

"The Ministry of Reconciliation"

Part 2

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Introduction: Last week in our study of 2 Corinthians 5 we looked at verse 17. This verse will connect with what we shall look at tonight so we need to refresh our minds concerning this verse.

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:7

In our study last week we looked at the context of this verse and we learned that the change in the believer's life which Paul writes of here refers to the way we evaluate people and things. He also is referring to the way our priorities change after we come to know Jesus Christ. At the end of the verse Paul almost breaks into rejoicing as he thinks of the constant change which takes place in the believer's life. Here are the words which Paul uses, "**behold, all things are become new**". This could also read "**New things have now come**". Paul was thrilled that each day he was becoming more and more like Jesus Christ.

This by the way was one of his motivations for ministry. Paul knew that if ANY MAN was baptized into Christ then his or her life would be forever changed. Not only would they be saved from the wrath of God but they would live lives that would glorify the Lord. They would then be people who would manifest Jesus Christ.

Application:

This is the answer which our society is looking for today. With all the hatred, division, greed and deception within our nation Jesus is the answer. He is the Only One who can change the lives of those who are in bondage to sin.

John 8:31-36

³¹ *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*

³² *And ye shall know the truth, and **the truth shall make you free.***

³³ *They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?*

³⁴ *Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*

³⁵ *And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.*

³⁶ **If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.**

We are surrounded by a world that is enslaved to sin and therefore Jesus is what they need. He is the only One who can set them free and when they come to Him their lives are forever changed. The way they relate to others changes, the way they view others changes and their priorities also change. When they come to Christ they are crucified with Christ and resurrected with Him and then they can live a new life in Christ.

I. Motivations for Ministry

Part 2

A. God's great love for mankind and the commission.

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:18a

Here Paul tells his readers that ALL THINGS are of God. The question which comes to my mind is, "What are the ALL THINGS?"

The ALL things are what Paul has just written about. The entire change in the believer and even the entire plan of salvation, it is all of God. Long before the creation of the world God had a plan for the salvation of man.

Revelation 13:8

⁸ *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb **slain from the foundation of the world.***

In the mind of God Jesus Christ was slain from before the foundation of the world. You see God knew that man would sin and He knew His Son would go to the cross and die for our sins.

The first glimpse of the death of Jesus Christ was seen in Genesis 2.

Genesis 2:20-24

²⁰ *And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a help meet for him.*

²¹ *And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;*

²² *And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.*

²³ *And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*

²⁴ *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

Here is the very first bloodshed in the Bible. The deep sleep which Adam entered is a picture of the death of Jesus Christ and the blood Adam shed was a picture of the blood of Jesus Christ which was shed for His bride. The "one flesh" which Adam and Eve became is a picture of the believer being baptized into the body of Christ and becoming one with Him.

Hebrews 2:11a

¹¹ *For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one:*

Before sin ever entered into the world God gave a picture salvation in the very first marriage. The point is that salvation was God's idea and it was ALL from Him. He is the One who causes the change in the lives of believers. The change is not because we have reformed our lives but it because we have been transformed by God. I am reminded of something which Paul said in Romans.

Romans 7:18, 19

¹⁸ *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*

¹⁹ *For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.*

Now let us see the details of this as we move on.

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:18

In verses 18-20 the word "reconcile" is used 5 times so we can be sure that Paul is focused upon the reconciliation of man to God. Let me explain what "reconciliation" is. To reconcile is to take someone who is hostile towards someone else and change that into a friendly relationship. Unsaved ungodly man is an enemy of God and is hostile toward Him and God takes the initiative in this estranged relationship and sent Jesus to be our Mediator Who based on our faith in His sacrificial death and resurrection life brings us into a friendly relationship with God.

God was the One Who had been offended by sin so it was God Who set the bar for forgiveness. It was God who determined that perfection was required for man to get to heaven and it was God Who established that the wages of sin would be death. Both of these standards brought the sentence of damnation upon mankind because we are far from perfect so on our own we were facing the sentence of ETERNAL DEATH.

Based upon all of this God has made a way for man to be reconciled to Him and it is all through Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ...*

Jesus Christ went to the cross as a PERFECT MAN and it was on that cross that he died for our sins and He was buried and rose from the grave on the 3rd day. Now He is our Great High Priest and He intercedes for us and by His ministry as High Priest we are kept saved.

Hebrews 7:24, 25

²⁴ *But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.*

²⁵ *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:18 again.

Paul tells the Corinthians here at the end of this verse that he had now been given the ministry of reconciliation. Paul was entrusted with the greatest message of all time and that is that God has made a way for man to be reconciled to God.

Application:

The same ministry has been entrusted to you and me also. We are sinners who have been reconciled and now we have been given the ministry of reconciliation. It is our responsibility to take the Good News of the Gospel out into the world to tell others what God has done for them.

Notice the words of Henry Blackaby:

"Sin breaks our relationship with God; it severs relationships with others as well. Broken relationships are the epidemic of our day. Sin alienates family members, separates friends, divides churches, and destroys marriages. Sin creates mistrust, jealousy, hatred, and greed, all of which devastate relationships. Only Christ has the remedy for the disastrous effect of sin on human relationships. As His ambassadors, we are to take the

message of reconciliation to a broken, divided world. We urge reconciliation first with God, and then with each other.

How tragic when God's messengers of peace harbor enmity toward each other. It is a travesty to carry a message of love and yet be filled with hatred. If there is someone whom you refuse to forgive, your message of reconciliation is hypocrisy. The evidence that you are a disciple of Jesus is that you love your fellow Christian ([John 13:35](#)). In each of your relationships, make certain that your actions share the love and forgiveness that reflect what you received from God. Then you will not only speak the message of reconciliation, but you will live it as well."

So in all of this we see 2 Truths which motivated Paul's ministry. He understood that it was God's great love for mankind that caused Him to provide a way of salvation and then Paul was commissioned by God. He was given the ministry of reconciliation. So Paul lived the ministry of reconciliation. Remember what he had recorded in Romans 10?

Romans 10:13-15

¹³ *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

¹⁴ *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?*

¹⁵ *And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:19

The words "TO WIT" mean "This is what I am saying". This verse is rich in spiritual Truth.

We see that God was IN CHRIST reconciling the world unto Himself. The fact that God was IN CHRIST speaks of the deity of Jesus Christ. God was the One Who was offended by our sin and to show the depth of His love for us **HE** choose to come to this sin filled world and make a way for us to be reconciled. He came into this world as a Man and He went to the cross where He died as our Substitute to pay for our sins.

Isaiah 53:4-6

⁴ *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*

⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

The wrath of God was satisfied on our behalf because of the payment which Jesus Christ made for us.

1 John 2:1-2

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

² And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

The word "PROPITIATION" means "satisfaction" or "to appease". The death of Jesus Christ appeased/satisfied the wrath of God on our behalf.

Now because our sin has been paid for He is able to remove our sin from our account and He then covers us in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:22a

²² Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe:

Conclusion:

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:19 again.

I want you to notice that God was in Christ reconciling the WORLD unto Himself. I need to touch on this before we stop tonight. This means that when Jesus died He died for the sins of the entire world.

John 3:16

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Now there are some who teach that the "world" here in these verses and others only refers to those who would be saved. They say that Jesus only died ONLY for those who would receive Him as Savior and that if Christ died for everyone then no one could be sentenced to hell because the payment for their sins has already been made.

But that is not correct. Jesus did die for EVERYONE but His death is only applied to our account when we receive Him as Savior.

Romans 3:22a

²² *Even the righteousness of God which is by **faith** of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe:*

I want you to think about what I am about to say, If Jesus ONLY died for those who would be saved and if their sins have been paid for and applied to their account before they receive Jesus Christ as Savior they why was Paul so urgent about preaching the Gospel? Why do we need to go into all the world and preach the Gospel? Let me tell you why we need to preach the Gospel. Because Christ died for everyone but in order for His death to be applied to their account they must BELIEVE.