

Everyone, Everywhere

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Everyone, Everywhere // Sermon 5 Ministry of Reconciliation // 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

If you have your Bible, turn with me to 2 Corinthians.

- We will be in **2 Corinthians 5:14-21**.

Next Weekend: Bryan Loritts preaching!

This passage, no doubt, is one of the most beautiful, powerful sections of Scripture we will encounter.

- It's rich with deep theological truths.
- It stirs the heart and lifts the spirit.

I pray that as we walk through this text together, it will stir our hearts, renew our minds, and ignite our passion for Jesus!

This morning, we are talking about what it means to be **reconciled to God**.

Big idea: *Gospel reconciliation provides us with both an identity and a purpose.*

2 Corinthians 5:14–21:

[14] For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; [15] and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

[16] From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. [17] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. [18] All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. [20] Therefore, we are ambassadors for

Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. [21] For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Let's begin with...

1. Our Identity: The love of Christ controls us.

[14] For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; [15] and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

Paul lays the foundation for this text: *the love of Christ controls us.*

What does this mean? The word ***controls*** means to be “hemmed in.” It means to be completely directed.

- It's the picture of water flowing in a river – the water is *hemmed in* by the banks of the river...forcing the water to flow a certain direction.
- The water can't abruptly decide to go right or left – it's controlled by the banks.
- The water can't retreat – it's forced to move forward.

So, Paul says, “My life is *hemmed in* and *controlled* by the love of Jesus...”

- Without Christ, I would quit.
- Without Christ, I would retreat.
- Without Christ, I would turn away from God, His church, His people, and His mission.

But the love of Christ – His sacrificial, unconditional love - grips my heart in such a way that I cannot help but live for Him.

- This love sets me free from living for myself and frees me to live for Him.

Notice this: *The emphasis is not on our love for Christ; it's on Christ's love for us.*

- Paul says, “The love of Christ for us is so strong and powerful that it drives us to live for Him.”

It radically alters the way we live.

[15] and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

We no longer live for self.

- We are compelled and motivated to live for Him.
- It drives us to action.

The love Jesus has for us is what fuels and motivates our love for others.

Listen to the words of F.B. Meyer:

“As the sunlight strikes the moon, and is reflected from her to the earth, so the love we have to Christ, or to man, is the reflection of His love to us. All love in our cold and loveless hearts is the release and reflection of the Love which began in Him, was mediated to us in Calvary, and is reflected from us, as sunlight from a mirror.”

- **F.B. Meyer**

The love of Christ controls our love for Him – and our love for others.

Our Identity: The love of Christ controls us.

2. Our Identity: We are a new creation.

When you are *in Christ*, you are no longer the man/woman you used to be.

- You are a new creation!

[16] **From now on** (now that you're a believer), **therefore, we regard** (value) **no one according to the flesh...**

This isn't a behavior shift – it's an identity shift.

We no longer see people the way we once did.

- People are no longer objects for our own pleasure.
- We don't value people based on worldly standards – *what they have, what they look like, or what they can do for us.*

Paul says, “This is how we used to view Christ...”

Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.

This is how we used to see Jesus:

- We *valued* God based on what God could do for us; not for who He is.
- “Jesus as a cosmic genie rather than a change agent.”

Listen to the words of Eric Mason:

“If the only time you can say “amen” is when it's about providing for you financially or doing something in the physical realm for you, then you view Christ as a cosmic genie rather than a change agent. There's a difference between the two. Some say, “I want God to change around me but not in me.” When you regard Christ according to the flesh, all you want him to do is change stuff, not change you.”¹

- **Eric Mason**

¹ Eric Mason, *Exalting Jesus in 2 Corinthians*, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2024), 108.

But listen Christian, that's not who we are *in Christ*.

- In Christ, we don't chase the *gift*, we chase the *Giver*.
- In Christ, we don't chase the *blessings*, we chase the *Blessor*.

We are not chasing what God can do for us; we are chasing God Himself.

That's why Paul says...

[17] Therefore, if anyone is *in Christ*, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Our **union with Christ** radically changed us.

- There is a shift in our identity!
- You are a brand-new person!

You are now associated with the righteousness of Christ.

Paul goes so far to say, ***the old has passed away***.

- The old you is unrecoverable.
- The old man is gone.

The ***old man's*** dreams, ideas, agendas, purposes have been exchanged and replaced with the life of Christ.²

You are a new creation. That's who you are in Christ!

Our Identity: We are a new creation.

3. Our Activity: The ministry of reconciliation.

This is the heart of the passage: Having established our identity in Christ, Paul now shifts to our activity.

- The beautiful reality of reconciliation with God isn't just a truth we experience – it's a mission we live out.

[18] All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, **and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.** [20] Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Paul begins by saying, “All this is from God...”

- Our salvation, from beginning to end, is from God.
- We weren't looking for God; he came looking for us.
- He initiates our reconciliation.

The Bible says we were enemies of God and alienated from Him because of sin.

- Our fellowship with God was broken.

² <https://www.bibleref.com/2-Corinthians/5/2-Corinthians-5-17.html>

- We were doomed and destined to spend all eternity apart from Him. **But through Christ, God has made a way for us to be brought back into relationship with Him.**

- The cross provides a way for us to be reconciled to God. **When we trust in Jesus, our sins are forgiven, and God no longer holds our sins against us because the blood of His Son was the payment to satisfy His wrath against our sins.**

[21] For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

This is a beautiful reality: God, in His mercy and grace, reached out to us through His Son, Jesus.

- He restored and reconciled us.
- He exchanged our sin for His righteousness.
- We are made right with God!!!

But the message does not end with us.

- It's a message that is intended to be shared and passed on to others. He reconciles us *and* He **entrusts us with the message of reconciliation.**

We are not simply recipients of the gospel; we are ambassadors, called to share the gospel with others.

- This is our activity. It's what we are called to do.
- It's our purpose.

[20] Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. **We implore you** (we urge you; it's an urgent plea) **on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.**

The world is in desperate need of Jesus, and it is our responsibility to share the message of reconciliation with them.

What does this mean for us today?

1. **Are you living out your identity in Jesus?**
 - a. Does the love of Christ control you?
 - b. Are you living for self, or living for the One who saved you?
 - c. Do you know Him?
2. **Are you fulfilling your role as an ambassador for Christ?**
 - a. Are you sharing the message of reconciliation with others?
 - b. Are you pleading with your lost friends, your family, your community, to be reconciled to God?