

Youth Teaching Resources

June 10, 2018



Season After Pentecost: The Perils of Pauline ... Thinking (May 27-July 8)

2 Corinthians 4:5-12 (RCL 4:5-12) – “Treasure Sharing”

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:5 (RCL 4:13-5:1) – “We Don’t Lose Heart”

2 Corinthians 5:6-17 (RCL 5:6-10 [11-13], 14-17) – “By Faith, Not Sight”

2 Corinthians 6:1-13 – “Living Oxymorons”

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Find links and videos related to this lesson.

We Don't Lose Heart

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:5

YOUTH Teaching Guide

by Jeremy Colliver

This youth teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Baptists Today*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Baptists Today* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Baptists Today* so they can prepare before the lesson.

PARENT PREP

How do you deal with your stress? “But, this section is about my student.” You ask. Well, how you deal with your stress is how your students will deal with their stress. They begin to model how to deal with different aspects of life by watching you. They might not end up dealing with stress the same way you do, but they will start by modeling life after you. So, how much do you want your students to have to unlearn? How can you model dealing with stress in a healthy way?

TEACHING THE LESSON

Fellowship

Begin your session by showing the clip “Family Stress” from *The Incredibles*. If you are unable to show the clip, summarize it to the best of your ability, and then facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) What caused the stress for each character in this clip?
- 2) How did the characters respond to their own stress? To the stress of the people around them?
- 3) Could any of these stressors have been prevented?
- 4) How do you deal with stress?
- 5) How does stress impact your faith?

Information

Transition to the next section of the session by reading 2 Corinthians 4:1-12. Allow the students to ask any initial questions they have about the text. As you answer their questions, you may want to provide some of the information found in Tony's commentary to answer their questions. When the students have had an opportunity to share their initial thoughts, continue the discussion by facilitating a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) What danger had Paul been in?
- 2) Why does Paul believe that God will raise the believers of Jesus with Jesus?
- 3) What kept Paul going? How was this at the heart of his ministry?
- 4) What does Paul mean by an "inner" and "outer" self?
- 5) What metaphor does Paul use to talk about dying and what happens next?
- 6) How does the metaphor teach about what might happen after we die?

If your group would like to dig deeper in their discussion, share some of the insights that Tony provides in the "Digging Deeper" portion of his commentary. You may want to use some questions like the following to facilitate your discussion:

- 1) Why was Paul so confident about the resurrection?
- 2) What does Paul mean by being clothed?
- 3) How does Paul guarantee our resurrection?

You may also want your group to discuss "The Hardest Question" if they would like to continue their discussion on this passage. Tony poses the following question to consider as "The Hardest Question": Why does Paul quote from Psalm 116:10 as he does?

Transformation

Conclude your session by distributing paper and pencils to everyone gathered. As you distribute the paper and pencils, challenge the students to write down everything that creates stress in their lives. Allow them time to write and then tell the students to "get rid" of all the stress they just wrote down. You may need to prompt them to ball up their paper or rip it in half. When everyone has taken care of their stress, facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) What the biggest stressor that you wrote down on your paper?
- 2) How easy was it to fill up your paper?
- 3) Why do you have so much stress in your life?
- 4) How can you really get rid of all your stress?
- 5) How can you help someone else when they feel stressed?
- 6) How can stress keep you away from your relationship with God?

Close with a prayer asking God for patience as we deal with all of the stress in our lives.

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartlege

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

The text—The Revised Common Lectionary has 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1 as today’s text, then skips over vv. 2-5 to begin next week’s text at 5:6. The committee may have done this because vv. 2-5 include Pauline speculations about what happens after death. Rather than ignore those puzzling but interesting verses, we will include them in our study.

Confidence in the resurrection—Paul found great confidence in speaking of how God raised Jesus from the dead, leading him to believe God would raise believers, too.

Consider these examples:

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 – “For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.”

1 Corinthians 15:14-15 – “. . . and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.”

Romans 8:11 – “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.”

Inner and outer selves—Ernest Best describes Paul’s reference to an “inner” and “outer” self in this way:

When he contrasts inner and outer natures Paul does not have in mind the comparison common in the ancient world as in ours of an immortal soul imprisoned in a mortal body from which it is set free at death. Nor has he in mind the contrast of the loss of physical vigor with old age and a possible deepening of life in the spirit. “Our outer nature” is the life we live among other people in which we may be persecuted or suffer in other ways (see 4:8–11). “Our inner nature” is the new life that comes into being with our relationship to Christ when we become new beings (5:17). Our inner nature is not yet perfect or complete; it will be hereafter; meanwhile it is being renewed and is growing every day.

(Ernest Best, *Second Corinthians*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching [Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1987], 45.)

Digging Deeper *continued*

Clothed, or not?—If you read from more than one Bible translation, you may find it curious that vv. 2-3 appear so different. This is due to a text critical issue. Mitzi I. Minor does a nice job of explaining it:

Ancient manuscripts have different participles in the verse. Some have *ekdysamenoi*, which can be translated, “if we are unclothed.” The NRSV follows this reading. Other manuscripts, however, have *endysamenoi*, which can be translated, “if we are clothed.” The TNIV follows this reading. [Compare NRSV and TNIV Translations of 5:2-3] A number of recent scholars choose the latter option as the likely correct reading and understand the verse to say, “if indeed we are clothed, we will not be found naked.”

The NRSV believes the participle *ekdysamenoi* belongs in v. 3 and translates the sentence (vv. 2-3) this way: “For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling—if indeed, when we have taken it off, we will not be found naked.”

The TNIV opts for the participle *endysamenoi* as the best reading and translates this way: “Meanwhile, we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.”

The text-critical decision here is difficult since the manuscript evidence is solid for either participle. Those who agree with the NRSV argue that Paul is likely being paradoxical (i.e., we, though unclothed, will not be found naked) and that “when we are clothed, we will not be found naked” is redundant. Those agreeing with the TNIV say the redundancy makes this reading the more difficult one and that a scribe would not likely have created it.

(Mitzi I. Minor, *2 Corinthians*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary [Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2009], 95).

Skipping death—Some interpreters believe that Paul’s desire to be “further clothed” means that he wants to be “overclothed,” that is, to put on heavenly clothes over his earthly clothes, so that he doesn’t have to die (lose his earthly clothes) and be “naked” in the interim, before the resurrection brings a new heavenly wardrobe.

Guarantee—When Paul speaks of the Spirit as a “guarantee” of our future resurrection, the word he uses typically means “down payment” or “pledge” of future payment.

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartlege

The Hardest Question is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Why does Paul quote from Psalm 116:10 as he does?

Paul's quotation of scripture in 2 Corinthians 4:13 is curious. It comes from Psalm 116:10, which is equivalent to Psalm 115:1 in the Greek translation known as the Septuagint (LXX). Paul, like other New Testament writers, often quoted from the Greek version rather than the Hebrew. This is natural, since he was writing in Greek, and his readers would have readier access to the LXX than to Hebrew scrolls. The Hebrew and Greek versions often differ, however, as they do here.

Paul also quotes the verse in a very loose way, one that modern divinity school teachers would never allow their students to get away with. The rabbis of Paul's day paid little attention to context when applying scripture texts to daily life, but introduced all kinds of other thoughts as they picked over isolated words or phrases.

In context, the author of Psalm 116 had spoken of being in mortal danger and praying for help. After surviving a perilous period, he offered his gratitude to God in the form of a psalm. In v. 10, he wrote: "I kept my faith, even when I said 'I am greatly afflicted.'" That makes perfect sense in Hebrew.

Most English translations, like the NRSV quoted above, interpret the particle *kī* from the Hebrew version (which can mean "for" or "because" as well as "if" or "when") to mean "even when." The psalmist had remained faithful to God, even while speaking of the danger that afflicted him.

The Greek translators, however, moved the verse to the beginning of another psalm, added an "alleluia" to it, and took *kī* to mean "therefore." This separated the act of speaking from the comment on suffering, so the verse reads something like "Praise the LORD: I believed, therefore I spoke. And I was greatly afflicted."

With this reading in mind, Paul ignored the second half of the verse and cited only the words "I believed, therefore I spoke."

This implies that the psalmist meant to say "Because I had faith, I testified of it."

In the original context, that's not what the verse intended. Even so, it does reflect the overall message of the psalm: the author had trusted God through a time of dire peril, and lived to testify of God's help.