

2021-08-29

August 29, 2021 – II Corinthians 5:17-21 – Cultural Intelligence: Radical Re-Purpose, Radical Reconciliation, Radical Representative

I. Introduction

- Caleb Thomas Panter
 - i. Caleb = faithful, wholehearted, bold, or brave
 - ii. Thomas = Twin, one who wrestles with faith
 - iii. Panter = Keeper of the pantry/person who provides sustenance for large groups of people
 - iv. Caleb Thomas Panter = a faithful, wholehearted, bold, or brave person who wrestles with faith and who provides sustenance for large groups of people
 - 1. This morning, I pray I can live fully into my name.
- LifeCall – The LifeCall answers the What of our lives.
 - i. My LifeCall is that I exist to honor God and love people by
 - 1. Motivating Momentageous (Courageous + Moment)
 - a. I believe momentum come from a collision of courageous moments and my greatest desire is to motivate you to be courageous in each of these moments.
- LifeCore – The LifeCore answers the Why of our lives.
 - i. Confident Vulnerability – because real invites real
 - ii. Courageous Risk – because wholehearted is more than half the battle
 - iii. Contagious Community – because adventure is more fun with companions
 - iv. Creative Curation – because intentional design shifts generic to specific
 - v. Confetti Explosions – because celebrations are the bomb

(As you can see, I love a good alliteration – just a heads up, there are more of those coming today!)

- Deepest desire for today is that you would walk away motivated to be more courageous.
 - i. We are going to be in II Corinthians 5:17-21
 - ii. As we have done this whole series, we are going to be wrestling with how to live for God in a diverse, pluralistic world.
 - iii. As we do that, let's pray.

(Pray)

II. II Corinthians 5: 17-21

- Read II Corinthians 5:17-21
- Start in 14
 - i. “For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”
- Who wrote this passage?

- i. There are some important pieces that we are going to discuss as it relates to this passage and engaging with culture, but before we do that, I'd like to consider the person who wrote this text.
- ii. As you may know, the letter of II Corinthians is written by a man named Paul – who ultimately became an Apostle of Christ.
 - 1. It might be wise for us to go back in time and learn more about this man.
 - a. Acts 7 – we find Saul holding the cloaks of the men who were stoning a believer named Stephen.
 - b. Acts 8: 1-3
 - i. “And Saul approved of this execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.”
 - c. Acts 9: 1-19
 - i. Conversion and repentance that led to a change of direction
 - ii. Scripture goes on to tell us more about this man who was living this kind of life – in his own words
 - 1. II Corinthians 11:23-25
 - iii. So, we see through scripture that Saul, or Paul, who is now in Christ, is a man who:
 - 1. Is living a life **Radically Re-Purposed**
 - a. He was going his own way, now he is going the way of Jesus
 - b. Using the gifts (same passion and abilities, but new context) he has been given for Jesus
 - 2. Engaged in a **Radical Reconciliation**
 - a. Living in a relationship that wasn't possible before Christ
 - 3. Now living as a **Radical Representative** of the new life he has been giving
 - a. Living fully on mission sharing the good news

(I told you there were more alliterations! Ha.)

- A question I have for you, this morning, is this:

- i. For those of us who are in Christ, those of us who have said yes to Jesus,
 - 1. are we living radically repurposed,
 - a. have you changed your direction
 - b. do you use your gifts (passions and abilities) for the kingdom
 - 2. engaged in a relationship through radical reconciliation
 - a. fully aware of the relationship we have now that you couldn't have had before
 - 3. living on mission as a radical representative?
 - a. Living fully on mission sharing the good news

{This is important, because we aren't going to be able to engage in culture by being partially committed and somewhat on mission.

It doesn't work that way. It's not attractive. It doesn't answer the longing for those who are searching for more.

If we are going to live for God in a diverse, pluralistic world, we must live from a radically re-purposed place through radical reconciliation with our creator as a radical representative on mission for Christ.

- I want to remind you what the mission of Fellowship Dallas is. . .

Fellowship Dallas exists to call each other to live out our God-given purpose in Christ every day.

We desperately want you to live a re-purposed life. You might have heard about Younique which is a discipleship tool that helps you grow to know your God-Given purpose and to live it out daily.

- This mission is not for the faint of heart.
 - Prior to Jesus, Paul was living on purpose.
 - After Christ, Paul was living out his God-given purpose in Christ.
- To live into your God-given purpose is not easy – it requires continually growing in our relationship with the Father – knowing who God is and knowing who we are as a result.
 - We are not promised comfort.
 - We are not promised that living into our God-given purpose will happen without sacrifices.
 - If I'm being honest, sometimes, I'm appalled at myself that I can fully realize, with both my head and my heart, that God brought me from death to life and that I would still desire more – comfort and an easy path. As if death to life wasn't enough!?
 - The good life is found when we grow in our God-awareness and our self-awareness.
- To live and love in a community on mission, like this, requires us to be Radically Repurposed through Radical Reconciliation living as a Radical Representative on mission – the life of Paul constantly reminds us of this truth.

III. Back to the Passage – How do we engage culture?

- So, Paul – a man who clearly lived all out for Jesus, writes the words in II Corinthians 5:17-21.
- These words offer us a challenge and an invitation.
 - How do we live from a place of Radical Repentance through Radical Reconciliation as a Radical Representative on Mission while engaging with Culture.
- Three big themes to II Corinthians 5:17-21 – “Let’s dig in!”
 - “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”***
 - This is our ultimate hope!
 - (Invitation to be in Christ and become a disciple.). Time to take a next step – Confess Jesus as Lord, it might be time for you to publicly declare this in baptism – would love to talk with you . . .
 - Good news of being a new creation
 - Paul states this as if it is a foregone conclusion – there is no option. In Christ = New Creation.
 - Results of being a New Creation
 - The Kingdom is the ultimate authority in our lives – we now live under the ultimate mandate of self-sacrificing love.
 - No longer subscribe to the world’s power structures
 - No more vying for power or prestige.
 - No longer bound by our past.
 - No matter how twisted or messed up our past is, God can work through us to create a future that is better than we deserve or could have imagined.
 - This is incredibly exciting to me and very challenging.
 - Personal Challenge – living under the awareness and authority that comes with being in Christ and a new creation and still struggling to live fully every day
 - WANT TO SPEAK DIRECTLY TO THE PERSON WHO IS IN CHRIST AND STILL HURTS

- i. Being “in Christ” and a “New Creation” doesn’t mean that our pain goes away – we still live in a broken world.
 - ii. Truth = You can be a new creation and still be wounded; you can trust in the ultimate healer and still have wounds that need tended to
 - iii. Sometimes, if I’m being honest, Shame of my past creeps in.
 - 1. Shame of pain that I have caused and Shame of pain that I experienced that wasn’t my fault.
 - a. Recognizing that this shame reminds me that I need Jesus.
 - 2. Therapy – Confessing what our reality is . . .
 - 3. As a believer and a new creation or creature, “It’s ok to not be ok.”
 - a. Trying to portray an image of having it all together is not an effective way to engage culture.
 - 4. I’m so thankful that some of the stigma around mental illness or therapy is being slowly broken down, but we still have a long way to go.
 - 5. Trauma is real. Some of us have been through things in our lives that need to be worked out.
 - a. As Christians, we have Jesus – the ultimate hope . . . And therapy can be helpful.
 - i. God has gifted certain people to be able to really walk with us and live out their God-given purpose as therapists and doctors.
 - 6. Here is why this is important – Those of us in Christ are called to be disciple-makers, and it’s difficult, if not impossible, to take someone where you haven’t gone yourself.
 - a. If you are hurting, get some help.
 - 7. Ultimately, as a new creation we have hope because Jesus’ death on the cross – that sacrifice – ushers us into the new life available in Christ and rescues us from the old life we once lived.
 - 8. Our own acceptance and our new reality in Christ allows us to accept ourselves and accept others.
- ii. *“All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.”*
 - 1. Reconciliation – “an exchange” or “change”
 - a. It’s because of this exchange, that we can live in relationship with our Creator.
 - i. The balance sheet showed us owing a debt
 - ii. God, through Christ, paid off that debt.
 - b. This being reconciled forces us to consider our past – reminds of us that our old life has passed and our new life is being lived out daily
 - c. It also forces us to consider how we are going to live in community.
 - i. With patience
 - ii. With forgiveness
 - iii. With the ability to hold space for each other when we disagree
 - d. I’m afraid that sometimes we lose sight of this reconciliation and think we are in seats of power – **those of us in Christ have a mandate to work toward unity – not gain more power.**
 - i. Unity isn’t always agreeing on everything
 - ii. Unity is agreeing that we didn’t arrive on our own
 - 1. The unity that we all were lost and now all are found is the unity that will change the world; not that we all agree, but that we all are free because our debt has been cancelled is what will help us engage with the world.

2. Can you imagine a world where we sit at tables and the first thing we remind each other of is how God exchanged his Son on our behalf and the only thing we compete in is in humility and self-sacrificing love.
 - a. I want to play that game!
 - b. Admit our bias – “I once was lost and now I am found.”
- iii. *“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*
 1. Traits of an ambassador – generically speaking
 - a. An ambassador has a primary allegiance to the home he comes from, not to the foreign country where he lives.
 - b. An ambassador does not ask people to come to the embassy to get to know his country. He goes out and engages with the people of the land in which he now lives.
 - c. An ambassador bears the message of his leader.
 - i. In this case, we are bearers of a message from God.
 - ii. Not only proclaimed by what we say, but by how we say it and how we live.
 - iii. “Can’t lead someone somewhere you have never been.”
 2. Traits of an ambassador – specific to one who is reconciled
 - a. While the traits I just mentioned are all true of us and necessary, there is one more that is important because of our reconciled status
 - i. Our job as ambassadors is NOT to “Grow the Kingdom,” or “Penetrate the World,” or even “Conquer the world for the Kingdom.”
 1. Those images could not be more misleading about what we are called to as a church.
 - ii. Our calling is to invite people into a sacred space – a space that operates in the world but does not take it over. This sacred space allows them to experience a relationship with Jesus – just like we have – and be reconciled.
 - iii. This is the invitation of a reconciled ambassador – a radical representative.

IV. What does this passage tell us about God?

- New Creation – from death to life
- Reconciled – loved us enough to exchange on our behalf
- Ambassador – wants to partner with us on mission

V. How do we engage with culture?

- Radically Repurposed - We engage with the security of knowing that in Christ, we are a new creation
- Radically Reconciled - We continually recognize the reconciliation that has taken place and go to God for our approval
- Radical Representatives - We operate as ambassadors inviting people into the “sacred space” of a deep relationship with Jesus.
 - i. As reconciled people, we offer an invitation, pleading with every tribe and every nation to be reconciled to God, showing love to all people – because we know that when we didn’t deserve it, it was offered to us.

(Stand with me Fellowship)

- Colossians 3: 1-17 Blessing (Band Enter and lead song – “This is my testimony, from death to life)