DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION GUIDE

TEXT SUMMARY

This week's sermon, the final sermon in our "Sin and Salvation" series is titled "The Great Exchange." In this week's text, 2 Cor 5:16-21, Paul outlines how in Christ God has exchanged our sin for Christ's righteousness.

INTRODUCTION (OBSERVATION):

1. "Therefore" is used three times in our text. (Remember that "therefore" means "in light of this…") What ideas do the "therefores" link together?

2. What other terms or themes are repeated in our text? (See especially v. 18-19.)

3. Verse 18 begins with "all this." What is the referent for the pronoun "this"? All what?

4. The phrase "so that" (v. 21) declares a purpose. What ideas does "so that" connect?

DISCUSSION (INTERPRETATION):

1. What does it mean to regard Jesus "according to the flesh" (v. 16)?

2. Does v. 17 mean that once someone becomes a believer, their old life – along with all the old temptations – goes away? If not, what does v. 17 mean? What does it mean to be "a new creation"?

3. One repeated theme is reconciliation (v. 18-19). How is evangelism a "ministry of reconciliation"?

4. What is the function of an ambassador (v. 20)? How do believers function as ambassadors in their circle of influence?

5. Who is the "we" in v. 20? Is it Paul and his team imploring the readers, or is it the "we" of believers in general?

SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

1. **Paul notes that he and everyone else once regarded Jesus differently, "according to the flesh" (v. 16).**
    - There is a wide variety of opinion about Jesus in our world. How is Jesus generally regarded now, in our cultural moment?
    - Before you came to know Christ, how did you regard Jesus? What means did God use to bring you to a new understanding of who Jesus is?
2. **Verse 17 is a precious promise: in Christ I am a new person.**
    - When you first came to faith, the Spirit began His sanctifying work in your life, began making you anew. How have you changed over the years as the Spirit has been bending the trajectory of your life toward holiness?
    - What are some of the means the Spirit has used to shape your heart and life?
3. **Verse 20 says, "We are ambassadors for Christ."** Who are the people in your life now who are far from God, people who are trying to put their lives together in their own wisdom and power?
    - What are their names?
    - What would you need to do to invite them into your life so that you could cultivate a relationship sturdy enough to bear the weight of a spiritual conversation?
    - (If you are not ready to invite them into your life, begin by praying for them by name, asking God to create in you a risk-taking love for your neighbors,)