



Sermon Series: Belonging, Part 2

Sermon Title: *Why Some People Don't Respond to the Gospel*

Date: 1/15/2023

2 Corinthians 3:7–18

You may have people with whom you have shared God's plan of salvation through Christ, yet it seems like the gospel doesn't seem to "take" with this person. You wonder, "What am I doing wrong?" In reality, you may be doing everything right. The answer may be that the work of salvation is not just a transfer of truth - It is a spiritual encounter.

In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul explains why his own people frequently failed to respond.

Big Idea: Don't blame yourself when people don't respond to the gospel.

There are several reasons why people choose not to belong to Christ.

Reason #1: They rely on their religious performance

1500 years before Paul, Moses climbed Mt Sinai to receive God's Laws for the Israelites. The people promised to follow them, but it was an empty promise because the people immediately turned to idols. Moses throws down the stone tablets, shattering them. God even says to Moses in Exodus 32:10, "Step out of the way. I'll vaporize the whole bunch and start over again with just you." But Moses intercedes, and God relents. Moses receives God's laws a 2nd time and returns with a glowing face. The people are impressed. **Exodus 34:29–30**

Paul uses this as a metaphor. Just like the glow of Moses' face eventually faded, so did the glory of the Law. God designed from the start for the system to be temporary. Its administration reveals a problem but not a cure. **Romans 3:20**

God gave His laws so we can self-diagnose. **Galatians 3:19**

It served a specific purpose, and it was temporary. **Galatians 3:24**

A big reason why people don't respond to the Gospel is they think keeping the rules can save them. It can't because no one can keep them perfectly.

Reason #2: They rely on their religious heritage
2 Corinthians 3:10-11

Paul's own people believed that since they were descendants of Abraham that they were "in. Jesus corrected that false notion. **Matthew 3:9**

Many people today base their hopes on their religious heritage. They recall the rituals with fondness. But just as Moses' face faded, the glory of every religious heritage faded. Reliance on religious works and heritage rests like a veil over the spiritual understanding of many people.

Reason #3: They can't see Gospel truth
2 Corinthians 3: 15

Every person who relies on works or religion lacks the ability to see or hear gospel truth. Prior to faith in Christ, every person has a spiritual "welding mask" over his face that prevents him from seeing the gospel. That person doesn't just misunderstand the gospel; they can't even see it. Like they're blind.

Up until the point we turn to Christ, we're blind. But when we turn to Christ, His Spirit removes the blinding veil **2 Corinthians 3:16**

How can we see more people respond?

You may need to turn to Jesus for salvation. God's Spirit is talking to you. A veil has been lifted. God's Spirit is whispering, "This is true. Listen!" Don't ignore it. Hebrews 3:15, Hebrews 2:3

For those who want to be a spokesman for Jesus

1. Pray for God's Spirit to draw them to the Savior. **John 6:44**
2. Pray for divine appointments with people from whom God is removing the veil.
3. Ask the Lord to give you the words to speak. Read God's Word and know the gospel.
4. Boldly invite people to come to the place where you know they will hear the good news. And remember that salvation is a work of God's Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:14

Discussion Questions:

- **What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?**
- **What types of religious traditions/ heritages/ rituals keep people from accepting the gospel?**
- **Is there anyone in your life who has repeatedly heard a clear and logical presentation of the gospel yet fails to respond? From your perspective, what is holding them back?**
- **Do you ever blame yourself when someone doesn't respond to the gospel? Explain why that blame is accurate or inaccurate**
- **Describe a time when you presented the gospel, and a person responded**