

Week 10 - (5:18-19a) Ministry of reconciliation

Review

2 Cor 5:14f – All Died

2 Cor 5:16 – Regard no one from a worldly point of view

2 Cor 5:17 – New creation

Discussion

- What is the difference between looking forward to “new creation” and having “new creation” now?
- In light of the “already new creation” idea, how would you describe the gospel message?

Text

14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. 16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Focus Phrase

18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.

“all of this”

- Christ's death (v. 14)
- Ability to live for others (v. 15)
- Non-flesh perspective of life (v. 16)
- New creation (v. 17)

“from God”

- God is the source and initiator of our blessings
- God takes the initiative
- God does the work
- God demonstrates his character by acting before being told

“reconciled us to himself”

- Idea of reconciliation = closing a gap

2010 Cycle 2 – “Love Compels Us”

- The question is what kind of gap exists?
- This includes a reference to Paul’s history of having been an enemy of Christ before the Damascus road revelation, there God reconciled Paul to himself, radically changing Paul’s perspective of the proper way to think about Christ and then appointing Paul to be an apostle/ambassador or reconciliation...carrying the message of the real Christ to Jews and Gentiles.

“reconciling the world to himself”

- Paul takes his personal experience of reconciliation with God and generalizes it to all people
- God was doing something big in the life/death/resurrection of Christ
- This message of reconciliation was for Gentiles and the world, not just for Israel

“Not counting men’s sins against them”

- Not “reasoning”, “reckoning”, “thinking about” their sins. The opposite of (logizomai) is deception, cheating, false reasoning. Therefore the idea of “not counting men’s sins against them” involves the notion of not taking the sin into consideration, but not the idea of deception or cheating.
- God’s gift of Christ did not consider our sins/sinfulness in the past, but rather is a demonstration of his love in the present and the assurance of his love into the future.
- Different views of how to conceive of sin or sins will effect how we think of or appropriate Christ’s actions
- Accounting view – our acts of sin accumulate as a negative transactions rendering our balance negative. Christ pays off the negative balance...now we must keep the account in the positive by means of good deeds and following commands. If we are trying hard...then God is willing to cover our occasional overdrafts. If, however we are too casual about “being in the red” then God may or may not cover the overdrafts. The critical thing is to have a balanced checkbook on the day of judgment or death, whichever occurs first.
- From Paul’s perspective, Christ’s sacrifice opens a new vista of human living, one in which those who are “in Christ” have God’s Spirit giving them power over sinfulness, changing them from the inside out into people who are animated or who find their life-source to be God’s spirit rather than their own flesh. They live by God for God rather than by self for self.

Parallels to Reconciliation & Peace

- Rom 5:1-10
- Is 52:13-53:12
- Rom 11:15
- Eph 2:11-22
- Col 1:15-23

Discussion

- What do these phrases tell us about God, his nature? His Character?
- What do these verses tell us about the bigger story of universe?
- How / Why does God deal with sin?
- What do we learn in this section about the connection between Character and Action?
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