

If you're a sports fan...it can be fun to represent:

I'm an Ohio State Football fan—put my Ohio State hat on. I love wearing my Ohio State hat...I have like 3 of them. It's fun to represent for my Buckeyes.

I'm also a Broncos fan—put Denver hat on.... it's fun represent for my Broncos. They have had some crazy losses and crazy wins the last few weeks.

We wear our team's swag simply because it's fun to represent!!

Some of you wear logo clothing for your business, or your company. Or if you're like pastor Doug...you're into logo clothing anytime from anywhere!!! Hahah. Others of you wear logo clothing for your Alma mater.

This is my Son-n-Law's mining company hat. I was wearing it one time while I was surf fishing down in Florida. And I sent him a selfie...and he said...Nice Hat...thanks for representing!

I wear a "We Love Life" wrist band to represent for the pro-life movement.

This morning I'm representing for Turning Point USA/Charlie Kirk with my Freedom T-Shirt. This Tuesday on October 14, is Charlie Kirk's birthday and the first *National Day of Remembrance* for Charlie Kirk. Congress passed this a few weeks ago. So, I'm representing!!!

Why do we do wear these kinds of things? Why do we represent? Because we're raving fans. We love our team, our company, or our university. We believe in them. We love to represent because we're proud of who they are...what they stand for! We like to champion their cause or mission. And we want people to know we are connected with them. I'm standing with TPUSA and their very noble mission! I'm standing with "We Love Life" because I am a champion of pro-life.

[Transition] – Many of us represent and promote all kinds of colleges, companies, and causes. Today our text calls us to the most important cause we can represent in this life—the cause of Christ! Today we're called to represent Christ in our culture. Why? Because no one has done more for us or changed our lives and our eternities more dramatically than Christ has.

Today Paul argues there is no cause more noble, no truth more life changing, or more worthy to stand for and represent than *all of Jesus for all of the world!*

I want to show you how he says it...look in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians 5. Verse 17 says, *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here!"* This teaches us the main reason why we are called to represent...because...

Christ gives us a second chance at a great relationship with God.

This is the Bible's big red "reset button." Most of us know by now, if you have a tech issue with some device the first thing you are going to want to do is hit the restart button. Restarting solves like 90% of issues. But, the

reset button with God gives you a 100% fresh start at a great relationship with God.

And celebrating this is the reason we gather up together each week here at Foothills Church. Because we have another chance at a great relationship with God. Each of us gets another chance to live forgiven and free, and to live a meaningful life. You and I get another chance to live as we were created and designed to live.

Is this for real, or is it just naïve, wishful thinking? In the next few verses Paul actually explains how it is possible for us to actually have a big red “reset” or “restart” button in life.

First, Paul shares something stunning. Verse 18 says, *“All this is from God.”* This is referring to the reset button of verse 17. God has established the reset button. This is really good news because it promises you, the one who was offended by your sin, is actually the one who initiates the “do over” in your relationship. In other words, the whole “second-chance-button” was God’s idea. His love for you was so great that he took the first step to offer a second chance at a great relationship.

[Transition] – Listen specifically to how he did it...

Next, Paul adds, *“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ”* This means God implemented his “reconciliation-restart” button idea by sending his Son Jesus the Christ to live, show us what God is like, then die on a cross, and then, miracle of miracles, be raised again to life!

Paul unpacks more of the significance of this in verse 19 by saying, *"that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them.."* In other words, something Jesus does enables God to no longer count our sins against us. Something Jesus does means you and I no longer have a debt to God on the ledgers of our lives.

[Transition] – But, wait. How did that happen? What did Jesus do that made that possible?

Paul explains, *"**21** God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."* (vs. 21).

You see, the way God established the "Second-Chance-Restart" button was to call on Jesus to take our punishment for our sin for us. God in his holiness cannot simply overlook sin or sweep it under the carpet. His holy and righteous standard required it be punished.

[Illustrate with paper target] - So, he took the target of God's wrath for sin that was on your chest and my chest...he took it off our chest, and he put it squarely on the chest of Jesus. And Jesus endured the full brunt of God's wrath for our sin on himself. He took our punishment for our sin onto himself satisfying the righteous requirements of God's holy law.

In accounting terms...you can say he took the expense off our side of the ledger, and he put it on Jesus.

Jesus steps up and lovingly pays our debt for sin. He takes the amount we owe for sin, which is death, and proceeds to pay it for us on the cross. Then to prove that he had the power to actually accomplish the transaction, he rises from the grave on Easter. In this way, you could say

the resurrection is your confirmation receipt that your debt was in fact paid.

Jesus said he was going to die, then be raised again. Then he was crucified on a cross and died. And then he was raised again to life. That truth ought to sit you up in your chair because the resurrection proves that he was who he said he was and was able to accomplish what he said he would.

The resurrection makes Jesus completely unique among every spiritual leader there ever was. Name any spiritual or religious leader. When they died...they stayed dead. But, Jesus is alive now and forever.

Now, with our debt for sin paid, and that expense deleted from our account. God is now able to credit our account with his righteousness. The mercy of God cancels our sin, so we don't get what we do deserve—God's judgment.

And the grace of God gives us what we don't deserve—his righteousness. That's the key difference Jesus took on our sin, qualifying us to take on his righteousness. Boom—Restart button established. Opportunity for a second chance created!

You see, a second chance at a great relationship with God is not wishful thinking. It is a God initiated, Jesus enacted reality. The peace and reconciliation now possible with God is not simply a cessation of hostilities or an uneasy truce. It refers to the mending of the broken relationship that results from God making us right through faith and changing us from enemies to friends (GNB).¹

¹ David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, vol. 29, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 289–290.

[**Transition**] – Folks, this is a “second-chance-restart” button made possible by Jesus’ death and resurrection. Paul goes on to say in these verses that God not only made reconciliation and second chances possible, he also calls those who experience all the goodness of second chances to represent! He calls us to become raving fans and spread the good news.

Look at how Paul says it, *“And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.”* (vss. 19-20). You see, God calls us to represent!!

We’re called to represent—To be ambassadors of second chances (19b-20a).

In the ancient times, as now, Ambassadors or Envoys were usually sent to represent—to represent the highest authority of a nation—a king or a president. They send their ambassadors or envoys as a sign of friendship and good will, to be available and to establish relationship, to renew friendly relations, or to make new alliances.

God’s purpose in sending Christ and his envoys has the same end—to put an end to hostilities and to bring about peace and reconciliation. God sends believers out as envoys to continue to announce that now is the day of salvation and reconciliation.²

God sends us out to represent him, to be available, to establish relationship. He sends us out as an extension of his heart and his good

² David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, vol. 29, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 295–296.

will toward people, to reach to them for peace and good will and friendship.

Our creator longs to connect with us, bless us and transform our lives, and then invite us to share that good news with those in our orbit of lives.

This calling is the reason our mission statement here at Foothills church says, *"We exist to connect people to Jesus and help them grow to love and serve him."*

Now, how you represent God to those in your world is going to be somewhat unique to you. In order for that to be authentic and genuine, it's going to be born out of your temperament. It's going to be born out of your style of relating.

Don't try to be a Billy Graham, or a Luis Palau, or Charlie Kirk. Don't try to be someone you admire. Be you! Don't try to mimic their style or approach. You're not them. And God doesn't want you to be them. He wants you to be you and take *your story of Jesus...* into your world...in your way. He's wired you to reach people others can't reach.

Represent in your world in your way. But, represent. Represent through your actions. Represent through your attitudes. And be ready to represent through your words. As the Apostle Peter teaches us, *"**15** Worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. **16** But do this in a gentle and respectful way....."* -1 Peter 3:15

You see, you can love others well with actions and attitudes, but at some point, they are going to ask you, why is it that you are the way you are?

Why are you so optimistic, why so full of faith? And you are going to want to be prepared to explain that in your style and your words and your way.

What does it look like to be ready as this text calls us to do?

- Write out your testimony and shrink wrap it for a short presentation opportunity.
- Adopt a mental outline...Love of God, Sin of Man, Cross of Christ, Prayer of faith. Memorize this outline and one verse that goes with it. Put it on a card you can carry in your wallet. Review it. use it. refer to it.
- Over the last year from time to time we've talked about adopting the CPR approach. Caring, praying, and reaching. So, you've got people in your life who are far from Jesus, but you care about them—so you're doing the C of CPR already. Chances are you are praying for them—so you are doing the P of CPR as well. And the last one of CPR is R—reach. With intentionality you are reaching out to them. And at some point, they are going to ask you...why? Why are you so kind to me? Why are you so thoughtful? Why are you so generous? Why do you care why do you pray for me?

And you are going to want to be ready as the Apostle Peter said. Be ready to share your story of Jesus in your life in your way and with your style. All the other things build the bridge of relationship, but at some point, that bridge will be strong enough to carry the weight of the gospel.

[Transition] - Now, each one of us has been given a second chance at a great relationship with God. And each one of us has been invited to represent on God's behalf in our world. And the message we are to take

to the world, is the message Paul extends to those in Corinth and the message I want to extend to you today. The last part of verse 20 says, *"We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God."*

Jesus' Invitation—Be reconciled to God (20b)

All this good news—though God initiates it, and Jesus establishes it—it requires response from you! Just like in any video game or on any technology you have, you have to personally hit the "Restart" button. You have to drop your defenses. You have to open your heart to Jesus. You have to personally accept the forgiveness and reconciliation God is offering.

Like the verse says, I want to implore you in the most loving way possible to accept God's invitation to be reconciled with him by believing in Jesus. Today I want to invite you to push the "SECOND CHANCE RESTART" button.

Here's how you do it:

1. Admit your sin – No matter how good of a person you are, no matter how good of a life you have lived. No matter how good your intentions are...you are not a perfect person, and you have not lived a perfect life. Each and every one of us needs to admit we're sinners and need forgiveness.
2. Accept his forgiveness – Know that his death and resurrection was on your behalf. Thank him for making you right with God by paying the price for your sin, and gifting you his righteousness.

3. Agree to follow him—Pushing the “Second Chance Restart” button of faith in Jesus is the starting place of a life-long journey with him where you grow to know and love him more and more.

When you push the restart button of reconciliation you not only receive his forgiveness but you receive his leadership for your life as well. He will teach you how to live like you were designed to live.

When you push the “Second Chance Restart” button...remember what our opening verse proclaimed, *“if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”*

You might want to pray something like this today:

God, thank you for making it possible to have a second chance at a great relationship with you. Thank you, Jesus, for establishing that chance through your death and resurrection. I admit I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I surrender my life to you and I agree to follow you as the leader of my life.