

Thanksgiving Sermon

Introduction

- I. Conflating materialism with thanksgiving
- II. What are you thankful for, ultimately?
 - A. Material things
 - 1. Some people don't have material things
 - B. Health/family, etc.
 - 1. Some people don't have their health or family
 - C. JESUS!
 - 1. You probably know this Sunday school answer is the true one
 - 2. If it is so easy to answer the question with JESUS then why don't we live like it?
- III. A thankful heart does not come from *knowing* what we should be thankful for
 - A. You can know something and have it not impact you
 - B. Why do we have such a cavalier attitude toward Jesus?
 - C. This message is not going to be "5 steps to a thankful heart" or "3 things we should be thankful for"
 - 1. You have probably heard messages about thanksgiving rooted in guilt and shame - you should be more thankful!
 - 2. Not only do I think that's a bad strategy - I don't think it works

Thanksgiving is the natural response of a heart that has been captured by the beauty and wonder of the gospel.

Context: Paul has been defending his legitimacy as an apostle despite weakness and suffering.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

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.

I. What? (What is a new creation?)

A. New Creation (v. 17)

1. What does it mean to be new?

- a) Question of Identity
- b) Romans 6:4-8
- c) **4** We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. **5** For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. **6** We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. **7** For one who has died has been set free from sin. **8** Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

2. You are no longer a sinner

- a) You don't have to sin anymore!
- b) Your identity has changed

II. How? (How has this new creation happened?)

A. From God (vs.18-19)

1. God takes the initiative
2. The only reason you are able to cry out to God is that he has begun the work of reconciliation already
3. God has acted on you, you did not act on you
 - a) You did not act on God
4. Because you did not initiate it, you can't get out of it

a) Ephesians 1:13-14

- (1) **13** In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, **14** who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

III. Who? (Who are you now?)

A. Righteous (v. 21)

B. If you ask someone who they are they respond with what they *do*

1. It is easy for us to jump to what we *do* - be messengers of reconciliation

C. Romans 8:1-4

1. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. **2** For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. **3** For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, **4** in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

D. You will never be more righteous than you are right now

1. We think of righteousness primarily as morality when God declares it as a status
 - a) Romans 4:1-4 - Abraham had his faith counted to him as righteousness
2. You are no longer a sinner you are righteous - and it is not dependent on you or your sinfulness or righteousness
3. Moralists and legalists will say - "you can't just tell people they're righteous! They're just going to keep on sinning! We need to tell people how awful they are!"

You are not righteous because of anything that *you* have done - you know that's not true. You are righteous because God has *declared* you to be, because of his reconciliatory work that *he* initiated in you.

Application

I. What is your response?

A. Get out of jail free card

1. That is not a Christian way to think

B. Thankful motivation

1. 2 Corinthians 3:**16** But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. **17** Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. **18** And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.
2. This good news of the gospel changes you - your everyday actions begin to come in line with your identity
3. **BUT**, you are living from a place of being declared righteous - not a place of earning righteousness
 - a) Guilt and shame threaten to beat us back down, trying to get us to deny our identity
 - b) What you did last night, last week, years ago can haunt you
 - c) Still, Christian, if you have put your faith in Jesus you can lift up your head because of the righteousness that your Father has given to you through his Son - you don't get to redefine who you are.

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