

SCRIPTURE: Romans 5:1-5; 10-11, Colossians 1:21-23, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, 1 Corinthians 10:31

Dear Church,

The last few weeks we have explored the parable of the good soil, weak soil and bad soil and the planting of seeds in each of these. We came to realize we are the sower of these seeds, and we can also see ourselves in the many soils. We learned that with each good crop comes with its own crop of weeds. God in His wisdom tells us to leave the weeds until the harvest, at which point they will be separated out. Of course, we are talking of the second coming of Jesus and the angels harvesting both the good crop and the bad. Each crop (person), good or bad, has its designated place in eternity. In the light or in the dark, with God in heaven or in the fiery furnace never to see the face of our Heavenly Father.

A while ago, I encouraged each of us to look at our Mission Statement found each week in our bulletin. For several weeks I have spoken messages pertaining to each, in case you hadn't noticed, and this week is no different. The third point says, "by personally inviting others to move into a new life in Christ." It took me a moment to come to understand the full meaning of the responsibility we as a congregation have committed to. It is more than inviting others to join us in worship service and Bible studies (though this is certainly part of it). We are inviting others to move away from their normal way of life into a new life in Jesus.

I realize to invite others to church has the potential to cause anxiety and fear, fear of rejection and persecution. Maybe even the possibility of losing a friend or family member. But have faith, God has a plan and your first rejection will make your first acceptance even sweeter. The following scriptures are a map of success given by God to win others back to Him.

Romans 5:1-5; 10-11

5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. ³Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

¹⁰For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

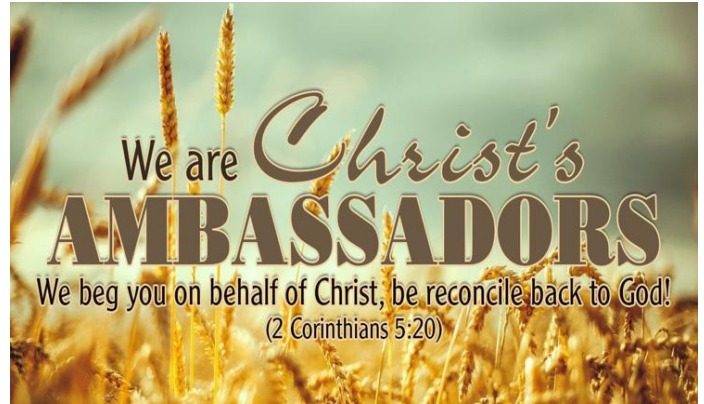
Colossians 1:21-23

²¹Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. ²²But 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—²³if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Do you see the fruit of the Spirit in the first two verses of Romans? They are faith, peace, grace and hope, which produce in us perseverance and character. We have heard before that others are watching us and the life we live. We all have lives of blessings and trials. How we react to these speaks louder than words.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. 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. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.



We, those who have chosen Jesus as their Savior, have been completely reconciled to God. We have been moved from a place of, charged, judged, convicted and sentenced into a place of complete pardon. Not on our own merit, but by the Creator Himself. He came as a man and paid the price to free us from eternal death. We are a new creation! Do our daily lives reflect this? If not, why would anyone want to be like us? To live a life of presumed laws and regulations written in a book few understand has no appeal.

1 Corinthians 10:31

³¹ So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

This witness, living every moment in the grace and reconciliation of God, is our greatest witness. When others see us truly having hope and joy in all circumstances, how can they not want it? This attitude of doing all we do to glorify God results in movement. It is faith in action.

A new life with Jesus as the Christ and our risen Savior is first realized in knowledge. An awareness that there is something better than what the world has to offer. Awareness creates curiosity, and curiosity brings a desire to know more. This then brings wisdom, knowledge in action. And then we receive discernment from the Holy Spirit to determine right action pleasing to God.

Our personal invitation to family and friends will cause movement, towards or away from God.

Your Brother in Jesus,

Archie

CALL TO ACTION: Living out every aspect of your life for Jesus begins with knowing you are a child of God. To grasp your identity in Christ, meditate on Ephesians 1:3-14. If you have trouble unpacking these verses, I invite you to come look at them with me.