that new house.

Back up to chapter 4 and I want you to notice several things about this house you live in right now.

1. I want you to notice that the house that you live in right now is in a **perishing condition**.

Chapter 4 verse 16 says, ***“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away,*** that is, your body right now is passing away; it's dying. Do you know what we're doing right here? We're sitting here wasting away.

You say, Pastor, that's morbid. Hold on and you'll find out it's glorious. Listen folks, I'm not trying to make you feel bad, I'm trying today to give you a breathtaking expectation about the future that every Christian ought to have. Our bodies are in a perishing condition

Our house is not only in a perishing condition but...

2. It's in a **painful condition**.

Verse 17 says, ***“For our light and momentary troubles”*** do you see that?

In chapter 5 verse 2, it says, ***“Meanwhile we groan.”*** Verse 4 says, ***“we groan and are burdened,”***

We have a painful condition. Let's have a reality check right now. I want you to stop and think about it: is there anybody here today who is not feeling pain somewhere? It may be in the lower back, some vertebrae that are too tight. Some of you have a dull toothache, others have a little headache, somebody feels a little arthritis, somebody else has feet that hurt. Everybody is feeling something, except a few of you young whippersnappers. We who are in this body, in this old house groan.

Illustration: Somebody said, you know you're getting old when everything hurts and what doesn't hurt doesn't work. Or when the gleam in your eyes is from your bifocals. Or when you feel in the morning like the night after, but you didn't do anything or go anywhere last night. Your mind makes promises that your body can't keep. Your knees buckle but your belt won't. Dialing long distance wears you out. Your back goes out more than you do. You look forward to a dull evening.

We are in a perishing condition, we're in a painful condition and...

3. We are in a **passing condition**.

Chapter 4 verse 18 says, **“So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, (it's passing away) but what is unseen is eternal.”**

This old house that you live in is a temporary house; it's a tent. You were never meant to put the tent pegs down too deep. Folks, the things that are seen are temporary, they are passing, passing away.

Illustration: We hear that the cells in our old body are constantly being renewed. There are between 50 and 75 trillion cells in the body.... Each type of cell has its own life span, and scientists say that **every seven to ten years you have a brand-new body.**

If that's true, then you're looking at Gerry Blood 9.0. I would like to think that each version is better than the last, but not always. The things that are seen are temporal, they're passing away, our bodies are like an old house that is decaying.

STORY: Stuart Hamblen was saved in a Billy Graham crusade in 1949 in Los Angeles. There is a story that sometime later, Hamblen was out on a hunting expedition in the Sierra with guide Monte Wolfe, when he and his fellow hunter, actor John Wayne, came up on an old, dilapidated house. The shingles had been blown off the roof, some of the windowpanes had been broken, there was a rickety old fence and a gate hanging on one hinge.

In the yard was a bony old hound dog and they decided they would investigate. Stu and his buddy went up to this old house, the door was unlatched, a little ajar, and they pushed aside and went in. That's when they found him--the old man who had lived in that house. He was dead.

Stuart Hamblen was a cowboy songwriter, and he recorded a song in March 1954 called, **“this old house.”** It became very successful, peaking at number 2 on the Billboard Country & Western chart. It was his last hit on the country charts and with the royalties he bought the mansion that had been owned by the late Errol Flynn.

The song describes the last words of an old man living in an old house that has fallen into such disrepair that it is no longer structurally sound. The man tells of how the house "once knew his children" and "once knew his wife," but that he was not going to need it any longer nor did he have time to repair it.

This Ole House Lyrics

[Verse 1]

This old house once knew my children
This old house once knew my wife
This old house was home and comfort
As we fought the storms of life
This old house once rang with laughter
This old house heard many shouts
Now she trembles in the darkness
When the lightning walks about

[Chorus]

Ain't gonna need this house no longer
Ain't gonna need this house no more
Ain't got time to fix the shingles
Ain't got time to fix the floor
Ain't got time to oil the hinges
Nor to mend the window-pane
Ain't gonna need this house no longer
I'm gettin' ready to meet the saints

[Verse 2]

This old house is a-gettin' shaky
This old house is a-gettin' old
This old house lets in the rain
This old house lets in the cold
Oh my knees are gettin' chilly
But I feel no fear or pain
'Cause I see an angel peekin'
Through a broken window-pane

[Chorus]

Ain't gonna need this house no longer
Ain't gonna need this house no more
Ain't got time to fix the shingles
Ain't got time to fix the floor
Ain't got time to oil the hinges
Nor to mend the window-pane
Ain't gonna need this house no longer
I'm gettin' ready to meet the saints

[Verse 3]

Now this old house is afraid of thunder
This old house is afraid of storms
This old house just groans and trembles
When the night wind flings its arms

This old house is a-gettin' feeble
This old house is a-needin' paint
Just like me, it's tuckered out
But I'm gettin' ready to meet the saints

Ecclesiastes, chapter 12 has a lot to say about this old house.

Remember your Creator
in the days of your youth,
before the days of trouble come
and the years approach when you will say,
“I find no pleasure in them”—
2 before the sun and the light
and the moon and the stars grow dark,
and the clouds return after the rain;
3 when the keepers of the house tremble,
and the strong men stoop,
when the grinders cease because they are few,
and those looking through the windows grow dim;
4 when the doors to the street are closed
and the sound of grinding fades;
when people rise up at the sound of birds,
but all their songs grow faint;
5 when people are afraid of heights
and of dangers in the streets;
when the almond tree blossoms
and the grasshopper drags itself along
and desire no longer is stirred.
Then people go to their eternal home
and mourners go about the streets. (NIV)

So, the very first thing is we have a God-given desire for our new house. That's the way God designed us, and that's not a form of escapism, that is the way God made us...to long to be with Him for all eternity.

Secondly, I want you to see the **God-ordained design of your new house.**

What's your new house going to be like? Chapter 5 verse 1, **“For 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.”**

1. We know that this old house is going to be a **supernatural body.**

It's not made with hands; it is the handiwork of God himself. Now we live in

natural bodies, but in heaven we're going to live in a supernatural body.

2. **It's going to be eternal body.**

It will never get old, never get sick, there will be no pain, there'll be no groaning, or moaning, there'll be no sighing, or crying, there'll be no dying, there'll be no sorrow, there'll be no sin--the former things are passed away.

This is what he's talking about in verse 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 instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.”***

So, our new body is a supernatural body, it is an eternal body...

3. **It is a heavenly body.**

The Bible says here in verse 1, ***“eternal house in the heaven.”*** It means that our new body is going to be subject to spiritual laws and not earthly laws. We're going to be like the Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes people want to ask all kinds of questions. People say, Pastor, will we eat or will we have to eat? Will we sleep? Will we be able to travel? How far? How fast? How old will we be? What about little babies that are born and die as little babies? Will they be little babies in heaven? Will we live in families in heaven? A lot of good questions, aren't they? Do you know the answers to all those questions? No I don't; there are a lot of things we don't know.

First John chapter 3, and verse 2 says, ***“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”***

I don't know exactly what my new body is going to be like but I know I'll be satisfied with it, because it's made by God, and it will be supernatural, eternal, and heavenly.

The Bible says very clearly and very plainly in Philippians chapter 3 verses 20 and 21, ***“But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.” (NIV)***

Our bodies are like an old house; they're wearing out, but that's ok. We'll move out of these bodies and move into a new body. But wait a minute, what happens in the period of time after we move out and before we get our new body? There is an intermediate state where we exist as pure spirits

with the Lord. Jesus, when his body went to the tomb, said to the father, "Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit." Jesus said to a man that was dying next to him on the cross, "This day you will be with me in paradise." That man's body went to the grave, but Jesus said, "this very day you'll be with me."

The Bible teaches that the moment you close your eyes in death in this life you open your spiritual eyes upon the Lord Jesus, you are with Christ immediately. I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. That's what the apostle Paul said, to be absent with the body is to be present with the Lord. But we wait for our resurrection body and that resurrection body is going to come, it's going to be made like unto His glorious body. That is the design of our new house.

We talked about the God-given desire for our new body, and the God-ordained designed, and lastly, I want you to think about...

Thirdly, I want you to see the deed to your new house.

How do you know all of this is going to take place? How do you know this is not just a preacher up here on Sunday morning giving you some form of sentimentality to make you feel better because of the inevitability of death? Well, I want to tell you, God has already given you a title deed to your new house that you're going to be moving into.

There are three major parts in that deed--it's based upon three things.

1. **God's sovereign work.**

Notice if you will in chapter 5 and verse 5. **"Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."**

Paul says we're going to get a new body and then he says the one who created us and redeemed us for this is God. This is what God had in mind when he created the first house-- that we would move out of this old house and we would move into that eternal house in the heavens. God fashioned us for this, for this cause Jesus suffered and bled and died. Now folks, that's pretty good guarantee. You see, you have the sovereign work of God, which is the first paragraph in your deed.

But not only God's sovereign work, but we also have...

2. **God's spiritual witness.**

Now, watch it, verse 5, **"Now the one who has fashioned us for this very**

purpose is God," now watch this...who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Do you know what the word deposit means?

It's a down payment, it's the guarantee of the spirit. You see, not only do I have the sovereign work of God, but I have that inner witness of the spirit.

You say, I know what it means, pastor, it means you just **feel** saved. No, that's not what it means. And, by the way, be careful not to get into the trap of living by feelings. Now, I'm not against emotions, emotions are fine, but the witness of the spirit is not dependent upon feelings.

The witness of the spirit is an inner awareness that you belong to Jesus Christ. Now it may show in your emotions, but my emotions are not the proof. For example, I might be saved and not happy. As a matter of fact, any Christian who has unconfessed sin in his life ought to be miserable, it's one of the signs he is saved. The most miserable man on earth is not a lost man; the most miserable man on earth is a saved man out of fellowship with God.

Your spirit is place of spiritual knowledge: we know God in the spirit. Spiritual knowledge and intellectual knowledge are different. For example, does God know something? Yes, He knows everything. How does God know what God knows? Does God learn what He knows? Does somebody teach it to Him? God can't learn anything. If God learned anything He'd change, but He says, I'm the Lord, I change not. How does God know? Does God just have a hunch? Does God have a feeling? He just knows. How do you know that you're saved? You just know. I can't tell you exactly how I know that I know but I can tell you that I know. I know because God's spirit agrees with my spirit that I'm a child of God. It is God's holy Spirit that witnesses with my spirit that I am a child of God.

The deed to my new house is by God's sovereign work, God's spiritual witness, and then last of all,

3. **God's sure word.**

Verses 6-7 say, **"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 For we live by faith, not by sight."**

Where does this confidence come from? Where does this faith come from? **Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.** When you put those three things together, you can read your title clear. You can say, Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine. Because there is God's sovereign work, God's spiritual witness, and God's sure word. That tells us that what God says is true. And when I read the Bible and

find it true in every other instance, I find it true concerning what will happen when I die? Thank God that we can know, dear friends, that we've got a new house and we'll be moving in one day.

Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 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, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.