

Week 11 - (5:19b-20) - Ambassadors

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.

“reconciled us to himself”

- Idea of reconciliation = closing a gap
- 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 of 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.
- 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
- Rom 11:15
- Col 1:15-23

Discussion

- What are the implications on our mission/purpose if we are incorporated by faith into the promise and calling of Abraham?
- What reconciliation were the Corinthians in need of? Did they believe / have faith in Christ? Did they have faith in God? Were they acting immorally?

2010 Cycle 2 – “Love Compels Us”

Focus Phrase

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.

Ambassadors

- Response to agent = response to sender
- Matt 25
- Matt 10, esp 10:40
- Lk 10:16
- Ex 4:16; 7:1
- 1 Sam – reject God as King
- John – 17:18, refuse you they refuse me

Be reconciled to God

- What does this indicate about Paul’s perception of the issue in Corinth?
- If they are baptized, living morally, then what is the issue Paul is trying to correct?