

2 Corinthians 5:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Analysis

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord—Paul repeats *tharroumen* (θαρροῦμεν, "we are confident") and introduces *eudokoumen* (εὐδοκοῦμεν, "we are well-pleased, we prefer"). This is bold personal preference: death's prospect brings not dread but desire. *Ekdēmēsai* (ἐκδημῆσαι, aorist infinitive, "to be away from home") from the body means *endēmēsai* *pros ton Kyrion* (ἐνδημῆσαι πρὸς τὸν Κύριον, "to be at home with the Lord").

The preposition *pros* (πρός, "toward, with") indicates intimate proximity—face-to-face presence. This verse anchors Christian hope: death is not annihilation or soul-sleep but conscious, personal fellowship with Christ (Philippians 1:23, "to depart and be with Christ is far better"). Paul's preference for death over earthly life demonstrates radical Christ-centeredness—his ultimate treasure is Christ Himself, not earthly comfort or ministry success. Yet this isn't death-wish but prioritization: better than earthly pilgrimage is heavenly homecoming.

Historical Context

Paul likely wrote this after narrowly escaping death in Asia (1:8-10). His perspective wasn't theoretical but forged through suffering. Ancient martyrs' accounts show Christians facing death with inexplicable joy—outsiders found this baffling. Paul's theology explains this: death is doorway to Christ's presence, making martyrdom gain, not loss.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. Can you honestly say you would "rather" be with Christ than continue earthly life—what does your answer reveal about your values?
2. How does Paul's confidence about immediate presence with Christ after death address fears about what happens when we die?
3. What would need to change in your life for Christ Himself (not heaven's rewards) to be your primary longing?

Interlinear Text

Θαρροῦμεν δὲ καὶ εὐδοκοῦμεν μᾶλλον ἐκδημῆσαι
We are confident I say and willing rather to be absent
G2292 G1161 G2532 G2106 G3123 G1553

ἐκ τοῦ σώματος καὶ ἐνδημῆσαι πρὸς τὸν κύριον
from the body and to be present with the Lord
G3588 G4983 G2532 G1736 G4314 G3588 G2962

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 5:6 (References Lord): Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

1 John 3:2 (Parallel theme): Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

John 14:3 (Parallel theme): And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

2 Corinthians 5:9 (Parallel theme): Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

Psalms 16:11 (Parallel theme): Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Psalms 17:15 (Parallel theme): As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

John 17:24 (Parallel theme): Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

Luke 2:29 (References Lord): Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

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