

Becoming New

Believers faithfully represent Christ by living as new creations reconciled to Him.



The Transformation for Adult LifeGroups

2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21; 6:1-2

March 10, 2019/ March 13, 2019

TODAY'S TEXT

Text: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21

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, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 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 people'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[b] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6:1-2

As God's co-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. ² For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

FIRST THOUGHTS

- Have you ever wondered why before and after tv shows and makeover videos are so popular and enticing? Are you drawn to them? What are some of your favorites?

Today we are going to look at how our lives are radically changed because of our relationship with Jesus and how we are called to invite others into this transforming relationship.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

God created us to relate to one another, but He also created us to relate to Him. Our greatest need is to be reconciled to God. Sin has created a barrier that must be dealt with if we are to come into a right relationship with Him. Sin also creates barriers between people, and barriers must be removed if two sides are to come into agreement. In this week's Scripture passage, we'll see that Paul thought deeply about reconciliation and insisted that genuine reconciliation comes only through a right relationship with Jesus. Further, as you study this passage, keep in mind that churches that reconcile fractured relationships will be more effective in proclaiming the gospel message.

Understanding affliction in the Christian life has been a key theme from Paul in this letter to the Corinthians. One of the reasons why believers "do not lose heart" (2 Cor. 4:16) is because we trust that our momentary afflictions will produce an "an eternal glory that far outweighs them all" (4:17) in heaven. Christians can expect the temporary "earthly tent" of their bodies to be replaced with "an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands" (5:1).

This truth, of course, leads us to desire to be "away from the body and at home with the Lord"—but until that happens, "we make it our goal to please him" (5:8-9). Why? Because, as Paul stated, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad" (5:10).

Because judgment is approaching, Paul insisted that "we try to persuade others" (5:11). Not only on account of judgment, but also because "Christ's love compels us" (5:14), our aim should be to convince people to live as those who have been reconciled by God. If Jesus died for all, then "those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again" (5:15).

Living for Christ means living a life of separation from the world (6:14-18). If we are to be held accountable for the things we've done in our body, both good and evil, then "let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God" (7:1). Yet none of this is possible unless we've become new creations, having been reconciled to God through Christ's sacrifice.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

REBORN

> Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-17

- Paul explained that we are made different by the Holy Spirit. How should this change cause believers to regard one another?
- How did Paul explain the transformation process that takes place in believers? How would you explain it?

RECONCILED

> Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

- What are believers' relationships with God like once they are changed into the new creation?
- What responsibilities has God given every believer who has been reconciled to Him? How can we fulfill that responsibility?
- What is the relationship between our vertical reconciliation with God and our horizontal reconciliation with others? Can you have one without the other?
- Is there someone you need to be reconciled with today? How can you make the first step to restore your connection?

READY

> Read 2 Corinthians 6:1-2

- What warning did Paul extend to the Corinthian believers?
- What time perimeters did Paul give the Corinthian believers for doing the work of reconciliation?

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE

We learn from Paul's teaching that nothing changes on the outside of people who receive Christ, but we become brand-new people on the inside. It's the work of God through the Holy Spirit that changes us, and we are no longer the same. The change does not take place in our brains or our bodies, but in our souls, and the change that takes place impacts our whole lives. Spiritual transformation gives us a new purpose for the lives we live on earth and our hope of spending eternity with God.

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- What does this text teach us about the change that takes place in believers? What does it say about believers' responsibilities as changed people?

Personal Challenge: This week, take time to people watch. Your transformation and reconciliation should have changed the way you view others. As an ambassador for God and a coworker with Christ, take time to think about what Christ would say to the people around you.

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

- Read 2 Corinthians 9:1-15
- Think of a time you were in need and someone showed generosity to you. What was that like?
- How have you experienced "it is more blessed to give than to receive" in your life?

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

10th — Deuteronomy 13-15; Galatians 1 | **11th** — Deuteronomy 16-18; Psalm 38; Galatians 2 | **12th** — Deuteronomy 19-21; Galatians 3 | **13th** - Deuteronomy 22-24; Galatians 4 | **14th** — Deuteronomy 25-27; Galatians 5 | **15th** — Deuteronomy 28-29; Galatians 6 | **16th** - Deuteronomy 30-31; Psalm 40; 1 Corinthians 1