

5. Reconciliation carries with it the idea of bringing together two opposing parties. In the context of II Corinthians 5:18–21 these parties are God and humans. Do you have a story of how God and you were reconciled?
6. Paul assigns an official title to our role in the reconciliation process. By calling us ambassadors he takes a civil term and applies it to a spiritual work. Read: Ephesians 6:18–20. What can we learn from this passage about the role of an ambassador for Christ? How can we work together as ambassadors?

Taking It Further & Taking It Home

READ II Corinthians 5:11–21 again consider just how important a changed heart is. Other passages to consider are 1 Samuel 16:6–7; Matthew 5:8, 28; 6:21; 12:34. How can you recognize God forging a new creation, a new heart in your life and others practically?

Time to PRAY

(Or do this at the beginning of your group time)

Take time to share prayer requests that relate to the people in your group, and then pray for those needs. Here's a place to list specific prayer needs:

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Worship Next Sunday: February 12, 2023

“How God Measures Success”

II Corinthians 6:1–13

Pastor Ben McCardell

Answer Key: • wisdom • appeal • esteem • sinner • evidence

Sermon Notes – February 5, 2023

Review

- ⇒ The opening words of II Corinthians address the letter “to the church of God that is at Corinth”. Paul sets out to celebrate God’s work. This theme means Paul will often correct wrong views of God’s work in his life and the Corinthians.
- ⇒ Paul’s mission to authenticate his ministry has been a tour of how belief in the good news of Jesus’s life, death and resurrection change our earthly priorities and the lenses we view our world. Statements like “we have this treasure in jars of clay” (II Cor 4:7) and “for we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God... eternal in the heavens” (II Cor 5:1) point us to the idea that what we value here on this earth should leave us looking to something eternal.
- ⇒ Last Sunday, Paul’s message took us to the topic of death and how we as believers should consider it. We learned we should see it as the beginning of life, understanding death, for a Christian, leads to courage in the present and that death brings us before Christ the Judge.

Today’s Text: II Corinthians 5:11–21

God’s Love Forges a New Creation in Believers. In our passage today Paul seeks to explain what a faithful life looks like for a believer on this earth. Paul weaves three ideas throughout this section of scripture. Taken together they explain God’s desire for us while we remain on this earth.

God’s Love Commissions Us

- ⇒ The fear of the Lord is the foundation for _____ (Prov 1:7). Paul seeks to please Christ because of the future judgement of all believers (II Cor 5:9–10). In II Corinthians 5:11 Paul reflects on this future reckoning of his life by speaking of the fear that it brings. Biblical fear is God fearing fear (Matt 10:28; Luke 12:4–7, cf. 1 Peter 1:17).

- ⇒ Living in the fear of the Lord, Paul acts. Specifically, he says, “we persuade men” (11). Paul does this out of obedience to Christ’s command to make disciples (Matt 28:18–20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).
- ⇒ God “gave us the ministry of reconciliation” (18) and made us “ambassadors for Christ” (20). God makes his _____ through men and women (20). God’s love forges new hearts only if we obediently proclaim reconciliation.

God’s Love Controls Us

- ⇒ To speak of love is to speak of the heart. Paul draws a line between boasting of the heart and appearance (12). Love changes our heart. We need to change what we _____.
- ⇒ “For the love of Christ controls us” (14). Paul’s ministry of love is controlled by Christ. This control functions by means of considering Christ’s death. This selfless act teaches us to be selfless, to not live for ourselves
- ⇒ The implication of a *new heart* and the *control of love* is that the outward appearance becomes inconsequential. Paul reminding the Corinthian church about this implies we must also actively choose which to boast about.
- ⇒ Union with Christ results in a person becoming a new creation. The creative God forges a new person (II Cor 17; 4:6).

God’s Love Changes Us

- ⇒ “Be reconciled to God” (20). Paul’s first formal command in II Corinthians is to be reconciled to God. The means of reconciliation is found in Christ. God was pleased to make the Sinless One a _____ so that “we might become the righteousness of God” (21; Isaiah 53:4–6).
- ⇒ This letter was addressed to a “church” and “saints” (1:1). Yet Paul is not impressed by their external identity. Paul continues to persuade others even within the church. We must ask ourselves if our assurance of faith rest on our appearances or on _____ of a changed heart.

Responding to God’s Word

- ⇒ What role does the fear of the Lord play in your life? Fear can motivate us to do many things. Is the fear of the Lord effecting your priorities?
- ⇒ Does the love God showed us in his son’s death controlling you?
- ⇒ Have you become a new creation? Have you been reconciled to God? Paul is attempting to persuade us of taking that step. Christ’s death is how God reconciles a person. Have you asked God for reconciliation?

Community Group Notes

Getting Started

Do you know a person who is an ambassador for a product, an idea or an organization? How do they make their product authentic? Their idea valid? Their organization necessary? In a world of ambassadors, what is real or unreal?

Talking It Through

1. Review the sermon from Sunday: READ II Corinthians 5:11–21 and remember the main points from Sunday. In summary form, what was this week’s sermon about?
2. Is fear ever a good thing? Read: Luke 12:4–7. How does the fear of God effect your life?
3. How does one boast of the heart of someone else? Read: Matthew 15:10–20. How does Jesus define the relationship between appearance and the heart? What does Paul confirm about Jesus’ teaching in II Corinthians?
4. Paul writes that “the love of Christ controls us” (II Cor 5:14). How does Paul explain the process of control? Take time as a group to reflect on what it cost Jesus to die for our sins.