

Back in 2010 Tom Cruz and Cameron Diaz co-stared in a film called *Knight and Day*. Cruz plays the role of a secret agent who is tasked with protecting Diaz from some bad guys who are trying to kill her. Unsure of who he is Diaz tries to get away from him or somehow ends up foolishly getting separated from him. But he keeps reminding her that her life expectancy separated from him is super low. So, he keeps having to remind her: Your life expectancy...without me....low...with me High...with me...without me. With me without me.

Our text today teaches us about our lives...and Paul is teaching us about the dramatic difference in our lives when we live with verses without Jesus. Without him (low hand)...with him (high hand) With him...without him. With him...without him.

[Transition] - Let's see what Paul says about this dramatic difference of life with Jesus...verses without Jesus. Look at verse 21.

***21** Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.*

Without Jesus you are alienated from God.

Paul describes our lives without Jesus using two descriptors. He says without Jesus we are alienated from, and enemies of God.

To be alienated from God means we are estranged, non-participants with God.¹ There's a kind of conflict that has driven a wedge, and so we have no relationship with him. The form of the word describes a state of being. Without Jesus we're the estranged ones, living our lives completely disconnected with our creator.

¹ James Strong, *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009), 13.

He layers on “alienated” with “enemies in our minds”. This is where it really gets ugly. Enemies in our mind refers to our disposition, our way of thinking. It is polluted with sin. It refers to a sin sick mind. It’s evil, morally bankrupt, worthless, and having no value. Without Jesus we are in a state of being sickly or diseased in mind. And we are thoroughly obstinate toward God, his leaders, and his people.²

And this internal condition, is readily observable in one’s behavior, one’s actions, one’s attitudes, and one’s speech. Those without Jesus operate off a different sheet of music. Those without Jesus see life differently and process life from an entirely different worldview. It’s a worldview devoid of any truth from the One who created the world. Instead, it’s a worldview formed and molded by their own ideas and reasonings with no regard for God.

Ephesians 2 describes those without Jesus as people who have no hope of heaven in the afterlife. James says they have no real wisdom in this life. And Hebrews says without Jesus they have no ability to please God in any way.

Those without Jesus are described as lost, foolish, and destined to give an account for their lives and in the end, they will have to, themselves atone, for all the wrong they have done in their lives. So, they are described as those destined for destruction.

[Transition] – Without Jesus, this is your condition: (Low hand)...alienated from God...enemies of God. BUT WITH JESUS it’s an entirely different condition. Look at verse 22

22 *But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation*

—

² Günther Harder, “[Ἐχθρός, Ἐχθρία](#),” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 554–555.

With Jesus you are reconciled to God.

We understand reconciliation. It's a plain meaning here. And this reconciliation was accomplished by Christ's physical body through death. I mentioned this last week. But, it is worth repeating. I want to make sure you understand this.

- Our God is a completely holy God.
- His holiness and justice required sin to be punished. Sin violates and offends his holiness. His just character requires sin to be punished, or his just character is violated.
- The blood of Jesus spilled out on the cross met the just demands of God's holy law. Jesus paid our debt. He died our death, so that we could live.
- And by shedding his blood and taking the punishment required for sin, he reconciled all of creation impacted by sin with its creator.

Reconciliation returns peace and harmony into a relationship that had been conflicted. As we saw last week, the reconciliation Christ makes possible touches every bit of creation that had been polluted with sin.

In other words, creation as a whole was polluted by sin, and the reconciliation Christ makes possible is not just in the relationship between God and man, it embraces the total life situation of man. It brings reconciliation between humankind to God. It makes reconciliation possible between Jew and non-Jews. And it carries with it reconciliation of all things in heaven and on earth leading to their submission and subjugation to Jesus...who we saw last week is supreme over everything seen and unseen. He has supremacy over all of it.

Now, I want you to notice the results of this reconciliation for our lives:

- **You are presented holy in God's sight.**

The idea here is you are now set before God pure. As if you had never sinned. Every bit of what made you “alienated and enemies” of God is washed clean. This is a grace of Christ in your life. You are not presented holy because you got your act together and you cleaned yourself up and purified yourself. You were made holy by Christ’s work alone.

You are now set before God for his purposes. Your whole life is oriented to God and set in service of him. As Romans 12:1 says, *“And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable.”*

[Transition] - In addition to being presented as holy, Paul adds...without blemish.

- **You are presented blameless in God’s sight.**

Without blemish means to be without blame or fault.³ No fault, no weakness, no imperfections that can be called out or leveraged against you

As Romans 8 says, *“So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.”*

[Transition] - Paul says...you are free from accusation.

- **You are free from accusation.**

³ James Strong, *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009), 10.

There's nothing to call you out on. There's no offense to be pointed out. There's no issue anyone can bring up against you.

Again Romans 8, "**33** *Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself.* **34** *Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.*"

38 *And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,^[p] neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.* **39** *No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

[Transition] – So, with all of these magnificent results...reconciled... presented holy, without blemish, and free from accusation...with all these results we can say your chances of thriving in life with Jesus is up here (high hand). Without Him...(low hand). With Him...(high hand). So...it makes the most sense to stick with Jesus!! Verse 23 gives us three ways to stick with Jesus.

So, stick with Jesus

1. Continue in your faith.

This basically means keep believing. Keep trusting. Keep looking to Jesus and leaning on Jesus and the truth of his word in the Bible. Keep learning to recognize the voice of his Spirit and seek to walk in obedience to him. Whenever you start to get wobbly or shaky, remember my resurrection validated everything I claimed to be and everything I promised to do.

The Apostle John in his gospel uses the analogy of a grape vine to illustrate what it looks like to continue in your faith. *"**4** Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.**5**"* "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. -John 15:4-5
[**Transition**] – To stick with Jesus we must continue in our faith, and we must remain established and firm.

2. Remain established and firm.

The word "established" here pictures the laying of a firm foundation. ⁴ It refers to the idea of establishing a solid foundation and then continuing to build on it."

In the same way we are presented holy in his sight, this firm foundation is a work of Christ's grace in our lives. However, you and I must choose wisely where we are going to build.

In Matthew 7 Jesus said, "**24** "Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. **25** Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse because it is built on bedrock. **26** But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn't obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. **27** When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash."

⁴ H.G. Liddell, *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996), 361.

Just as in this parable, you and I have to make a choice where we're going to build. Are we going to build our lives and orient our lives on the life and principles of Jesus?

Or are we going to prioritize lesser matters? Are we going to spend large amounts of time scrolling through our social media feeds? Are we going to escape and lose ourselves in all sorts of personal entertainment. Are we going to buy into the philosophies and worldviews of constructed by man's wisdom or are we going to build our lives on God's wisdom?

[Transition] - To stick with Jesus we must continue in our faith, wisely build a firm foundation on God's wisdom. And finally, from verse 23, to stick with Jesus we must hold firmly to the hope of the gospel.

3. Hold firmly to the hope promised in the gospel.

Paul says, "Don't move from the hope held out in the gospel." The phrase "not moved" means, "*to transpose, shift, go from one place to another.*" Essentially, Paul is saying don't ever change or shift or move your focus off the promises held out in the gospel. Don't stop believing and trusting.

Much of what he's referring to are the magnificent blessings of sticking with Jesus he's just been talking about in our text today. That's the core of it at least.

It includes all the blessings of heaven which God desires for us to have and that are made possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus. The list could be massive and contain all the promise found in God's Word for God's people.

It's really true...life with Jesus thrives. Life without Jesus dies. With Jesus (high hand) Without Jesus (low hand) With Jesus...without Jesus.

Conclusion:

I look around this room and I know...Many of you have understood your condition without Jesus and so you have come to him and opened your heart to him, and you have called out to him to be your forgiver and the leader of your life.

Your sin has been completely forgiven. You have been reconciled to God, made holy, and qualified for heaven. And so, now you are living your life learning how to love God and how to live like he has designed you to live. And you are finding peace, and joy and meaning in life. With Jesus (high hand).

When challenges and hard time come in your life, you talk and walk it through with God in prayer, with the support of others who are sticking with Jesus, and you are overcoming those challenges rather than them overcoming you. You're conquering them rather than them conquering you. Brilliant...I love that for you! It's life with Jesus (High hand)

But you might be here today, and you were not aware of your condition or situation without Jesus (low hand). I want to talk to those of you in that situation for a moment.

Today can be the day of salvation for you. Now you are aware that without Jesus in your life, you are alienated from God. You are not on good terms with God. You're not right with him.

But, today you realize you'd really like to be at peace with God, and on good terms with him. You realize you need his forgiveness in your life. You realize you want to be seen as holy in his sight. You want to be qualified for heaven.

If that's you, then here's what you need to do.

1. **Admit you're not perfect.** Admit you have made some poor choices in the past. Own the reality that there is sin your life, and you need to be forgiven.

2. **Ask Jesus to be your forgiver.** Thank Jesus for giving his life for your life on the cross. And ask him to be your forgiver. You could say something like this:

Jesus, for the first time in my life I see clearly that I need your forgiveness. I've made some poor choices in my life. I've treated others poorly at times. And I've lived my life ignoring you. Today I ask you to forgive me, make me holy, and qualify me for heaven. Teach me how to follow you as the leader of my life.

If that prayer captures how you're feeling, then just offer this prayer to God as your call to him to be your forgiver and leader. And when you do, you are no longer enemies of God. You are no longer alienated from him. Instead, you are made holy in God's sight. You are made perfect. You are free from accusation. And you are qualified for heaven. From this day forward...here is your new objective in life....

3. **Stick with Jesus.** Keep the faith, keep trusting, keep leaning on Jesus, and hold onto the hope he has secured for you.

I'd love to know if you are making this choice and praying this prayer today. Would you let me know by filing out the connect card and telling me about it?