

YOU'RE NOT WHO YOU USED TO BE

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

LIVING FOR CHRIST MEANS SEEING PEOPLE FROM A SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE

- *"From now on, then, we do not know anyone from a worldly perspective. Even if we have known Christ from a worldly perspective, yet now we no longer know him in this way." (2 Corinthians 5:16)*
- **The world sees people by what they have done, what they have, and what they look like, but the Spirit teaches us to see them by what God can do in their lives.**
- **One of the blessings of being IN Christ is having the Holy Spirit to transform us from fleshly people to people who walk in the Spirit with discernment.**

IN CHRIST OUR OLD SELF HAS PASSED AWAY AND WE ARE A NEW CREATION

- *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17)*
- **Jesus didn't die to make a better version of the old you; He died so that in Him you could become someone new.**
- *"I say, then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16)*
- **Your past may explain where you've been, but it no longer has the authority to determine who you are—because in Christ, you are a new creation!**

IF WE ARE IN CHRIST, WE HAVE BEEN COMMISSIONED BY GOD TO BE HIS AMBASSADORS OF THE GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION THROUGH JESUS (THE GOSPEL)

- *"Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. 19 That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, 'Be reconciled to God.' 21 He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:18-21)*
- **The apostle Paul's life was a reflection of who he said he was and who he served, and as believers our lives should reflect the new creation that we profess we are.**

- **God didn't just save you from something; He saved you for something, which is to represent Jesus to a world that desperately needs Him.**
- **We are not saved by grace through faith in Jesus just so we can go to heaven, but to also be ambassadors for Christ and the gospel of Jesus.**

CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION

Observation:

- According to verse 16, how does Paul say Christians should no longer view other people?
- What does verse 17 say happens to someone who is "in Christ"?
- What has God done for us through Christ, and what ministry and message has He entrusted to His people? (vss. 18-20)
- What did God accomplish through Christ so that sinful people could be made righteous before Him? (vs. 21)

Understanding

- What are some ways our culture teaches us to evaluate and categorize people?
- Which of those worldly perspectives are Christians most susceptible to adopting, and how can the Holy Spirit change the way we see people?
- How might your negative perspective of some people change if you began thinking more about what God could do in their life rather than simply what they have done and how they behave?
- What is the difference between Christianity being about self-improvement and Christianity being about becoming a new creation in Christ?
- What parts of a person's past can make it difficult for them to embrace their new identity in Christ?
- What is the difference between saying "That's just the way I am" and recognizing that the Holy Spirit is continually transforming us?
- What is one old attitude, habit, or pattern that God is currently calling you to leave behind as you learn to walk more consistently in your new identity?
- How would your daily priorities change if you consistently viewed your workplace, neighborhood, family, school, friendships, and other relationships as places where God has positioned you to represent Jesus?

Loving Outward:

- Who do you need to share the gospel with this week?
- Who do you need to follow-up with regarding the gospel?
- Who are you bringing to church next Sunday?