

2 Corinthians 5 v 6-10, 14-17

Brothers and sisters, we are always confident;
even though we know that while we are at home in the body
we are away from the Lord –
for we walk by faith, not by sight.

Yes, we do have confidence,
and we would rather be away from the body
and at home with the Lord.

So whether we are at home or away,
we make it our aim to please him.

For all of us must appear before the judgement seat of Christ,
so that each may receive recompense
for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

The love of Christ urges us on,
because we are convinced that one has died for all;
therefore all have died.

And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves,
but for him who died and was raised for them.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view;
even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view,
we know him no longer in that way.

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:
everything old has passed away;
see, everything has become new!

Mark 4 v 26-34

Such a large crowd gathered around Jesus
that he got into a boat and began to teach them using many parables.

Jesus said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground,
and would sleep and rise night and day,
and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how.
The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head.
But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle,
because the harvest has come.'

Jesus also said,

'With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it?
It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground,
is the smallest of all the seeds on earth;
yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs,
and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.'

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it;
he did not speak to them except in parables,
but he explained everything in private to his disciples.