

Sermon 2: The Glorious Weight of this Ministry: 2 Corinthians 5:17-6:2

Text: 2 Corinthians 5:17-6:2 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation..."

Introduction:

- **Our last message:**
 - God graciously called us out of darkness to give the light of the gospel to the world through us.
 - The question is not if we are called, but rather how God has fitted us to follow this call.
- **The context of our text:**
 - **Everyone will stand before Christ: 2 Corinthians 5:9-11**
"We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ...Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men..."
 - **We have been given a measure of grace to steward: 2 Corinthians 6:1-2**
"We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain..."

Summary: We have been saved to represent Christ to the world.

Interrogative: How can we do this effectively?

Truth 1: Motive: We must feel the weight of four compelling motivators.

- **Motivation 1: The Judgment Seat: 5:9-10** "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad..."
 - **God gives us resources to steward: 1 Corinthians 3:9-15**
"We are labourers together with God...According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid

the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon...Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire..."

- **We will stand before Him at the Judgment Seat:**
 - The quality of our service will be evaluated.
 - This should motivate our service to the Lord.
- **Motivation 2: God's justice: 5:11** "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men..."
 - This is not suggesting that we will face God's wrath.
 - We understand His holiness and it sobers us that one day all people will stand before Him.
 - This conviction so impacts us, that we labor diligently to call people to faith in Christ.
- **Motivation 3: God's love: 5:13-15** "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again..."
 - God's love for us.
 - Our love for Him which flows from a deeper understanding of His love for us.
 - The more deeply I understand God's love, the more deeply it will grip my heart.
 - We are called to channel this great love.
- **Motivation 4: Our new identity: 5:17** "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new..."
 - "We are in Christ"
 - "We are new creatures"
 - "We are ambassadors"
 - "We are righteous in Him"
 - "We are co-laborers"
 - "We are objects of grace"

Truth 2: Message: We must be gripped by the glory of the cross.

- **Foolish or glorious: 1 Corinthians 1:18** "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God..."
- **A great exchange: Isaiah 53:4-5; 10-11** "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows...he was wounded for our transgressions, he

was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed...it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied..."

- **The nature of its glory:**
 - **He became sin for us: 5:21** "For he hath made him to be sin for us..."
 - **He did it as a sinless man: 5:21** "Who knew no sin..."
 - **He did it so we could be made the righteousness in Christ: 5:21** "That we might be made the righteousness of God in him..."
- **Conclusion:** The cross is the only just basis for sinners to be forgiven.

Truth 3: Method: We must understand how God does this work.

- **From start to finish God's work is a testimony to His grace:**
 - **Regeneration:** He makes us new creatures in Christ. **5:17** "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new..."
 - **Reconciliation:** He reconciles us to Himself.
 - **5:18** "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ..."
 - **5:19** "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them..."
 - **Calling:** He calls us to the ministry of reconciliation.
 - **5:18** "Given to us the ministry of reconciliation..."
 - **5:19** "Committed unto us the word of reconciliation..."
 - **Appointment:** He appoints us to represent Him to the lost: **5:20** "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ..."
 - **Empowerment:** God beseeches the world through us: **5:20** "God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God..."

Truth 4: Marvel: We must marvel at God's plan to reach the broken through the broken:

- **We receive God's grace for a purpose: 6:1** "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain..."
 - **He wants to work through us:** "Workers together with him..."
 - **He wants us to steward the grace we have received:** "Receive not the grace of God in vain..."
- **God's grace to Abraham's seed: Isaiah 49:6-12** "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto

the end of the earth...Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee...I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages...these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west..."

Applying this passage:

- **To someone who does not know Christ:**
 - You need to be reconciled to Him.
 - He has graciously done everything to remove the enmity between us.
 - He is calling you to repent and believe in Christ.
 - Anyone can be saved.
- **To the believer:**
 - We will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ.
 - We should be sobered and compelled by God's love.
 - We must regularly remind ourselves of this wonderful gospel.
 - We must grow in our ability to communicate this wonderful gospel.
 - We must remind ourselves that we are new creatures in Christ who have been reconciled to God for an immediate ministry:
 - We are called to participate in this ministry of reconciliation.
 - We are appointed to represent Him to the lost.
 - We are empowered by the Spirit to do this work.
 - The question is not if, but how and where:
 - Each of us has been uniquely fitted to impact lives.
 - Each has been uniquely planted to impact lives.
 - Let's ask God to open our eyes to opportunities and let's embrace them from the heart.
 - Let's faithfully represent Him to those who need salvation!