

Evangelism: The Work of Reconciliation

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Date: 29 October 2023

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[0 : 00] seated. Good morning. Please open your Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter 5.

2 Corinthians chapter 5. We're going to read verses 9 through 21. As I prepared, there were more and more verses further and further around this passage that I wanted to keep including.

I had to limit it to this, but we may make reference to other places. And just to let you know, those who have been following along, we have been in the book of Exodus for some time now, working our way through that expositionally.

And today we have our annual meeting. I thought it would be good for us to talk about one of our three points of our mission statement, evangelism. And so I want us to look at a different passage today just in preparation for the upcoming annual meeting.

So if you'll look with me, 2 Corinthians chapter 5, we'll begin reading in verse 9 and read to verse 21. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please Him.

[1 : 29] For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience.

We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you calls to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance, and not about what is in the heart.

For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God. If we are in our right mind, it is for you. 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.

[2 : 40] 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 us the ministry 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. Let's pray together.

[3 : 41] Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You for this work of reconciliation. Lord, we ask and pray that You would be with us now, that You would open our hearts to receive Your Word.

And that, Lord, You would even work reconciliation in some hearts today. We pray for those who do know You. Lord, that we would make it our aim to be ministers of reconciliation.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. So, I have three points to our message. And very unlike me, they're alliterated, for those of you who like alliterations.

So, our passage is talking about the ministry of reconciliation. And so, I have the message of reconciliation, the method of reconciliation, and the motivation of reconciliation.

So, if you like alliterations, there you go. That's my one sermon in three years that's alliterated. For those of you who don't, that's okay. I don't either. All right. But maybe you'll remember it better. The ministry of reconciliation, beginning with the message of reconciliation.

[4 : 45] So, if you look at verse 10 of our passage. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

So, as we think of the message of reconciliation, we can begin the message with this. There's a coming judgment. God is going to judge the earth. That's where he begins in this passage. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. So, we think about the message. It begins with God's going to judge one day.

And if we understand this in light of the rest of Scripture, even the word that we see throughout the passage of reconciled or reconciliation, that word implies something, doesn't it?

If two parties need to be reconciled, what do we already know about them with nothing, no other information? They're somehow not getting along. There's enmity between them.

[5 : 46] There's some division or break in relationship. And so, as we think about this message and the judgment seat of Christ, we have to understand that man has sinned against the holy God.

That man is in opposition to God. He has enmity with God. We understand that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

As we process those things in light of this, that there's a judgment coming. And you have sinned against God. And because of that, the relationship has been broken. We saw this.

We talked about this in Exodus and redemptive history. From the garden, Adam and Eve sinned. They're cast out of the garden. The relationship with God is what they've longed for all the time.

And we, in Exodus, are seeing some realization of a restoration of relationship. There's another alliteration for you. Because God is coming and making his tabernacle among man.

[6 : 45] And we, in the New Testament, understand this even at a greater level that God has given his Holy Spirit. But there's a break in the relationship. We long to be reconciled to God to have some kind of relationship with God.

So we said all sin. God's word also tells us that the wages of sin is death. So our sinful state makes us opposed to God. And because of God's character, his very nature, God is opposed to the sinner. God is holy. He has no fellowship with sin. And so we, as a sinful people, find ourselves opposed to God, who cannot tolerate evil.

And, sorry, we are opposed to God. And God is opposed to us. Listen to Isaiah 59, verse 2. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God.

And your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. My guess is probably all of us know some experience of this. Maybe before we were Christians. Even sometimes, as Christians, we feel like God has hidden his face from us.

[7 : 59] We pray he does not hear. Often that's brought on by our continuing war with sin, ongoing sin in the life of the believer. In Romans 5, we hear a presentation of the gospel.

Verses 6 through 11 says, For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person. Though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more now that we are reconciled shall we be saved by his life.

More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. Now, of course, this also is Paul. And it's probably the closest parallel to the passage we're looking at.

[9 : 17] But notice how he describes the state of mankind. When did God save you if you're a Christian? When you were an enemy. That's the word he uses.

I know sometimes it's easy for us to imagine that apart from Christ that maybe we like God and God likes us and he's a nice guy, he's probably not going to judge me.

We are enemies of God apart from that work of reconciliation that's brought about through Jesus Christ. So if you have not trusted in Christ, that is your state right now.

Now, you can outwardly look as good as you want to, you can be good, you can do good works, but inside your heart is opposed to him. We're enemies. Of course, we also see the positive side of the message, getting a little bit ahead of ourselves, but if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more now that we are reconciled shall we be saved by his life.

More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we now have received reconciliation. I'll come back to that in a little bit, but for now see that reconciliation is a work of God.

[10 : 34] While we were enemies, God reconciled us to himself. Even though we're opposed to God, we don't really have legitimate reason to be opposed to God other than we want to be our own God, we fear his judgment.

God is the one who has the reason to be upset, to break the relationship. We've sinned against him, and yet it's God who initiates reconciliation.

Listen to Ephesians 2, 13 through 16. But now in Christ Jesus, you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility. By abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

Now this passage is speaking specifically of the Jews and the Gentiles. That there was a break in between them that once the Gentiles were far off from God, but God has reconciled them, but also note that he might reconcile us both to God in one body.

[11 : 56] It doesn't matter. Jew, Gentile, our state from birth is that we're in opposition to God. So the message begins with, there's a coming judgment, and basically we're not passing the judgment.

We're enemies. We're opposed to God. Look with me in our passage at verses 14 and 15. Verse 14.

So we see here that one died, and that's very important in terms of our message and the progression of it. Now I want to be careful because I know that there are those universalists out there in the world.

Universalists would believe that all people are saved. And if we look at this passage, one has died for all, therefore all have died. So I think we can understand that all doesn't always mean every single person on the face of the earth.

It can be all of a select group. All my family versus all the world. And so we see that in this passage.

[13 : 32] This one, Jesus Christ, has died for all who are in him, those who have trusted in him, and therefore all who are in him have died. And he died for all, that those who live, there's even a distinction word there, those who live.

That means what? There are some who don't live. And so for all those who live, they might no longer live for themselves, but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

And so what we see is a solution to the problem. And let me just say that the work of reconciliation, that there has to be a work of reconciliation, implies that not everyone's saved.

If Christ died for all people and all are saved, there's no need for seeking of reconciliation, is there? We're all reconciled.

But that's not what it is. But we do see a solution to the problem. Coming judgment, we've sinned and are enemies of God, but we see that one died. And he died that those who were in him died with him so that they might have life.

[14 : 40] What Christ experienced, as our federal head, he died, and in him we died, and likewise he's raised to new life, and so too are we, even as we see in Romans 6 and symbolized in baptism.

So one died, and verse 15 tells us, and one was raised. Look at verse 17. It's one that's probably more familiar to you.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. And so again, another distinction. What are we inherently humans?

We are enemies of God. But there's a distinction made in verse 17. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. It is, as it were, not of the original creation.

No longer one of those who are of Adam, but now they've been born of Christ. They've been united to him. There's something new. What's old, and what is old? Paul talks about in Romans 7, the old man that he battles with.

[15 : 45] That sin, that enemy of God. The old has passed away. Behold, all has been made new. And so we are a new creation.

Verse 19, we see more of the message. That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the work of reconciliation.

Not counting their sin against them. Here's more of the work. God is opposed to us because we've sinned against him.

But in reconciliation, the process, the message of reconciliation is, God no longer counts that sin against us. Now, how is that possible? God can't just ignore it, or God would be unrighteous.

And so we've seen already, and we see again in verse 21, if you look there, for our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, Christ.

[16:52] How is it that he doesn't count our sin against us? Because God counts our sin against Christ. He becomes sin. And 21 goes on, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

And so we see the transition. What does it mean to be a new creation? It means to be made the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. And so, is God opposed to the righteousness of God? Is God opposed to his own son? No. So those of us who are in Christ have been reconciled to him. Back at verse 19 for a second. We see what I would say is really a summary of redemptive history. What we've been seeing in the book of Exodus, what we see all throughout the Bible in human history, that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting the trespasses against him, and entrusting to us the work of reconciliation.

That's human history. From the fall, what has God been doing? In Christ, he's been reconciling the world to himself. It's an ongoing process. As we think about the message, and this gets a little bit maybe into the method and motivation, but we see also that part of the message is that there's a call.

[18:12] Look at verse 20. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. I said a call. It could be a command. We'll talk a little bit about the method next, but for now, there's a call.

We're called to be reconciled to God. And we've seen already that reconciliation is a work of God. So when we give the message of reconciliation, we don't say, I want you to make peace with God. We tell them that God has made peace with them by his son. His son has become sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Reconciliation comes not by our forgiving God, he hasn't wronged us, but by our trusting in Christ, through whom we have been reconciled, through whom we've been made righteous, the relationship has been restored.

[19:21] As we think about that call that we might give to people in the message, we see something of that in chapter 6, verse 2, which again, I didn't include in the reading because I didn't want to include the whole book of 2 Corinthians.

So look at verses 1 and 2. Working together with them then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain, for he says, in a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you.

Behold, now is the favorable time. Behold, now is the day of salvation. And so I think that's just another way of saying, here's the appeal.

He's speaking of the fact that we live in a time after Christ. This is the day of salvation. The whole church age, the 2,000 years that have passed, it is the age of reconciliation.

Reconciliation. It's the day of salvation. But I think he's also making an appeal when we tell people, be reconciled to God.

[20:23] Know that if you do, today's the day of salvation. Reconciliation. Let's consider the method of reconciliation. What is our method of reconciliation?

We've seen some already, I'll touch on. But let me start with verse 16. 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. So if you think about our method, how do we go about this work of reconciliation? Well, one way we start is that we no longer regard anyone according to the flesh. So what does that mean? And maybe we're helped by the idea that they once, or Paul's saying, he once considered Christ according to the flesh. But he does so no longer. I think there are multiple ways we can do this.

If we think about the work of Paul in relation to Jesus Christ, we know that Saul, Paul before he was saved, Saul was in opposition to Christ.

[21 : 34] He believed him to be false. There's some extent that he desired to follow God, but believed Jesus to be a false Messiah. He regarded him as only fleshly, just another person, not being a spiritual person.

And I think if we take this even further, we could say, what does it mean that we regard no one according to the flesh? Or, what does it mean to regard someone according to the flesh? To regard someone according to the flesh is to think of them only in terms of the physical, only in terms of their body, their person, but not in terms of their soul or their spiritual state.

We could say it means to consider them from an earthly perspective. How an unbeliever might look upon anyone else in the world. when it speaks of the people who crucified Jesus in 1 Corinthians 2.8, it says, none of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, and this is that Christ is the Messiah, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

And so, regarding Christ according to the flesh resulted in his crucifixion. Paul's saying, that's not how we regard him any longer, nor do we regard anyone according to the flesh.

Now, many of you have not been in our adult Sunday school. I want to encourage you, come. But we've been talking about evangelism in Sunday school. And as we looked at evangelism, one of the things we looked at was the idea of being a broken-hearted evangelist.

[23 : 11] Our heart breaking for others. I think what Paul's getting at is part of that. How often in our life do we go about our day, maybe we wake up and we see our family, maybe we go to work and we interact with coworkers, we're driving on the road, there's other drivers there, maybe we stop and at a store, walk in, see other people shopping.

How often do we do that and think of them only as people? As people. Not as eternal souls that will spend eternity either in heaven or hell.

How often do we forget the first part of this message? We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. And I didn't point this out earlier, and I should, but verse 11 says, therefore, knowing the fear of God.

Well, actually, I'm coming to that later, so. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord. Therefore, because of the judgment, we fear the Lord. Do we go about our day and think little to nothing about the spiritual state of those around us?

We're wrong if we do. Paul says, we regard no one according to the flesh. I think sometimes we look at the Apostle Paul and we think, I'm amazed at him.

[24 : 30] Wow, look at all he did. And sometimes we may even say, oh, that I were a Christian like Paul. Here's the solution. Paul regarded no one according to the flesh.

Everyone he saw, he thought about, where will they spend eternity? And in Sunday school, as we talked about the brokenhearted evangelist, we spoke of thinking about people in such a way that our heart breaks for them.

something's wrong if we as Christians are content that we're not going to hell. Content that our relationship with God has been reconciled and restored.

That one day we will be in heaven with him, but we don't care that anyone else experienced that.

That doesn't mesh with the gospel. Okay, so our method.

Number one is, we view everyone spiritually, knowing that they're headed for either heaven or hell.

And as we do that, the next step would be then in verse 11.

[25 : 37] Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. There's multiple words being used here. I want to touch on several of them, and really the rest of mine are all kind of on that point.

But we persuade others. Persuade is to use truth to convince someone. And so, we're seeking to convince them of the truth of the gospel.

Verse 20 says, we are ambassadors of Christ. What does it mean to be an ambassador? You are representing the one who sent you. You're speaking on their behalf.

And so, if the ambassador of a king were to come to me and say something, he's given me the words of the king in lieu of, in place of, the king who's not here to tell me the message himself.

He sent his ambassador to communicate this. That's what we are as Christians. We are ambassadors of Christ. So, we think about others in terms of their spiritual state.

[26 : 37] How do we think about ourselves? What is my purpose here on earth? My guess as I look to this is that the thing that probably is squashing this or killing this in most of us is just worldliness.

How easy it is for us to become like the culture around us. To think of people only in fleshly ways. Do we understand and consider that as Christians, you are an ambassador of Christ Jesus? your responsibility, your duty, your mission, your job, vocation is to tell others God's message. And what is that message?

Well, that's what we talked about the first point. It's the gospel. It's the message of reconciliation that God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself. He explains even what it means to be an ambassador of Christ.

Verse 20, Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. And then I think he gives the message of that. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

[27 : 45] Ambassadors, on behalf of Christ, what's the message? Be reconciled to God. So, if we understand that, let me ask you, you don't have to say this out loud, might be interesting if we did, how would you rate yourself in terms of being an ambassador of Jesus Christ?

How many people have you talked to, let me just start with in your lifetime, about being reconciled to God? You gave them that message, you encouraged them, you challenged them, you implored them, be reconciled to God.

God making his appeal through us, we implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. My guess is, most of us are convicted when we just consider our life, but, if that's our vocation, if that's what God has saved us for, how often have we done this, this week?

who have we shared the gospel with? Who have we looked at in a spiritual way and said, man, I'm concerned for your soul, be reconciled to God. It doesn't have to be that direct, but a summary.

But verse 20 also says, we implore you. We already read chapter 6, verse 1, it says, we appeal to you. And so, we get a sense of, there's a persuasiveness to this, we implore, it's a begging.

[29 : 21] Even though, we rightly understand, that it's not about convincing them to buy into this. We implore, we beg, because we care about their soul, not because we're trying to treat them or convince them of this.

we're begging you because we don't want to see you in the day of judgment be cast out. Verse 11 again, therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others.

So, persuade, implore, appeal, and then, this is all done through the word of God. As ambassadors, we're speaking God's word. Or we could say the gospel of Jesus Christ, the message that we talked about before.

So, that's really our method. We see people spiritually, we implore them, we beg them in the gospel. But thirdly, we see the motivation of reconciliation.

And as I talk about this, I'm not saying the motivation for those who need to be reconciled. I could have said the motivation of the work of the ministry of reconciliation.

[30 : 43] But it didn't look as good as that. The motivation of reconciliation is not their motivation for being reconciled, but our motivation for seeking the reconciliation of others to God.

Now, I was touching this just a little bit already, but again, we see in the first part of our passage, verse 11, therefore knowing the fear of the Lord. And so, our first motivation is the fear of the Lord.

What does fear of the Lord mean here in this passage? I think we've been trained as Christians to say, when we hear fear of the Lord, it means reverence and awe of God. It's a good definition.

But in light of the context of this passage, I would say it goes beyond that because we see again verse 10, we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil, therefore knowing the fear of the Lord.

The therefore, what is the therefore for? What is the therefore there for? There's a continuation of the passage. What motivates us? What causes the fear of the Lord?

[31 : 52] We know that there's a day of judgment and that God will judge all our good and evil deeds. So, when I see the fear of the Lord here, I think it's more than just what we typically say of reverence and awe.

Paul's saying because he fears God and knows that one day he will stand before God and give an account of all that he's done, he's an ambassador of Jesus Christ. He's a minister of reconciliation. One day he's going to give an account why didn't you share the gospel with that person? And I would add to that, if we think about there's a coming day of judgment and everyone will be judged based on what they've done, the good and the evil, we have a good and right fear of the Lord that says there will be a judgment.

And in the day of judgment, again, we don't have to say this necessarily to them or how we say it, but this person will be judged. They will be cast out. And the right and good fear of the Lord we have motivates us to not have other people face the Lord without Christ Jesus.

We understand what it would be like to stand before him in that state. And therefore, we care about other people. 2 Corinthians 5, 10-11.

[33 : 18] For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may receive what is due for what he's done in the body, whether good or evil. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others.

But what we are is known to God and I hope is known also to your conscience. And so this goes to that broken heart that I was speaking of. We are concerned about others.

One quote that I have used in the Sunday School is by C.H. Spurgeon. He says, winners of souls are first weepers for souls. It's the weeping that motivates the winning.

It's what motivates us to share the gospel. And so my question would be, if you're in this room and you're a Christian or a member of our church as we think about our three points of evangelism, I mean our three mission statements, how often have you weeped, cried for the souls of people around you, co-workers, family members?

Do we give thought to that? Maybe I could even ask what is it that we cry about? There might be something that causes us to tear up and sometimes there are things that are passing that don't ultimately matter.

[34 : 39] And yet we have family members and co-workers who are dying and going to hell and we don't shed a tear for them. And so first we need a broken heart. And so motivation for this is the fear of the Lord and a broken heart for the lost.

Secondly, now going all the way back to maybe it sits one. I don't know but I have peace of God in our reference verse one so I'm not sure where that is in the passage but I don't see it in verse one.

But a second motivation is that we have peace with God. Thirdly, we have a love for Christ.

And so we have been reconciled to God we now have peace with God and then the love of Christ verse 14. For the love of Christ controls us because we have concluded this that one has died for all therefore all have died.

So notice the motivations we've spoken of. We started with the fear of the Lord and then we talk about the love of God. And I can already hear some people are saying well which is it? Which should motivate us the fear of God or the love of God?

[36 : 05] Yes. Right? It's both. Both of those things are motivations for us. I know there are some who think maybe the fear of the Lord should not be a motivation but God gives it as a motivation.

But know also that the love of Christ is a motivation. And the context of this makes it clear that that is Christ's love for us not our love for Christ.

Our love for Christ pours out of God's love or Christ's love for us. But it's Christ's love for us that motivates us to love others for him.

1 John 4 10-11 In this is love not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us we also ought to love one another.

Okay, so as we think about the motivation of the love of Jesus Christ, if we understand that Christ has loved us and saved us, if we know that forgiveness that Christ is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, beloved, if God so loved us we also ought to love one another.

[37 : 20] And so that beds the question. If we're not doing the work of the ministry of reconciliation, do we love others?

If our heart isn't broken for the lost who are headed for hell, do we love them? And if the answer to that is no, what's the implication?

If God so loved us we also ought to love one another. Paul makes it so that it's unthinkable to imagine that you could experience the love of God and then not love others.

Have we really known the love of God at all? And I want to talk about his, he says the love of Christ controls us or compels us.

There's a holy compulsion. It drives us. It motivates us. That word in the Greek can also mean control, seize, take hold of, or restrain.

[38 : 21] We think of restrain not in terms of holding us back but in terms of like bumpers in the bowling alley that keep the ball from going in the gutter. It keeps us focused. It keeps us on purpose. It restrains us so that we don't wander off into other things.

The love of God controls us so that our concern is the souls of others. This work of reconciliation. Maybe another way of saying this is Paul saying we cannot help but do this.

Galatians 2.20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Is that how you would describe your life? That it's no longer you who lives but Christ living in you through you and that you live your life completely in the faith in the Son of God.

something similar is said in our passage even verses 14 and 15 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 almost identical to what we saw in Galatians 2.20 if you're in Christ Jesus who you are who you were has died that's great news and we tend to stop with the fact that that means we're no longer enemies of God we've been reconciled but if we really get that message and we understand as well that Christ's love controls us it motivates us it drives us it steers our life we live for him now we no longer live for ourselves now I think to live for yourself is to live without reference to God that's not what's going through your mind how is this going to glorify God what has God called me to it's just I'm going about my life like any other person would who did not know God so we've been told that we because one died all have died we've died because our representative died and then we've talked about already a little bit verse 17 that we are a new creation in Jesus

[40 : 44] Christ that speaks to our union with Christ if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation the old has passed away behold the new has come one commentator Philip Hughes said this the expression in Christ sums up as briefly and as profoundly as possible the inexhaustible significance of man's redemption it speaks of security in him who has himself born in his own body the judgment of God against our sin it speaks of acceptance in him with whom alone God is well pleased it speaks of assurance for the future in him who is a resurrection and a life it speaks of the inheritance of glory in him who as the only begotten son is the sole heir of God it speaks of participation in the divine nature in him who is the everlasting word it speaks of knowing the truth and being free in that truth in him who himself is the truth all this and very much more that can ever be expressed in human language is meant by being in Christ now that's a short summary really of what I did in my

Sunday school class some time ago Ephesians 10 kind of sums that up for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them a little earlier in Ephesians 2 it tells us that every spiritual blessing we have is because we're in Christ Jesus and the result of that though is we serve him we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works our creation in Christ Jesus is our salvation it's the new creation it's that we are a new creation in Christ that's what he's talking about so why are you saved you're creating Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them I think Paul is expressing this is one of them back in verse 9 our first verse that we read 2 Corinthians 5 9 so whether we are home or away whether we're dead or alive whether we're in heaven or still here on the earth we make it our aim to please him that's the

Christian life maybe if you were to ask me even what we just read Ephesians 2 10 what is that good work well we make it our aim to please him and what does God call us to to be ambassadors of Jesus Christ so just a few things in application first I want to encourage you I've kind of been speaking to our church members today but look if you're not a Christian what is the message here for you be reconciled to God if no one else does and I hope everyone else will but if no one else says to you today be reconciled to God know that I'm standing here as an ambassador of Christ asking you pleading with you begging you be reconciled to God if you are not there is a day of judgment coming and the fear of the Lord compels us as does the love of Christ my desire is to see you share in that love that you might know eternal life in Jesus

Christ the good news is we see reconciliation is available to all if you put your trust in Jesus Christ you will be reconciled to him in fact we see here really the message of the gospel by trusting in him your sins are placed on him his work has been reconciled to the world not counting our sins against us because he counts them against Christ and also we see verse 21 not only is our sin counted against Christ but his righteousness is counted for us and so that one day if we're going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ so that one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body whether good or evil I'm going to stand before God in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ we will be received into heaven not because we did enough good stuff but because we have

Christ's righteousness his goodness commends us to God

Colossians 1 21 through 22 says and you who were once alienated and hostile in mind doing evil deeds he is now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him reconciliation reconciliation is in the body of Christ the body of flesh by his death so the only means God has given us to be reconciled with him is by the death of his son by trusting in Jesus Christ but notice that if you do you are presented as holy and blameless and above reproach before him does that sound fair I hear people all the time complain about life not being fair that's not fair this isn't fair is it we are going to be holy blameless and above reproach there's not one of us that measure up to that in our own behavior in our deeds none of us is holy but God alone and yet in Christ

[46 : 26] Jesus we one day will stand before him as holy that is reconciliation and again be reconciled to God for those of you who are Christians let me ask you what is your motivation for serving God maybe I could even start with are you serving God how are you serving God so we think about the upcoming annual meeting maybe you've heard before it's what is it 10% of the church does 90% of the work I think we have a lot of people who are attenders or even members who aren't invested so first of all are you serving what do you see as the calling of your life is it to fatten the retirement account a nest egg is that what we're living for maybe to leave something for our kids maybe to get promoted at work or do we see ourselves as living for Christ that we are servants of

Jesus Christ that's what we've been saved for and that we're serving him and if we do what is our motivation for serving I think we've seen here the fear of the Lord the love of God the love of Christ controls us and compels us secondly are you working to see others reconciled to God is that something you're doing seeking others reconciliation with God just imagine if it were a person not God now you know there are two people not getting along are you going to one and saying come back be forgiven they're not angry with you anymore I want you to be back together if we understand it that way in terms of human relationships are we doing that with others in relation to God thirdly are you looking at people through the eyes of Christ through Christ or I could say are you looking at people in the flesh or in the spirit how do you regard those around you God's calling us here to regard everyone according to the spirit to regard no one according to the flesh anymore and then finally is your heart broken for the lost in light of what we've seen do you have a broken heart for the lost I think I could stand up and even in the annual meeting or whatever we could talk about you know we're not seeing a lot of evangelism we want you to go do more evangelism do it do it and I hope that's not how you've interpreted the message what I hope you see is the love of Jesus Christ and how great it is that there is a coming judgment but in Christ we have forgiveness and brothers and sisters that ought to move us that ought to break our hearts that there are some in this world many in this world the majority of people in this world who have not known that forgiveness who have not been reconciled yet to God and are you okay with that continuing let's pray dear heavenly father we want to praise you that there is reconciliation at all

Lord you did not owe us reconciliation we knew the wages of sin when Adam and Eve took the fruit of the tree Lord we know the wages of sin even when we repeatedly daily sin against you by no means do you owe us reconciliation in fact as far as we can understand it should be impossible the holy God can be reconciled to sinful man but we thank you for our savior Jesus Christ who took upon himself our sin that we might become his righteousness and Lord in light of that that we many of us in this room have experienced we pray asking for forgiveness because we have sinned grievously in not caring for others not sharing the gospel with others Lord if we were human ambassadors we would have been fired a long time ago Lord forgive us in Christ we thank you that even such sin is nailed to the cross with him but Lord make us true ambassadors give us the eyes of Christ that we see everyone not according to the flesh but according to the spirit that our hearts would break for the lost and Lord we pray knowing that there are some in this room who don't know you we've pleaded we've implored that they would be reconciled to you even persuaded from your truth of your word that they would be reconciled to you but Lord we cannot make it happen sin Lord your spirit that you would work in the hearts of those who have heard the word that all who are in this room would know themselves to be reconciled to you before they leave here today we pray this in Christ's name amen