



POWER IN WEAKNESS!

The Epistle of 2 Corinthians

Be Reconciled to God!

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Message #7 of 17 – S881

Sermon given on February 2, 2020



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Be Reconciled to God!

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Opening Comments

- Turn to **2 Corinthians 5**
- Today we continue our journey through **2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness!**
- While we don't want to be morbid, we must all confront the reality that these bodies are not going to last forever **James 4:14**

You do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

- In the first part of chapter five, Paul reminded us the temporary nature of this body and contrasted it to the permanent body awaiting us in heaven
- Paul said in verse 9, whether he was in this temporary body or in his glorified body, he wanted to be pleasing to Jesus
- Because, he says in verse 10, someday every one of us is going to stand in His presence
- Paul lived with the everyday reality that life was fragile
- He was regularly being threatened and attacked
- Let's pray and then get into our text
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Be Reconciled to God!**
- Verse 11 is based on the reality that we will all stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ someday
- **2 Corinthians 5:11**
- Someday everyone will have to stand before God
- For Paul and his comrades, the idea of anyone doing that without Christ was too terrible to imagine
- And so his life was about helping people meet God in Christ
- Paul was so committed to that mission that some people accused him of being out of his mind
- **2 Corinthians 5:12-13**
- Paul wasn't out of his mind – he was passionately driven

- Tells us what his motivation was
- **2 Corinthians 5:14a**
- How much does Jesus love you?
- When they stretched out His arms and nailed them to the cross, He was showing us how much He loved us **Romans 5:8**
- **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**
- Humanly speaking, it is easier to love someone who demonstrates that they love you
- And inversely, it is harder to love someone when you can't see love coming from them
- Paul's motivation is based solely on what Christ has done for him
- Paul served the people of Corinth, not because they loved Paul, but because Christ loved Paul
- My attitude should be like Paul's – I love and serve Kelly, not because she loves me, but because Christ loves me – the fact that Kelly loves me is a bonus
- I love and serve this church, not because you love me, but because Christ's love compels me to love you and serve you
- That changes how I should view everyone I come into contact with – I am called to love and serve them, not because of them but because of Christ's love for me
- **2 Corinthians 5:14b-15**
- Christ's death frees us to live for something far greater than ourselves
- Before Christ – this life was all there was, and my life was preeminent over all others
- In Christ – this life is not all there is, and my life is a tool God can use to show His love to the rest of the world
- You may never become great in the eyes of the world but if you live for Christ, no matter what you do, great or small, it will be great in God's eyes
- Paul then says that when you live like that it changes the way you look at people
- **2 Corinthians 5:16**
- As humans, we naturally judge, evaluate, or regard people based on all the ways we can identify them

- Race, gender, social status, nation of origin, religion, political affiliation, opinion on climate change
- Paul is saying that once we are united to Christ in His death on the cross that those distinctions are not important to our attitude toward them **Galatians 3:28**

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

- Not that those things are practically gone, just not relevant to our interactions with people
- Something happened when we received Christ that changed everything
- **2 Corinthians 5:17**
- To be ‘in Christ’ is to believe the gospel message
- To be joined to Christ’s death and resurrection
- The ‘old things’ speaks to everything related to your life before Christ, but in context with verse 16, specifically talking about how we relate to other people
- You are no longer joined to the ‘old things’ but are something brand new – a ‘new creation’
- And you are a part of something more important than you and your life – the body of Christ **1 Corinthians 12:17**

Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

- Verse 17 was my experience after getting saved
- I was a new person – things changed in me immediately
- Not consciously – I wasn’t trying to change – I was just being ‘in Christ’
- But not everything changed in me and this verse encourages me in those areas where I still need to be more like Christ
- The ‘old things’ are dead – I don’t have to be what my flesh says I am
- I am free to choose to be something different than what other people think I should be – I can be what Christ wants me to be
- Verse 17 is a declaration of freedom to anyone who is in Christ
- In Christ you are free to be something new – I like that!
- Paul then turns to what was accomplished by God through Christ
- **2 Corinthians 5:18-19**
- Paul says he has been reconciled to God through Christ

- This is the reality for anyone who is in Christ – if you are a Christian, you have been reconciled to God through Christ
- Reconciled = To restore someone to favorable or friendly relations with another after a presumed wrong.
- In our case, it is not a presumed wrong **Romans 3:23**
... **all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...**
- The Bible teaches that every human, before salvation, is an enemy of God – need to be reconciled to God
- Problem is that you can't reconcile yourself to God – He does it through faith in Christ
- He does it because of His love for us **1 John 3:1**
Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!
- That is part of the new creation – you change from being an enemy of God to being a child of God – how radical is that?
- Paul says that God reconciled him to God through Christ and then gave him the ministry of reconciliation
- God calls to lost mankind through reconciled sinners.
- God is still using reconciled sinners to invite others to be reconciled to God through Christ
- 'not imputing their trespasses to them'
- This is the grace of God at work – if God didn't overlook people's sins, there would be no hope of salvation
- But God won't overlook people's sins forever
- If someone rejects God's offer of reconciliation in this life, there is no hope of reconciliation in the next life – only judgment awaits
- Which is why Paul felt compelled to share Christ with others
- **2 Corinthians 5:20**
- Paul considered it his high calling to represent Christ into the world
- God had proved His love for Paul by saving him from what he was and making him into something brand new
- And then God invited Paul to join Him in the work of reconciling the whole world to God through Christ
- This was not some dry work of ministry for Paul – it was the passion of his life

- Notice God's heart for the lost in this verse – 'as though God were pleading through us'
- I don't know about you, but it is a little hard for me to imagine God begging humans to do anything – but there it is!
- And as far as I can tell from the Scriptures this is the only place we see this
- How much must holy, Almighty God, Sovereign of the Universe love lost sinners if He pleads with them to be reconciled to Himself
- Paul ends this chapter telling us what God did so that reconciliation was possible
- **2 Corinthians 5:21**
- Jesus was sinless from eternity past, lived a perfectly sinless life, and now lives in sinless perfection in heaven
- It is not humanly possible to comprehend all that is in the phrase 'He made Him who knew no sin to be sin'
- As Jesus hung on the cross, all the sins of all humanity were placed on Him – His death satisfied God's holy requirement for sin
- And then three days later God raised Jesus from the dead, never to be touched by sin again
- If you are a Christian here this morning, you have been reconciled to God through Christ
- You are a new creation - which we symbolize in baptism **Romans 6:4**
Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
- God is calling us all to walk as a new creation – rejoicing in our reconciliation
- And as a new creation, we ought to be allowing the Holy Spirit to change our heart to be like God's heart
- One of those changes ought to be how we regard people
- I believe God only sees two kinds of people in this world
- People He has reconciled to Himself through His Son Jesus Christ
- And people He is pleading with to be reconciled through Christ
- Which one are you? If you are a Christian – rejoice in what Jesus did for you – and then ask God to show you how He has called you to be an ambassador of reconciliation

- If you are not a Christian, we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God – He loves you and wants you to be one of His children
- **Pray!**