

2 CORINTHIANS

STUDY UNMBER TEN

2 Corinthians 5:10-21

TEXT:

- v. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, in order that each one may receive a recompense for what he has done during his life in the body, whether good or bad.
- v. 11 Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we are persuading men, but we are well-known to God and I am hoping that we are well-known also in your consciences.
- v. 12 We are not again commending ourselves to you, but are giving you an opportunity to be proud of us, in order that you may be having an answer for those who are taking pride in appearance and not in heart.
- v. 13 For if we were out of our senses, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.
- v. 14 For the love of Christ is controlling us, bringing us to this conclusion, that one died for all, therefore all died;
- v. 15 and He died for all in order that those who are living no longer are living for themselves but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.
- v. 16 Therefore from now on we are knowing no man according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we are knowing Him thus no longer.
- v. 17 Therefore if any man is in Christ, He is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold new things have come.
- v. 18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.
- v. 19 Namely that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He entrusted to us the word of reconciliation.
- v. 20 Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, since God as it were is making his appeal through us; we are begging you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.
- v. 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

INTRODUCTION:

A Bottle of Wine

For all of us who are married, were married, wish you were married, or wish you weren't married, this is something to smile about the next time you open a bottle of wine:

Sally was driving home from one of her business trips in northern Arizona when she saw an elderly Navajo woman walking on the side of the road. As the trip was a long and quiet one, she stopped the car and asked the Navajo woman if she would like a ride.

With a silent nod of thanks, the woman got into the car. Resuming the journey, Sally tried in vain to make a bit of small talk with the Navajo woman. The old woman just sat silently, looking intently at everything she saw, studying every little detail, until she noticed a brown bag on the seat next to Sally.

"What's in the bag?" asked the old woman.

Sally looked down at the brown bag and said, "It's a bottle of wine. I got it for my husband."

The Navajo woman was silent for another moment or two. Then speaking with the quiet wisdom of an elder, she said, "Good trade."

Learning by doing....

A man was driving down the road. He passed a traffic camera and saw it flash. Astounded that he had been caught speeding when he was doing the speed limit, he turned around and, going even slower, he passed by the camera. Again, he saw it flash. He couldn't believe it! So he turned and, going a snail's pace, he passed the camera. AGAIN, he saw the camera flash. He guessed it must have a fault, and home he went. Four weeks later he received 3 traffic fines in the mail, all for not wearing a seatbelt.

For every person with a spark of genius, there are a hundred with ignition trouble.

Goldfish

Little Nancy was in the garden filling in a hole when her neighbor peered over the fence. Even though he didn't much like the kid he was interested in what the cheeky-faced youngster was doing, he asked, "What are you up to there, Nancy?" "My goldfish died," replied Nancy tearfully without looking up, "and I've just buried him." The neighbor laughed and said condescendingly, "That's a really big hole for a Goldfish, isn't it?" Nancy patted down the last heap of earth then replied, "That's because he's inside you cat."

Sermon Visual Aid

A minister decided that a visual demonstration would add emphasis to his Sunday sermon. Four worms were placed into four separate jars. The first worm was put into a jar of alcohol. The second worm was put into a jar of cigarette smoke. The third worm was put into a jar of chocolate syrup. The fourth worm was put into a jar of good clean soil. At the conclusion of the Sermon, the Minister reported the following results:

The first worm in alcohol – Dead.
The second worm in cigarette smoke – Dead.
Third worm in chocolate syrup – Dead.
Fourth worm in good clean soil – Alive.

So the minister asked the congregation – What can you learn from this demonstration? A little old woman in the back quickly raised her hand and said, “As long as you drink, smoke and eat chocolate, you won’t have worms!”

Church Humor

-Front row

An elderly woman walked into the local country church. The friendly usher greeted her at the door and helped her up the flight of steps.

“Where would you like to sit? He asked politely.

“The front row please.” She answered.

“You really don’t want to do that,” the usher said. “The pastor is really boring.”

“Do you happen to know who I am?” the woman inquired.

“No.” he said.

“I’m the pastor’s mother,” she replied indignantly.

“Do you know who I am?” he asked.

“No.” she said.

“Good,” he answered.

-Show and Tell

A kindergarten teacher gave her class a “show and tell” assignment. Each student was instructed to bring in an object to share with the class that represented their religion. The first student got up in front of the class and said, “My name is Benjamin and I am Jewish and this is a Star of David.” The second student got up in front of the class and said, “My name is Mary. I’m a Catholic and this is a Rosary.” The third student got up in front of the class and said, “My name is Tommy. I am Baptist, and this is a casserole.”

-The Best Way to Pray

A priest, a minister and a guru sat discussing the best positions for prayer while a telephone repairman worked nearby. “Kneeling is definitely the best way to pray,” the priest said. “No,” said the minister. “I get the best results standing with my hands outstretched to Heaven.” “You’re both wrong,” the guru said. “The most effective

prayer position is lying down on the floor.” The repairman could contain himself no longer. “Hey, fellas,” he interrupted. “The best prayin’ I ever did was when I was hanging’ upside down from a telephone pole.”

-Waking Up for Church

One Sunday morning, a mother went in to wake her son and tell him it was time to get ready for church, to which he replied, “I M not going.”

“Why not?” she asked.

“I’ll give you two reasons.” He said. “One, they don’t like me, and two, I don’t like them.”

His mother replied, “I’ll give YOU two good reasons why you SHOULD go to church.

One, you’re 54 years old, and two, you’re the pastor!”

-The Twenty and the One

A well-worn one dollar bill and a similarly distressed twenty dollar bill arrived at a Federal Bank to be retired. As they moved along the conveyor belt to be burned, they struck up a conversation. The twenty dollar bill reminisced about its travels all over the country. “I’ve had a pretty good life,” the twenty proclaimed. “Why I’ve been to Las Vegas and Atlantic City, the finest restaurants in New York, performances on Broadway, and even a cruise to the Caribbean.” “Wow!” said the one dollar bill. “You’ve really had an exciting life!” “So tell me,” says the twenty, “where have you been throughout your lifetime?” The one dollar bill replies, “Oh, I’ve been to the Methodist Church, the Baptist church, the Lutheran church...” The twenty dollar bill interrupts, “What’s a church?”

-Goat for Dinner

The young couple invited their elderly pastor for Sunday dinner. While they were in the kitchen preparing the meal, the minister asked their son what they were having.

“Goat,” the little boy replied.

“Goat?” replied the startled man of the cloth, “Are you sure about that?”

“Yep,” said the youngster. “I heard Dad say to Mom, ‘Today is just as good as any to have the old goat for dinner.’”

Cowboy Poetry 520-14

Silver & Jade & Black Onyx

He was goin’ to buy her them earrings,
if ever he got back that way...
Silver and jade and black onyx,
a present for her, Christmas Day.

But one thing led to another,
and work kept him out on the ranch.
He made her a frame out of barnboard,
said he'd paint it when he got the chance.

A Chinook cleared the road a month later,
as he hurried to town for some feed.
For Valentine's he got her the usual....
work gloves and a big sack of feed.

He spent Mother's Day under a tractor,
had to send her to town for a part.
But he slipped ten dollars in her pocket,
to get "somethin' special at K-Mart."

On her birthday he stopped by the jewelers,
happy to see them earrings still there.
But, he bought her two pair of wranglers.
She was pinin' for a new something' to wear.

Their anniversary always come durin' harvest,
and he could never get home until dark.
He welded her a sickle-blade lawn statue,
a cross between a duck and Noah's ark.

The holidays rolled around come December.
This time he would not let her down.
He sold that big hog at the auction
And high-tailed it back into town.

But the jeweler's case was plum empty.
The earrings sold earlier in the day.
And the trip to the ranch was a torment,
tryin' to figure the right words to say.

So you can imagine his total amazement,
when onto the front porch she came,
Decked out in silver, jade & black onyx,
With earrings exactly the same.

"I sold me some chickens and bought these.
I think that they look very nice.
The man had trouble sellin' them.
Let me buy 'em for one-half the price."

Boys, I hope that you learn your lesson.

Buy your missus her gift without fail.
But there's no reason to rush right into it,
'cause they might put them earrings on sale!

p. 45

The passage we are about to consider:

BEGINS WITH JUDGMENT and
ENDS WITH RECONCILIATION AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

This is altogether fitting that the apostle Paul would address these issues following a brief discourse on physical death for the believer.

The late Francis A. Schaeffer in his book Death in the City says:

The Bible emphasizes this in various places. In Matt. 12:36 Jesus says, "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." There is a theory that all the sounds that have ever been made are still present in the universe, that the wave energy has only gotten so low that no one can hear them. Most people no longer hold this concept and of course it may not be true. But for some reason suddenly we might hear our own words, speaking out as the basis upon which God will judge us. The fact that in hypnosis we may recall a great deal more than we ordinarily can suggests that perhaps deep inside ourselves we never forget anything. God may suddenly use this so that from within ourselves we hear ourselves speak the very words we spoke in our lifetime. Then God will ask, "Are you condemned or are you not condemned?" And every man in all the world will say, "It is just, it is just, I am condemned."

Luke 12:2, 3 reads, "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops." This is not just a figure of speech. I believe that men will actually hear their own moral judgments, their own harsh words, being poured out against other men. And they will have to say, "You are just, and I am condemned." Rev. 20:12 speaks of the last great judgment: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." I have known evangelicals who have been somewhat embarrassed by this and say that this passage really means that people will be judged on whether they have accepted Christ as Savior or not. That is not what God says. He says, "I'm going to judge you by your works, and your works will fail. They will fail on the basis of your own moral judgments against others. No matter who you are or where." There is no injustice in God's dealings with lost men, because they are judged on the standard by which they have bound others.

pp. 113-14

J. I. Packer in his book Knowing God says:

Nor is this matter of a word merely; the reality of divine judgment, as a fact, is set forth on page after page of Biblical history. God judged Adam and Eve, expelling them from the Garden and pronouncing curses on their future earthly life (Genesis 3). God judged the corrupt world of Noah's day, sending a flood to destroy mankind (Genesis 6-8). God judged Sodom and Gomorrah, engulfing them in a volcanic catastrophe (Genesis 18-19). God judged Israel's Egyptian taskmasters, just as He foretold He would (see Genesis 15:14), unleashing against them the terrors of the ten plagues (Exodus 7-12). God judged those who worshipped the golden calf, using the Levites as His executioners (Exodus 32:26-35). God judged Nadab and Abihu for offering Him strange fire (Leviticus 10:1 ff.), as later He judged Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who were swallowed up in an earth tremor. God judged Achan for sacrilegious thieving; he and his were wiped out (Joshua 7). God judged Israel for unfaithfulness to Him after their entry into Canaan, causing them to fall under the dominion of other nations (Judges 2:11 ff., 3:5 ff., 4:1ff.). Before ever they entered the promised land, God threatened His people with deportation as the ultimate penalty for impiety, and eventually, after repeated warnings from the prophets, He judged them by fulfilling this threat; the northern kingdom (Israel) fell victim to the Assyrian captivity, and the southern kingdom (Judah) to the Babylonian captivity (2 Kings 17: 22:15 ff., 23:26 f.). In Babylon, God judged both Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar for their impiety. The former was given time for amendment of life, the latter was not (Daniel 4:5). Nor are the narratives of divine judgment confined to the Old Testament. In the New Testament story, judgment falls on the Jews for rejecting Christ (Matthew 21:43 f., I Thessalonians 2:14 ff.), on Ananias and Sapphira, for lying to God (Acts 5), on Herod, for his pride (Acts 12:21ff.), and on Christians at Corinth, who were afflicted with illness (which in some cases proved fatal) by reason of their gross irreverence in connection, particularly, with the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11:29-32). And this is only a selection from the abundant accounts of divine acts of judgment which the Bible contains.)

p. 125-26

J. I. Packer goes on to say:

The doctrine of final judgment...stresses man's accountability and the certainty that justice will finally triumph over all the wrongs which are part and parcel of life here and now. The former gives a dignity to the humblest action, the latter brings calmness and assurance to those in the thick of the battle. This doctrine gives meaning life...The Christian view of judgment means that history moves to a goal...Judgment protects the idea of the triumph of God and of good. It is unthinkable that the present conflict between good and evil should last throughout eternity. Judgment means that evil will be disposed of authoritatively, decisively, finally. Judgment means that in the end God's will will be perfectly done (The Biblical Doctrine of Judgment, p. 72).

p. 130

- v. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, in order that each one may receive a recompense for what he has done during his life in the body, whether good or bad.

The word “FOR” takes us back to chapter 5:9 and gives us the reason for our goal.

5:9

Therefore also, we are making it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

Wherever we are, we are wanting to be pleasing to Him because there is going to come a day of accountability.

“FOR WE MUST ALL APPEAR”

Paul includes himself in using “WE” here, and we must all appear. There are no excusers; no exceptions. It is just like when we receive a summons for a court appearance or jury duty, we have to take care of that responsibility or obligation either by appearing or filing some kind of justifiable excuse.

“FOR WE MUST ALL APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST”

The judgment seat of Christ is that time when believers will appear for their audit. The “WHAT” of the judgment seat of Christ is an examination of things that have been done from the moment of new birth until physical death.

The “WHEN” of the judgment seat of Christ is probably during the seven years of tribulation on earth. This will be going on in heaven following the rapture of the church.

The “WHY” of the judgment seat of Christ is seen in the purpose clause: “in order that each one may receive a recompense for what he has done during his life in the body.”

One is reminded of the parable of Jesus in Matthew 25, beginning at verse 14:

“For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his possessions to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. But he who received the one talent went away and dug in the ground, and hid his master’s money.

Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. And the one who had received five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave;

you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.'

The one who had received the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see, I have gained you two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

And the one who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed. And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see you have what is yours.' But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.' For to everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

"IN ORDER THAT EACH ONE MAY RECEIVE A RECOMPENSE FOR WHAT HE HAS DONE DURING HIS LIFE IN THE BODY"

The phrase "in the body" takes us back to chap. 5 verses 6 and 8:

2 Cor. 5:6, 8

Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord –

We are of good courage, and we are preferring rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord.

Monday – March 28

Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-11

Facing the Music

Each one's work will become manifest....because it will be revealed by fire.

According to legend, many years ago there lived a man in China who was accepted as a member of the Emperor's orchestra through the help of an influential friend. He claimed to be an accomplished flutist, though he couldn't play a note. Things went well for a while. During concerts, he would hold the flute to his lips at the appropriate times and go through the motions of playing. Then one day the Emperor announced that he wanted to hear each member of the orchestra in a solo performance. The frightened man immediately made arrangements to take lessons, but they did little to help him. He thought about claiming to be ill on the day of his scheduled appointment, but he feared his deceit would be reported by the royal physician. So when the dreaded day for his

recital arrived, rather than being discovered for the fraud that he was, he took a fatal dose of poison. He was afraid to “face the music.”

The day is coming when all people will be called before the Lord for a “recital.” Believers “must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). Unbelievers too will stand before God to be “judged according to their works” (Rev. 20:12). There’s no escaping it, not even through death. That’s why it is essential to accept Christ as our Savior and to live honestly before the Lord.

Yes, we all must face the music!

When we are called upon to stand
Before the Lord someday,
Will we anticipate His praise
Or dread what He will say?
Live now as you will wish you had lived
When you stand before God.

The computer printout begins with the new birth and ceases with death. It is just like the computers that measure our heartbeat or brain waves --- it ceases when the graph goes flat.

The verse ends with “WHETHER GOOD OR BAD.”

1 Cor. 3:11-15

For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

(Blessings Out of Buffetings by Alan Redpath)

I like a little comment by Dr. Harry Ironside on this subject. In his study of Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians he said, “Just look at that little word s-o-r-t, sort. It is not how much we have done that is going to count, but it is the quality of what we have done that is going to matter.” Every man’s work, of what sort it is: that which has been for the glory of God --- gold, silver, and precious stones, that which has been in the power of self and for the glory of man --- wood, hay, stubble.

p. 88

Do you say, “I am conscious in my life that there has been so much selfishness and carnality and sin, so much of sheer un-Christ-like behavior. What can I do about it if I am going to face this tremendous day of which you speak? There is one thing you can do, and you can do it today, right now. You can go into the presence of God in the name

of the Lord Jesus and you can judge yourself on every one of those things known to be contrary to His will. Do you remember what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:31? "...if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

In the face of the great day which will come to all, there is one thing that will take the fear out of it, and leave only hope and confidence. If you are prepared today to judge unquestionably in the presence of God that which you know in your life to be out of His will, and that which is sinful and contrary to His purpose for you, then you can trust Him for the cleansing by the precious blood of Christ.
pp. 88-89

(II Corinthians by H. A. Ironside)

Sometimes we fulfill our deepest ambition by foregoing our own desires and saying, "Lord, I want to be Thy servant; just take me, make me, break me, do what Thou wilt with me." You remember that through Jeremiah the Lord said to Baruch: "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not" (Jer. 45:5). So He says to every one of us, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not." But what should we seek? To be well-pleasing unto Him, so that whatever niche He calls upon us to fill we may fill it to His glory, and this in view of the judgment-seat.
p. 134

(The Letters to the Corinthians by William Barclay)

When we remember that life becomes a tremendous and a thrilling thing, for in life we are making or marring a destiny, we are winning or losing a crown. Time has become the testing ground of eternity.
p. 230

(Expository Studies in 2 Corinthians: Power Out of Weakness by Ray C. Stedman)

The Lord will have the joy of showing him many things Paul thought were failures that were really successes. Things that he did that no one heard anything about will be brought to light vividly displayed before others. So it is a time of disclosure, but it is also a time of evaluation when we learn for the first time who was right and what attitudes we should have had or should not have had. It is a helpful time of seeing the truth about ourselves.
p. 102

The teaching of this 10th verse can cause us to become discouraged and defeated if we see ourselves shrinking away from Him in shame at His appearing simply because we have lived our lives so selfishly and ineffectively for the glory of God.

Paul says in chapter 4, however, "we are not losing heart."

The second possibility would be to try to hurry like mad to make up for lost time.

(How to Get Along with Difficult People by Florence Littauer)

Here come Harriet Hurry, throwing her choir robe over her Christian Dior jogging suit and coordinating Nike shoes. Harriet is an extremely competent lady, and no one knows how she finds the time to be the Coordinator of Manna on Wheels, Director of Hemming for Heathens, on the Board of the Current Crucial Crises Council, and President of the Spiritual Jogging Society. She often rushes into a meeting late, gives a dramatic report, and leaves early to make it to the next committee. Harriet's theme song is, "I'm late, I'm late, for a very important date."

Harriet is out to save the world, and her husband calls her "The Lone Arranger."
p. 22-23

Cowboy Poetry 599-07

Last night as I lay on the prairie,
 And looked at the stars in the sky,
I wondered if ever a cowboy
 Would drift to that sweet by and by.

The trail to that bright, mystic region,
 Is narrow and dim, so they say,
But the one that leads down to perdition
 Is staked and is blazed all the way.

They say that there'll be a great round-up,
 Where cowboys like doggies will stand,
To be cut by those riders from Heaven,
 Who are posted and know every brand.

I wonder was there ever a cowboy
 Prepared for that great judgment day,
Who could say to the boss of the riders,
 I am ready to be driven away.

They say He will never forsake you,
 That He notes every action and look,
But for safety you'd better get branded,
 And have your name in His great tally-book.

For they tell of another great owner
 Who is nigh overstocked, so they say,
But who always makes room for the sinner,
 Who strays from that bright, narrow way.
pp. 164-5

Cowboy Poetry 599-08 The Cowboy Wishes

I want to be a cowboy
 And with the cowboys stand,
With leather chaps upon my legs
 And a six-gun in my hand.
And, while the foreman sees me
 I'll make some Winter plays,
But I will catch a regular
 When the herd's thrown out to graze.

I'll have a full-stamped saddle
 And a silver-mounted bit,
With conchos big as dollars,
 And silvered spurs, to wit;

Cowboy Poetry 501-10 Sometimes

I ask for reassurance
That the moments of my days
Count within Your kingdom
Write joy upon Your face

Though I see but partially
Results from every choice
I'm a lamb among Your many
Keen to hear my Shepherd's voice.

Bits and fragments of my time
You choose to touch and bless
In ways I see and understand.
I trust You with the rest.

Expectant, now, I'm confident
In Your best time and place
Hands that fashion all things good
Will lace my life with grace.
p. 36

This, however, runs contrary to the teaching of Scripture, which tells us we are to:

“be still and know that He is God”

We are to:

“press toward the mark”

It is true, but the key it to:

“walk by means of the Spirit and we will not fulfill the desires of the flesh”

To:

“wait upon the Lord and renew our strength; to mount up with wings as eagles; to run and not be weary; to walk and not faint.”

I think God expects us to receive truth where we are and then live life faithfully, a day at a time. To take up our cross daily and follow Him. To count on His mercies being new every morning. And saying with a heart full of gladness: “Great is Your faithfulness.”

Life by the inch is a cinch
And by the yard it is hard.

- v. 11 Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we are persuading men, but we are well-known to God and I am hoping that we are well-known also in your consciences.

The 11th verse begins with the word “THEREFORE.” The word “therefore” occurs 5 times in this passage:

Here in verse 11
Verse 14
Verse 16
Verse 17
Verse 20

“THEREFORE KNOWING THE FEAR OF THE LORD”

What is this fear of the Lord? I believe it is the three R's:

1. It is the R OF RESPECT – for His authority and our accountability to that authority.
2. It is the R OF RESPONSIBILITY = We have a responsibility to be obedient to Him.
3. It is the R OF RELATIONSHIP – He created us for a relationship with Himself.

John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God.

Our Daily Bread booklet for February 25 had this little story:

Recently I read a fable about a dog who loved to chase other animals. He bragged about his great running skill and said he could catch anything. Well, it wasn't long until his boastful claims were put to the test by a certain rabbit. With ease the little creature outran his barking pursuer. The other animals, watching with glee, began to laugh. The dog excused himself, however, by saying, "You forget, I was only running for fun. He was running for his life!"

That does make a difference! Motivation is the most important factor in everything we do. In fact, it determines the way believers serve the Lord. Some do so because it's the thing to do, or because they want recognition. Then there are others who serve with urgency and zeal. Recognizing the terrible plight of people lost in sin, and deeply grateful for God's saving grace in their own lives, they give their best by going all out for the Lord.

John 9:4

I must work the works of Him that sent Me, for the night is coming, when no man can work.

"THEREFORE KNOWING THE FEAR OF THE LORD, WE ARE PURSUADING MEN,"

We ask ourselves the question: How does Paul do this? Well, he does it in two ways:

By his LIFE and
By his LIP

Or:

By his WORKS and
By his WORDS

(Spiritual Awakening by Sherwood Eliot Wirt, editor)

I have reason to believe, from the notes put up at both ends of the town, that there are many of you that have arrows of conviction stuck fast in your souls. I have taken in near two hundred at the other end of the town within a fortnight. If this be the case, that God is thus at work, let the Devil roar, and we will go on in the name of the Lord.

p. 33

--- George Whitefield

(Facing Death and the Life After by Billy Graham)

In World War I, British soldiers had a popular song that went like this:

Oh Death, where is thy sting-a-ling-a-ling,
Oh Grave, thy victoree?

The bells of Hell go ting-a-ling-a-ling
For you but not for me.

A lot of people talk about hell, use it to tell other where to go, but do not want to be confronted with the thought that it might be their destination. Hell, for them, is only where the Hitlers and Stalins should end up, along with murderers, rapists, or child pornographers. But most think that "Good People" who mind their own business, pay their taxes, and put a few dollars in the collection plate will have some "eternal rewards." p. 37

John 4:35, 36

Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. Already he who reaps is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

Matt. 9:36-38

And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

"THEREFORE KNOWING THE FEAR OF THE LORD, WE ARE PERSUADING MEN, BUT WE ARE WELL-KNOWN TO GOD AND I AM HOPING THAT WE ARE WELL-KNOWN ALSO IN YOUR CONSCIENCES."

2 Cor. 4:2

But we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking around in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Paul is saying that he hopes the memory of them will hassle the Corinthians enough to make a decision.

- v. 12 We are not again commending ourselves to you, but are giving you an opportunity to be proud of us, in order that you may be having an answer for those who are taking pride in appearance and not in heart.

Paul has to regularly remind the Corinthians that he is not bragging and commending himself to them again.

Plummer in his translation says,

Do not misunderstand me. I am not beginning again to praise myself, as some persons say that I am so fond of doing.

2 Cor. 3:1

Are we beginning again to be commending ourselves? Or, we are not needing, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you, are we?

(Negatively) “We are not again commending ourselves to you, but (positively) we are giving you an opportunity.”

Whereas in verse 11 he is saying, “We are persuading men,” now he is saying, “We are giving you an opportunity.”

That opportunity is to be “proud of us.” And that would come with a change of heart on their part and their response to the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

2 Cor. 1:14

Just as you also partially did understand us, that we are your reason to be proud as you also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus.

The purpose is stated in the last part of verse 12: “IN ORDER THAT YOU MAY BE HAVING AN ANSWER FOR THOSE WHO ARE TAKING PRIDE IN APPEARANCE AND NOT IN HEART.”

Once a person has a relationship with God through Christ, it is a matter of the heart and not of appearance.

1 Peter 3:15

But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to every one who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

The verse ends with a positive and negative:

“For those who are (positively) taking pride in appearance and (negatively) not in heart.”

What does it mean: “taking pride in appearance”?

It is a life characterized by the three S's:

1. it is **SHOW**.
2. it is on the **SURFACE**.

3. and it is characterized by STRESS.

Matt. 6:1-6

Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing; that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. And when you pray, you are not to be as hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

The end of that kind of lifestyle is described graphically at the end of the Sermon on the Mount:

Matt. 7:21-23

Not every one who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father, who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'

- v. 13 For if we were out of our senses, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.

I guess a number of the Corinthians had accused Paul of being out of his mind in perpetrating the message of a personal relationship to Jesus Christ.

“FOR IF WE WERE OUT OF OUR SENSES” What does this mean?

I think it means the three E's:

1. the E of ENTHUSIASM.
2. the E of EXCITEMENT
3. the E of EAGERNESS FOR EVANGELISM

Acts 26:24ff

And while Paul was saying this in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you mad.” But Paul

said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth. For the king knows about these matters, and I speak to him also with confidence, since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice; for this has not been done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do." And Agrippa replied to Paul, "In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian."

1 Cor. 14:2

For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries.

"IF WE ARE IN OUR RIGHT MIND, IT IS FOR YOU."

If these things we are saying are true, it is being said for your benefit.

Luke 15:17

But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!

- v. 14 For the love of Christ is controlling us, bringing us to this conclusion, that one died for all, therefore all died;

The reason we know we are in our right mind is that it is the love of Christ that is controlling us.

What does this mean? --- "The love of Christ is controlling us"

When we think in terms of the power of human love, we think of what human love does to us physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally. We can get some idea of the power of Christ-love produced in us by the Holy Spirit.

Song of Solomon 8:6, 7

Place me like a seal over your heart,
Like a seal on your arm;
For love is as strong as death,
Its jealousy unyielding as the grave.
It burns like blazing fire,
Like a mighty flame.
Many waters cannot quench love;
Rivers cannot wash it away.
If one were to give
All the wealth of his house for love,
It would be utterly scorned.

(The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians by Charles R. Erdman)

“The love of Christ,” believed, accepted, appreciated, appropriated, is the supreme motive in the transformation of human life and character. It may be regarded as the essence of Christian experience. It is the explanation which Paul gives of his whole career. “The love of Christ constraineth us.”

It is not the love or the loveliness of a human Christ which can so transfigure and transform. The knowledge of the birth and death, of the country, of the conduct, or the teaching, and of the times of the man Jesus is of real value and profit to all. However, it is a vital relation to a divine, glorified, present Christ which makes of one “a new creature.”

p. 64

“FOR THE LOVE OF CHRIST IS CONTROLLING US, BRINGING US TO THIS CONCLUSION, THAT ONE (that is, Jesus Christ) DIED FOR ALL, THEREFORE ALL DIED;”

Romans 5:6-8

For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

(Second Corinthians – Where Life Endures by Roy L. Laurin)

Someone asked George Mueller for the secret of his life. He replied with these significant words: “There came a time in my life when George Mueller died, utterly died. He died to all his selfish plans and ambitions. When he died, Christ lived through him. This is my secret.”

p. 88

(Spiritual Awakening, Sherwood Eliot Wirt, editor)

My spirit was contrite before the Lord, whose love, at this time, affected my heart. This afternoon I felt a tender sympathy of soul with my poor wife and family left behind. My heart was enlarged I desires that they may walk in that humble obedience wherein the everlasting Father may be their guide and support through all the difficulties in this world. A sense of that gracious assistance through which my mind hath been strengthened to take up the Cross and leave them, to travel in the love of Truth, hath begotten thankfulness in my heart to our great Helper.

p. 58

---John Woolman

That self-knowledge which teaches us humility teaches us compassion also. The sick pity the sick. They sympathize with the disorder of which they feel the symptoms in

themselves. Self-knowledge also checks injustice, by establishing the equitable principle of ambition by convincing us how little we are entitled to superiority. It renders adversity profitable, by letting us see how much we deserve it. It makes prosperity safe, by directing our hearts to Him who confers it, instead of receiving it as the consequence of our own desert.

p. 75

--- Hannah More

(How to Be a People-Helper by Dr. Gary Collins)

Several years ago Harvard psychologist Gordon Allport called love “incomparably the greatest psychotherapeutic agent.” He went on to suggest that the church knows more about this than any secular counselor, but he decried the “age-long failure of religion to turn doctrine into practice.”

The body of Christ should be characterized by love---love for ourselves, our neighbors, our families, and even our enemies. Jesus loved us and died for us even while we were still sinners (Rom. 5:8). If this divine love were to flow through Christians and reach out to others --- like it should --- the results would be incredibly therapeutic.

But to love like this is risky. It takes time and effort and it might inconvenience us. So instead we talk about love but do very little about it.

p. 136

(Caring Enough to Confront by David Augsburger)

Love gives up the concealed weapons called questions and makes clear statements like: I care about you. I need you. I want your help. I want your respect. Love is honestly open in conversation. Love sets no traps.

p. 32

- v. 15 and He died for all in order that those who are living no longer are living for themselves but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

Plummer translates verses 14 and 15 in the following way:

I must be devoted to God and to you, for Christ's love keeps me from all selfish motives. Long ago I came to the following conclusion: The representative of the human race died for the sake of us all, and so His death was ours. Why did He die for all? In order that the living, now that they know that they died in Christ, should never again live for themselves, but should henceforth live for Him; who for their sakes died and was raised again. There you have our motive.

Here in the beginning of the 15th verse we have the second statement.

The first one was in verse 14:

“One died for all, therefore all died”

And now in verse 15:

“He died for all”

And then the purpose for that death is given:

“in order that those who are living (negatively) no longer are living for themselves by (positively) for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.”

The verse gives us an obvious choice of living for self or living for the Savior.

Negatively, Paul says, “No longer are living for themselves but for Him,” that is, for Jesus Christ.

How do you live for Him? There are two answers to that question:

1. SUBMISSION – Go where He tells you.
2. OBEDIENCE – Do what He says.

(Birthright by David C. Needham)

Concerning self-denial, 2 Corinthians 5:15 needs to be evaluated. It is important to see that the statement “those who live should no longer live for themselves,” comes right in the middle of an important progression of thought. Paul begins the chapter by making a clear distinction between one’s deepest self and his mortal house. This follows with a contrast between those who take pride in appearance, who recognize people according to the flesh, over against the fundamental fact that a Christian is God’s “new creation,” God’s ambassador. To make the “oneself” concept of 5:15 a reference to one’s deepest self would be to go against the entire flow of thought. Paul would say “sad is the Christian who lives as though we were still out to fulfill life as though he had not died with Christ, as though he were not ‘a new creation’.” Paul is saying essentially the same thing as in Galatians 2:20.

The distinction is most important to see. The Bible repeatedly asserts as sinful anything that is selfish, in other words, anything that manifest’s one’s concern or interest in oneself without regard for others. Thus Paul stated “for Christ’s love compels us” with the result that “those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised again.” Jesus expressed words quite similar when He spoke not only of the proper self-denial of His followers, but also of His own self-denial (see Mark 8:34; Mark 10:45; John 8:28).

pp. 164-65

- v. 16 Therefore from now on we are knowing no man, according to the flesh even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we are knowing Him thus no longer.

“THEREFORE FROM NOW ON WE ARE KNOWING NO MAN ACCORDING TO THE FLESH”

This takes us back to verse 12 where we read:

“in order that you may be having an answer for those who are taking pride in appearance and not in heart.”

Paul then says, “even though we have known Christ according to the flesh...” There was a time when the apostle Paul was fighting against Christ and His purpose and desirous of liquidation of His program for the church.

“YET NOW WE ARE KNOWING HIM THUS NO LONGER.” There has been a dramatic change in His life. This change is graphically illustrated in verse 17:

v. 17 Therefore if any man is in Christ, He is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold new things have come.

“THEREFORE IF ANY MAN IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATION”

This helps us understand what Jesus meant when He was speaking to Nicodemus: “You must be born again.”

“THE OLD THINGS PASSED AWAY”

We immediately ask the question: What are these?

Ephesians 2:1-3

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of that air, of the spirit that is working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Ephesians 2:12

Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

“BEHOLD NEW THINGS HAVE COME”

We ask ourselves the question: “What are these?”

Lewis Sperry Chafer in his book Salvation shares some of these things:

That God may in some measure be glorified, some, if not all, of these position[s] are here given. "The half has never been told." The reader is humbly invited to remember that these things are now true of each one who believes, and if there should be the slightest doubt as to whether he has believed that question can be forever settled even before the following pages are read:

I. In the Eternal Plan of God:
[There are five things that are true:]

1. foreknown
2. elect
3. predestinated
4. chosen
5. called

II. Reconciled:

1. reconciled by God
2. reconciled to God

III. Redeemed:

1. redeemed by God out of all condemnation

IV. Related to God Through a Propitiation:

V. All Sins Covered By Atoning Blood:

VI. Vitally Conjoined to Christ for Judgment of the "Old Man" Unto a New Walk:

VII. Free from the Law:

VIII. Children of God:

IX. Adopted (placed as adult sons):

X. Acceptable to God by Jesus Christ:

XI. Justified:

XII. Forgiven All Trespasses:

XIII. Made Nigh:

XIV. Delivered from the Powers of Darkness:

- XV. Translated into the Kingdom:
- XVI. On the Rock Christ Jesus:
- XVII. A Gift from God to Christ:
- XVIII. Circumcised in Christ:
- XIX. Partakers of the Holy and Royal Priesthood:
- XX. A Chosen Generation and a Peculiar People:
- XXI. Having Access to God:
- XXII. Within the “Much More” Care of God:
- XXIII. His Inheritance:
- XXIV. Our Inheritance:
- XXV. A Heavenly Association:
- XXVI. Heavenly Citizens:
- XXVII. Of the Family and Household of God:
- XXVIII. Light in the Lord:
- XXIX. Vitally United to the Father, Son and Spirit:
- XXX. Blessed with the “First Fruits” and the “Earnest” of the Spirit:
- XXXI. Glorified:
- XXXII. Complete in Him:
- XXXIII. Possessing Every Spiritual Blessing:

Peter E. Gillquist in his book Love Is Now says:

God says we are new people. He has planted within us new life. Old life looks at sin; new life looks at forgiveness. Old life is in fear; new life is in love. Old life expects estrangement; new life thrives on fellowship with God. Let's forget once and for all this emphasis on performance living and conditioned love. It's time we learn to walk in

confidence with God, expecting Him to use us, counting on Him to anoint us with power. If we should slip, let's trust the Savior and keep moving. He's taken care of all that.
p. 150

In Our Daily Bread for Thursday, April 29, we read:

The story is told that when Augustine was still without God and without hope, the Holy Spirit convicted him on the basis of Paul's words in Romans 13:14, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts." Augustine acknowledged his sinfulness, accepted Jesus as his Savior, and became a different person. His entire outlook on life began to change because of his new nature. One day he had to attend to some business in his old haunts in Rome. As he walked along, a former companion saw him and began calling, "Augustine, Augustine, it is I!" He took one look at the poor disreputable woman whose company he had formerly enjoyed, and he shuddered. Reminding himself of his new position in Christ, he quickly turned and ran from her, shouting, "It's not I, It's not I!" Augustine had found the secret of Paul's words: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"

Not I but Christ, He lives in me;
A transformation I can see;
God's work has wrought within my soul
Desire to let Him have control. ---Branon

(Caring Enough to Confront by David Augsburger)

Can people change? Can life be different? Wrong questions. Wrong words. Wrong viewpoint. It's not "can we" but "will we."

Strength is available. Change is possible. Whenever a man or a woman accepts responsibility for where she or he is (that's often called confession) and chooses to make a change (that's often called repentance) and reaches out for the strength of God and the accepting love of some significant other persons (that's often called conversion), then change begins.

p. 101

(How to Help People Change by Jay E. Adams)

So, repentance is a change of mind about one's beliefs, attitudes, and behavior that involves regret about sin and issues in a change of lifestyle as outward evidence of a desire to be different. It encompasses the following:

1. Confessing sin to God and to others (the outward expression of godly regret).
2. Seeking forgiveness (the first step taken to remedy the situation).
3. Forsaking the sinful way (the next remedial step).
4. Beginning an alternative way of life that is pleasing to God (the last corrective step).

p. 144

(Birthright by David C. Needham)

God's purpose in creating us is so that we, through a dependent relationship with our God, could receive and display the very life of God---the glory of God.

p. 23

Even today, after reading the morning news and the latest issue of TIME magazine, and even though I acknowledge countless gallons of human tears, the endless cycle of agonizing tragedy, I, along with the world's majority, maintain that Adam made the right decision. Even as I swallow my tranquilizers, rush to my psychiatrist, take that extra drink, endure my third divorce, and watch my children reject all the ideals I have tried to pass on --- I still say there is hope!

“You were wearied by all your ways,
But you would not say, ‘It is hopeless.’
You found renewal of your strength,
And so you did not faint.”

(Isaiah 57:10)

p. 27

(Back on Course by Gavin & Patti Macleod)

In the long, late nights I did get to thinking---in time the work runs out, and if your entire identity comes through your work, what happens when the work isn't there anymore? What's real about an actor? What's real about life? Is there a God who is real?

When I talked like that, Candy Bergen told me I was being too serious. After all, life is to be enjoyed.

“I agree! I've always believed that,” I answered. “But what happens when you wake up one day and realize you really are nothing?”

“You start drinking, I thought. Or you take drugs. Like some of the old stars, the so-called has-beens who can't cope with not being a star anymore.

pp. 67-68

(How to Disciple Your Children by Walter Henrichsen)

Many of us miss the kingdom of heaven by 18 inches --- the distance between the heart and head. We know it intellectually but have never received Christ as our own Savior. Until our children have gone through the process of conversion themselves, we have failed in the initial and most important step of discipling.

p. 45

(Glad Reunion by John Claypool)

You see, part of what had upset Elijah was probably his desire to find a shortcut for the work of redemption. He had expected the dramatic manifestation on Carmel to convert the whole world overnight, that is, to prove so overwhelmingly the existence of God that all humans would instantly believe. This is the temptation of all who confuse domination with devotion. You see, what God wants is a free response of love. He wants human beings to delight in him with all their hearts and minds and souls and strength, not just to be overwhelmed by his existence and cower in submission. And love like that does not come through a power transaction; it is the fruit of one-to-one wooing in which the affection of the heart is won.

In short, Elijah had to be reminded all over again of what God's work of redemption was all about: it is a process of devotion, not domination. And once he was able to accept that truth, the clouds of depression that had settled down so thickly over this man began to roll away.

p. 110

The hymnwriter has it right when he says:

What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought
Since Jesus came into my heart!
I have light in my soul for which long I had sought,
Since Jesus came into my heart!

I have ceased from my wand'ring and going astray
Since Jesus came into my heart!
And my sins, which were many, are all washed away,
Since Jesus came into my heart!

There's a light in the valley of death now for me,
Since Jesus came into my heart!
And the gates of the City beyond I can see,
Since Jesus came into my heart!

I shall go there to dwell in the City, I know,
Since Jesus came into my heart!
And I'm happy, so happy, as onward I go,
Since Jesus came into my heart!

Since Jesus came into my heart,
Since Jesus came into my heart,
Floor of joy o'er my soul
Like the sea billows roll,
Since Jesus came into my heart!

The big question that comes to us at this point of the study is: Have you made this decision? Are you truly in Christ?

- v. 18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

“NOW ALL THESE THINGS” refers to the new things that have happened when we receive Christ as Savior. They find their source from God. And it is God who reconciled us to himself. The instrument He used was “through Christ”, and He “gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”

The words “reconciled” and “reconciliation” occur five times here in these final verses of the chapter.

To be reconciled means that the relationship is made right.

Romans 5:12

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned---

Colossians 1:19-20

For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Colossians 1:22

Yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach---

The first thing: “NOW ALL THESE THINGS ARE FROM GOD, WHO RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF THROUGH CHRIST”

And secondly: GAVE US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION”

Once the relationship is established, the ministry of reconciliation is granted to him.

2 Corinthians 3:9

For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more is the ministry of righteousness abounding in glory.

2 Corinthians 4:1

Therefore since we are having this ministry, even as we were favored with mercy, we are not losing heart.

- v. 19 Namely that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He entrusted to us the word of reconciliation.

This verse is a further definition of verse 18. It was God who was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

1 John 2:1, 2

My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

(Negatively) “NOT COUNTING THEIR TRESPASSES AGAINST THEM, AND (positively) HE ENTRUSTED TO US THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION.”

In verse 18 he gave us the ministry of reconciliation, and in verse 19 he entrusted to us the word of reconciliation.

(Pilgrim at Tinker Creek by Annie Dillard)

I am no scientist. I explore the neighborhood. An infant who has just learned to hold his head up has a frank and forthright way of gazing about him in bewilderment. He hasn't the faintest clue where he is, and he aims to learn. In a couple of years, what he will have learned instead is how to fake it: he'll have the cocksure air of a squatter who has come to feel he owns the place.

p. 11

(Birthright by David C. Needham)

“I do not care what Gods there be;
I am the master of my fate,
The captain of my soul.”

(Lord Alfred Tennyson)

(Caring Enough to Forgive by David Augsburger)

Second Corinthians 5:11-21---Paul's view of others: vv. 11-16 Forgetting what lies behind --- We no longer view persons from a human point of view. The old is no longer in control. We no longer live for ourselves, v. 15. No longer pride ourselves in position or performance, v. 12.

vv. 17, 18 Recognizing what is now --- In Christ, a new creation has come. The old is gone, the new has come. Now we are reconciled. Now we are at peace (6:1,2). Past trespasses are released.

vv. 19-21 Reaching out to the future --- The future is open before us. We are reconciled to God, We share in God's reconciling work, We work together with God.

1. Collect references to the decisive acts of God in cutting us loose from the bondage of the past. Find passages which declare God has "blotted out," "buried," "sunk in the sea," "put to death," "forgotten," "erased," the impact of the past.
2. Read the book of Hosea, making notes on God's indiscourageable love, God's willingness to release us from the past, God's eagerness to embrace us now when there is a genuine turning toward him. In forgiving, we do the same.

pp. 60-61

A frequent working definition is "forgiveness is an unconditional gift of love."

p. 66

In a world of
Flawed
Communication,
Community is possible
Through
Understanding
Others.

In a world of
Painful
Alienation,
Community is created by
Accepting
Others.

In a world of
Broken
Trust,
Community is sustained by
Forgiveness.

p. 78

v. 20 Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, since God as it were is making his appeal through us; we are begging you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Back in verse 11 the apostle says, “We are persuading men.” In verse 12: “giving you an opportunity.” And now is verse 20: “We are begging you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

Plummer translates this verse:

It is on behalf of Christ, therefore that we are acting as ambassadors, seeing that it is God who entreats through us; we beseech on Christ's behalf, become reconciled to God.

(The Trauma of Transparency by Grant Howard)

God conversation with other human beings demands the same concerted effort from us. Our tendency is to be satisfied with casual, superficial, cliché-ridden comments that pass the time rather than build relationships.

Today I met a man
But not really.
Rather, our paths crossed.
The private paths of our own
 separate worlds made a juncture
 and we were there.

We told our impersonal names
 and shook each other's hand
 warmly and firmly --- to convey
 our interest
 which wasn't there.

We shared our views
 on the weather, politics,
 the latest news
 and other foreign things
 which were not there.

And when the conversation lagged,
 we said:
 “Well, glad to have met you”
 “Same here”

We lied, smiled, extended our hands
 again, and parted ---
 glad to be on our separate ways
 from our little meeting.

Today I met a man
But no really.

pp. 119-20

--- Author unknown

(Caring Enough to Confront by David Augsburger)

Repentance is owning responsibility for what was, accepting responsibility for what is, and acting responsibly now.

Repentance is responsible action.

p. 101

Repentance --- in the full Christian meaning of the word --- is a process. It's a thawing out of rigid life-styles into a flowing, moving, growing, repenting process.

Repentance is living in the open honesty called vulnerability. Repentance is growing in the decisive honesty we call responsibility. Both of these are processes. They continue as long as life continues.

To be a repenting person, I can choose to live in open, honest vulnerability before both God and community, and in clear, decisive responsibility to both God and community. This is repenting as a growing life-style. It is growth.

p. 104

(Birthright by David C. Needham)

To appreciate the wholesomeness of authentic Christian personhood, it must first be seen over against the biblical picture of the lostness of man and the fundamental nature of sin.

In drastic contrast with God's original and ultimate intention for human beings to be receivers and displayers of His very life in a dependent love relationship, man rejected God. Since this dependent relationship as seen most perfectly in the life of Jesus would have given meaning to existence, to lose it was to lose life. Thus man forced upon himself the consequence of helplessly struggling with the issue of meaning.

p. 35

...let's imagine God in all His absolute holiness at the very top of the picture. Then down at the bottom, let's place me, a SINNER. Because I have received Christ, God has performed a remarkable thing. Since He obviously cannot associate with sinners---light cannot fellowship with darkness---He has inserted a miraculous filter between Himself and men, the sinner. That filter is Jesus. His death, His resurrection. Therefore, as God looks down on me, He doesn't see me as I really am, but rather he sees all that is right about Jesus. Because of that wonderful filter, God's record against me is wiped out. Everything I was and am, a sinner who sins, is completely erased. And further, everything that Jesus is has been written in place of that record. I am justified. I am "positionally" righteous. I am judicially righteous. This is the way God sees me. But if for a moment---horrible thought---that filter were not there and He saw me as I really am, He would call me what I am, a SINNER.

p. 46

(How to Get Along with Difficult People by Florence Littauer)

Here comes Winnie Witness on her way to teach her second grade Sunday School class. She's full of pep and energy and always wears a skirt of many colors and her red

T-shirt which says "Expect a Miracle." Winnie looks perpetually for potential converts and smiles all the time so people will ask how they can be happy like her.

Notice that Winnie is carrying a complimentary straw basket filled with hundreds of different evangelistic tracts. She has the plan of salvation in 12 languages and is willing to witness to the uttermost parts of the world.

To accent her stunning outfit, Winnie is wearing a pair of plastic Good News gloves. By having her gloves on, she is always ready to explain God's plan in living color to any little lost child who doesn't know Jesus. Each finger on the glove is a different color: Green is the lost child, Yellow is God's love, Black is for sin, Red is Christ's death, and White says, "I receive Him."

You would never guess that Winnie is a new Christian. She's the chairman of the Church Evangelism Committee even though she just became a believer at last spring's retreat at Pinkney Pines. When she came down the hill bursting with her new faith, she drove right over to her mother-in-law's home and told her that she was a sinner not yet saved by grace, that she attended a shallow church, and that she'd better leave her liberal denomination immediately. Winnie then informed her husband that she would no longer go to the church of his youth because she didn't even think the pastor was a Christian. She immediately shared her faith with her husband, using the newest witnessing booklet. When he wouldn't pray with her, she told him he was hopeless, and she would shake the dust off her feet and go.

Today, as every day, Winnie was up early and out of the house seeking the lost. Her beds are unmade, and the dishes are in the sink, but she is witnessing aggressively to everyone she meets. Winnie grabs people wherever she finds them, backs them against the wall, and asks, with a persuasive smile, "Is there any reason you would not want to become a Christian my way, now?" She turns everything into a time of testimony, and when her friends see her coming, they flee in the opposite direction. Winnie is determined to bring her husband into the kingdom, so she tapes verses on his mirror, puts big Bibles under his pillow, and hides tracts in his lunch pail.

Winnie got an A in Assertion Training, but some people find her difficult.
pp. 26-27

"THEREFORE WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST" We are the representatives of the King in a foreign country.

"SINCE GOD AS IT WERE IS MAKING HIS APPEAL THROUGH US;" We are merely channels for God to use to communicate His message.

Acts 1:8

but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

"WE ARE BEGGING YOU ON BEHALF OF CHRIST, BE RECONCILED TO GOD."

- v. 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

We have a transfer of accounts taking place here in verse 21. God the Father made God the Son, who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf.

Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely he took up our infirmities
and carried our sorrows,
yet we considered him stricken by God,
smitten by him, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed.
We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

Donald Grey Barnhouse illustrates this truth in the following way:

Here is a simple illustration that expresses a great spiritual truth; If we look through a piece of red glass, everything is red; through blue glass, everything is blue; through yellow glass, everything is yellow, and so on.

The glorious truth is that when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, God looks at us through the Lord Jesus Christ. He sees us in all the white holiness of His Son. That is the great New Testament doctrine of the imputation of our sin to the account of Christ and his righteousness to our account.

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Romans 1:16, 17

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith."

Isaiah 64:6

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.

Romans 3:10

As it is written.

“There is none righteous, not even one;

Romans 3:21-24

But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

Rejoice, my soul, the debt is paid,
For all my sins on Christ were laid,
And in exchange He gave to me
His righteousness so full, so free.

--- Dennis J. DeHaan

In the Our Daily Bread booklet for August 15 we read:

How different was the attitude of Major John Andre, who was sentenced to death as a spy during the Revolutionary War. He was innocent and could have become bitter, but his relationship to the Lord was an anchor for his soul. In fact, he wrote this poem in which he gloried in the sacrifice of Christ: “On Him almighty vengeance fell!/ Which must have sunk a world to Hell;/ He bore it for a sinful race,/ And thus became their hiding place.” Though Andre was only 30 years old and would be put to death within 3 days, he added this glowing assurance: “A few more rolling suns at most/ Shall land me on fair Canaan’s coast,/ When I shall sing the song of grace/ And see my glorious Hiding Place.”

If you haven’t believed on the Lord Jesus, you have no shelter from God’s wrath. Deep in your heart you know you need a Savior. Admit your sin, and by faith receive Christ today. Let Him be your “hiding place”!

Should sevenfold storms of thunder roll
And shake this globe from pole to pole,
No thunderbolt shall daunt my face,
For Jesus is my hiding place.

---Andre

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Our goal ought to be to please the Lord in view of the fact that we will appear before Him at the judgment seat.

LESSON #2: Our LIFE and our LIPS are the means of witness.

LESSON #3: False religion is concerned about appearance; true religion is a matter of the heart.

LESSON #4: Are you filled with ENTUSIASM, EXCITEMENT, and EAGERNES FRO EVANGELISM?

LESSON #5: Is the love of Christ controlling you?

LESSON #6: Are you living for SELF or the SAVIOR?

LESSON #7: Have you become a new creation in Jesus Christ?

LESSON #8: Have you been reconciled to God?

LESSON #9: The righteousness of Christ becomes ours when we receive Him by faith.

(Holy Sweat by Tim Hansel)

One night on he “Merv Griffin Show,” I saw Merv interview some body builders. Merv was standing there, looking at these guys who had muscles on their muscles, and he asked a poignant question: “What do you use all these muscles for?”

One guy answered by flexing his muscles in one of those body building poses.

“No, you don’t understand me,” Merv said. “What do you use all those muscles for?”

The guy said, “I’ll show you.” And he flexed again, posing in another way.

“No, no. You still don’t understand my question. Read my lips. What do you use them for.”

And the guy posed again.

The tragedy is, I know some Christians like that. Don’t you? They attend church; they go to seminars, conferences, and Bible studies. They keep building up their spiritual muscles, but they don’t use them for the reason they were created. They’ve got muscles packed with knowledge and piety, but their essential purpose and power go unused. So they end up with all this power for show, just to look good, not for action. Sometimes they aren’t really aware of it. It can happen to any of us. Sometimes it’s so subtle.
pp. 26-27

April 4th, 2005

Becky

Mom it was too late for us to call you back last night so I didn’t call you, but within about 30 minutes to an hour within the time I talked to you my blood pressure went up, I mean it has been 70, I haven’t been able to stand up and I got up and I am like, oh well, I have got to hurry and see if, before it goes away. So I got up and I was able to take a shower

and everything. We actually went to dinner, I put make up on, it was our anniversary yesterday and we were not going to get to go out.

Then I got home and it didn't come back, and it didn't come back, and it didn't come back, and I did my blood pressure and it had gone up 15 points and I was still a little dizzy, but not blacking out like I was. This morning I woke up and I could get around, I just can't believe it. I should have had you pray for me 7 days ago I wish I had. I love you so much. Mom, you and the Lord you got the magic, you and the Lord and Dad. I just really appreciate it so much, I just can hardly believe it. I love you guys.

Bye

After the worst ordeal at the hospital three of Becky's doctors come into her room to tell her & Ray that each of them had come to an agreement on one thing: "they had never seen a patient as sick as Becky outside of I.C.U. They had to break-out in laughter when Becky & Ray gave each other a "high five."