

THE GOSPEL CHANGES OUR IDENTITY

2 CORINTHIANS 5

INTRODUCTION

- Paul continues his defense of his ministry and authority as an apostle. He empathizes with how dark the present can be sometimes, but explains what the resurrection holds for us.
- Paul covers his motivation for ministry and how believers should view the lost as well as other Christians due to Christ's work on their behalf.
- He finishes with a natural application of believing the Gospel: inviting others into it.

**CERTAINTY OF THE
FUTURE KINDLES
FAITH AND OBEDIENCE
FOR TODAY**

2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-10

HEAVENLY DWELLING

- Paul draws on his experience as a tentmaker.
- He likens his present, physical body with an “earthly tent,” something vulnerable and flimsy that could easily be damaged or destroyed.
- His future, resurrected body is much sturdier. It is a building from God, eternal in the heavens (verse 1).

HEAVENLY DWELLING

- Paul was certain that though the present may be dark, the future for believers was an overwhelmingly bright one: eternal life with God, in physically resurrected, imperishable glorified bodies.
- We should be fixing our eyes “not on what is seen but on what is unseen” (verses 2-4).
- The Holy Spirit in our life is a guarantee that we will receive our resurrection bodies at the return of Christ (verse 5).

UNSEEN

- Because his future is secure, Paul exudes Christian confidence and instructs his hearers to “always be of good courage” (verse 6).
- What is “seen” right now may be dark, but our “unseen” future is undeniably bright.
- Because we know this eventual destination, we can walk by faith (the unseen) and not by sight (the seen) (verse 7).

UNSEEN

- When Paul thinks about his resurrected body, he cannot wait to be “at home with the Lord” in a fully realized relationship with Him.
- This creates a desire in Paul to “please the Lord,” to bring him delight (verses 8-9).
- Another motivation for believers is that we will all give an account before the judgment seat of Christ for what we have done in this life (verse 10).

**FEAR OF GOD AND LOVE
OF CHRIST MOTIVATES
THE BELIEVER'S
MINISTRY**

2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-6:2

FEAR OF THE LORD

- The “fear of the Lord” here is a reverent awe, knowing that one day we stand before Judge Jesus and give an account of our life (verse 10).
- The account Paul will give to Jesus drives him to persuade men of two things: 1) the truth of the Gospel and 2) his legitimacy as an apostle.
- If people did not believe his legitimacy, then his ability to share Gospel truth would be impeded.

FEAR OF THE LORD

- While Paul openly admitted to persuading others, he knew he did not have to persuade God, for the Lord knew Paul was legitimate (verse 11).
- The Corinthians should come to the same conclusion, drawing on their interactions with Paul for proof.
- In verse 12, Paul isn't sharing his motivations in order to commend himself but to provide them with ammunition to defend Paul against his accusers.

LOVE OF CHRIST

- Paul affirms his sincerity in verse 13 by presenting himself as one who is both “beside” himself and in his right mind.
- Some of Paul’s actions could certainly have earned him the title of being out of his mind.
- He demonstrated great disregard for his well-being: facing a mob bent on destroying him (Acts 19:30; 21:35–40), walking back into a city from which he had been dragged after being stoned (Acts 14:19–20).

LOVE OF CHRIST

- As one commentator puts it, “only a person who was utterly devoted to God would show so little regard for himself. Such a man was Paul.”
- However, the Corinthians also understood the side of Paul that was in his “right mind.”
- They knew him as a teacher and loving father. Whatever he was labeled, Paul was selfless.

LOVE OF CHRIST

- Paul second motivation for his ministry was the love of Christ (verse 14).
- Paul speaks in representative language here, attributing everything Christ has done to all of his followers.
- Since we are one with Christ, when He died, we are considered dead to sin, too. Since Christ was raised and is living, we also are considered living anew after our death to sin.

LOVE OF CHRIST

- Anything that is true for Christ is true for us. This is the substitutionary Gospel, and it evokes great love in Paul.
- This is the primary reason Paul loves Jesus—because Jesus took his place.
- Christians can love Jesus for lots of reasons, but the peak of the believer's love for Christ should flow from His Gospel on behalf of guilty sinners.

RECONCILIATION

- We should not regard people according to the flesh.
- The Gospel changes how we view others in that we no longer look at them through an ordinary lens.
- We should not view others based on the world's values: race, gender, socio-economic status or prestige.
- Prior to his conversion, Paul regarded Christ according to the flesh.

RECONCILIATION

- Once a person becomes a believer, we should regard him or her as a “new creation.”
- God changes the condition of the heart. The believer experiences a total restructuring of life that alters its whole fabric (thinking, feeling, willing, acting).
- Put another way, this person is entirely under new management according to God.

RECONCILIATION

- After Paul tells us how we should / should not regard people because the Gospel changed us, he gives us the source of all of this change: “all this is from God.”
- He follows immediately with the reason for ministry, saying that because Christ reconciled us to God, we are commissioned to go offer the same invitation to others who will hopefully be reconciled to God through our message of Christ’s work.

RECONCILIATION

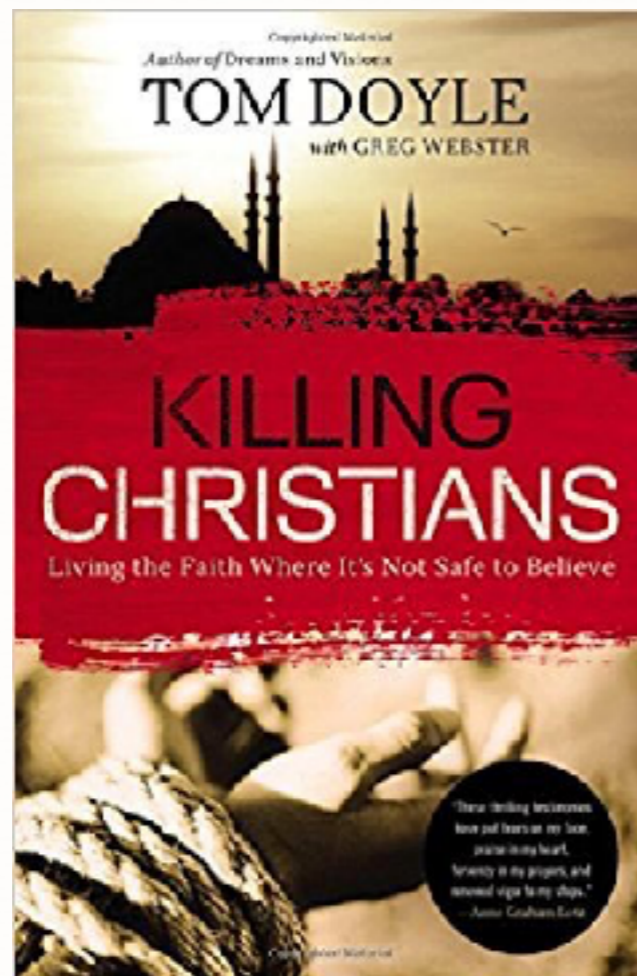
- Paul finishes with another identity the Christian has.
- Not only should a believer be considered God's new creation, he or she is also God's "ambassador."
- In ancient times, an ambassador was the official representative of a king with immense authority.
- They were the official representatives of the king. Paul says that this is the role of a Christian.

CONCLUSION

- To sum up how one is reconciled to God, Paul returns to the Gospel in verse 21.
- He states that Christ became our sin so that we could take on His righteousness, and be seen totally upright before God.
- Paul closes in 6:1–2a with a fitting plea drawn from Isaiah 49:8, saying that Isaiah's day of salvation has arrived in the reconciliation of the Cross.

**APPLICATION
AND
TESTIMONY**

TESTIMONY



TESTIMONY

- World Summit in Defense of Persecuted Christians: Coptic Christians from Egypt beheaded by ISIS and the new convert from Chad.
- Standing in the Fire: Farid (Syrian evangelist) and Rashid (who threatened to kill him for five years).
- Lebanon leaders conference: Rasha (mother) and her 3-year-old son Ali, left Syria on a rubber raft.