

2 Corinthians 5:12-21

“One Died For All”

You know as we gather together once again here on Easter Sunday morning we find ourselves in that frame of heart, that frame of mind whereby we're brought to that place of considering perhaps a little more carefully, or at least a little more specifically the reality of the resurrection. **and It doesn't take much as we look around us even in nature at this time of year and we see trees budding, flowers blooming, grass growing and becoming green that God is in the business of bringing life out of death.** To the believers Paul writes in Eph Ch 2, “*And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,*” Eph 2:1 To the Colossians he said, “*And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive...*” Col 2:13 and We realize, we recognize that the reality of our being called out of death into life is completely/entirely predicated upon another who was dead and behold is alive forevermore, and of course you know that I'm speaking with reference to Jesus Christ

Jesus said, “*For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*” Matt 12:40 He said, “*Destroy this temple (in regards to His body), and in three days I will raise it up.*” John 2:19 He said, “*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.*” John 11:25-26 One more, we find it in Rev 1:18 where Jesus said, “*I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen.*” **God clothing Himself in humanity in the person of Jesus Christ, suffering the death of the cross willingly, taking my penalty, your penalty personally upon Himself dying the death that belongs to me, suffering for my sin that I might be forgiven in Him. Christ has done all this for me – now – what does it mean to me? How am I to respond realistically; how is my life to reflect those things practically?**

Paul points us that direction in our text today, open your bibles to 2 Cor Ch 5:12-21 as we finish out this section of scripture today with the message entitled “One died for all.”

Vs12

Now in keeping with the context here Paul has been sharing with the Corinthians that contrary to popular opinion, life in Christ isn't a primrose path that we simply stroll through in life with out a care in the world or a worry one. **It can be a life of difficulty, of persecution and perplexity, but how that often times God is at work in those times whereby we're being buffeted, His strength is being perfected in our weakness. We're gleaning from Him, learning of Him who was meek and lowly of heart. Becoming broken vessels through whom the light of Christ can shine forth from, so we don't lose heart, we don't quit, we don't give up, we don't give in, why?** Because our focus isn't on the things of this world, we set our minds on things above, we're to maintain the eternal perspective, this tent (our earthly body) will one day be folded down and put away. We'll inherit a building from God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens, and God is preparing us here for what He has in store for us there. **and So we hasten the day that mortality is swallowed up by life because we're confident that in the day we're absent from this body we'll be present with the Lord.**

But there's a sense in which that sobers us because we realize that we're going to have to give an account *to* the Lord regarding the things we've done in these bodies whether good, or bad. Now again I'm not referencing salvation there, because we're accepted *in* Christ, if you're in Christ it's a done deal. **But living a life that's accepted *in* Christ and a life that's acceptable *to* Christ is two entirely different things. So in Vs 9 Paul said, "We make it our aim, our ambition in life to be pleasing to Him." and In Vs 11, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men."**

The fact he would stand before Christ and give an account, the fact that people leaving this planet apart from Christ will spend an eternity apart from God in isolated unbearable torment motivated Paul to preach the gospel. **To serve the Lord with everything that was in him, but he says here in Vs 12, "I'm not bragging about that, commending myself to you. But rather I'm equipping you to be able to answer those who would come against us in your midst who boast in appearance and not in heart."**

and The idea is that God's ways aren't our ways. Man looks at people who are suffering, or who are going through the ringer and says, "Man he must've really done something wrong to have this come upon him." and So often man will judge where someone is with God *personally* based upon the way things are going in their lives *circumstantially*. **and Paul was persecuted, he was hard pressed, struck down, not a success in the eyes of the world. If you were to boast based on appearance you wouldn't boast on Paul the apostle, but understand that it's the way of the world to boast in appearance, God looks to the heart.** Remember when Samuel was to anoint a king over Israel and so he went to the house of Jesse? He saw his oldest boy and said, "*Man this must be the one, just look at him.*" *He was judging based on appearance. and We read there, "But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.'*" 1 Sam 16:7

How easily impressed we are by a person's image, and if things look good we can overlook the substance. It ought not be, by appearance Paul was often struggling, going through trials, wasn't much to boast about according to a worldly way of thinking, but God was using him powerfully, profoundly in the midst of those things.

Vs13

"We do what we do to bless the Lord, and to benefit you. Being a fool for Christ is effective for you." You serve the Lord with all that you are and people will think you're crazy, you've lost your mind. Paul was accused of having lost his mind, Jesus was accused of being insane, you're in good company when people begin to mock you or speak all manner of evil against you falsely for the Lord's sake. **Jesus said, "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for great is your reward in heaven for so the persecuted the prophets who were before you."** You'll either be a God pleaser or a man pleaser but you can't be both, and if you choose to be a God pleaser man will ridicule you. But that's ok you're looking to bless the Lord, and benefit others, if they don't understand that's between them and the Lord, God will deal with that you just be faithful to Him and His call upon your life.

Vs14-15

Now we're getting into the heart of the text and Paul's 3rd motivating factor in ministry. We saw 2 last week, this is the 3rd here in Vs 14, "For the love of Christ compels us." What motivates Paul, what moves him, what propels him on in the ministry? The love of Christ, *not* his love *for* Christ, (though that was no doubt great) but rather Christ's love for him; when he says, "The love of Christ *compels* us," that word "compels" speaks of pressing on all sides, the love of Christ is pressing in on you from every angle, there's no escaping it. **and The idea here is knowing where he's been, what he's done, the things he's been apart of and what it is that he deserves, and yet Christ loves him and has given Himself *for* Him, how can he not serve Him? and The same goes for you, and the same goes for me; when you consider who you are, when I think about who I am, where I've been, what I've done, the position of my own heart throughout various times in my life, and for all of that Christ *loves* me? Has laid down His life *for* me? How can that not move me? How can that not motivate me, compel me, constrain me to serve Him?**

Any other motivation, any other foundation won't last, do you realize that the average span of time that pastor's stay in the pulpit today as about 2 ½ yrs? and The reason sighted for forsaking the ministry is "burnout." Too much, too many problems, too much pressure I'm done. The question is why were you there in the 1st place? Career choice? Wanted power, platform or influence? You love the Lord and just wanted to serve Him? Every one of those motives will fail, it's only a matter of time. **When I feel the problems out match the power, or I realize it can be a very difficult and arduous career, or I begin to go through a dry season and I don't feel as warm and fuzzy about Jesus today as I did yesterday, I'll quit, I won't carry on, those things can't constrain me or compel me, or continue to motivate me to press on.** It can't be *about* me or based *in* me, it has to be about Him and based in Him, His love never changes, never falters, never fails. It doesn't matter how I *feel*, because my feelings change all the time. **My motive for serving Him is found in Him, His love, He laid down His life, He gave His all for me on the cross, and regardless of how I feel, the *fact* is that He's worthy of all that my meager life has to offer, we love Him because He 1st loved us, the love of Christ compels us.**

"Because we judge thus: if One died for all, then all died." This is what we talked about in our introduction, this is what He's done *for* us, He *died* for us. Isa 53:6 "*All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*" "One died for all." Not just the elect, Jesus died for the sin of the world, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin *of the world*." **When Jesus laid His life down upon the altar of the cross atonement was made for the sin of the world, and that atonement is accredited to you the moment you believe upon Him (not from the head, but from the heart). So realize that when we read the statement "One died for all" it's not beyond a proper *application* to take it to mean just that.** John said, "*And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*" 1 John 2:2 Christ didn't die only for believers, He died for the world, however the benefits of His death and resurrection are only imputed to believers, we're saved by grace *through* faith. But it seems to me that a proper *interpretation* of this Vs would be to realize that Paul is referencing here all of those who would believe on Him.

Because it's only accurate to recognize this phrase "then all died" as referring to those who identify with the death of Christ by being found *in* Christ. So His sacrifice is *sufficient* for all, but it's only accredited to *all who believe*.

But here's what he's saying, "If One died for all, then it's only right to recognize all as having died *in* Him." He can't have died for *all* if *all* aren't recognized as having died *in* Him. So that if Christ died for you, then when He died (in Him) you died as well. **What does that mean? It means you're no longer apart of the equation, you're dead. Your "self-life" in Christ no longer exists, oh the old man likes to try and beat his way to the surface now and then but you're dead to self, and alive to God in Christ.** That's why Paul said to the Romans, "*For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" Rom 6:10-11 He told the Galatians, "*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*" Gal 2:20 and Again to the Colossians, "*For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*" Col 3:6 So if One died for all, then all died.

Vs15

Put in short, why did Jesus die for you? So that you might *live* for Him. This is our response to the resurrection, He died for us that we might live for Him who died for us and (notice) rose again. Listen, don't think that its coincidence or simply spiritual rhetoric that causes these 2 words, "Rose again" to be included in this passage.

Our entire hope, everything we live *for* and look forward *to* is based upon the reality of the resurrection. If it ended with Jesus simply dying you *may as well* live for yourself. A dead savior can't save anybody. But He rose again that we might live for Him. It's a lesson the Lord taught Peter after the resurrection, Peter opted to go fishing, took the boys with him, caught nothing. **Jesus showed up on the beach and you know the story, it was "fish on" in a major way, Peter dives in the sea to swim up to the beach and be with the Lord. and Jesus began to quiz him there before the disciples, "Do you love me Peter?" "Yes Lord," "Then feed My lambs" "Tend My sheep," "Feed My sheep" translation, "If You love Me live *for* Me."** In John 14 He said, "If anyone loves Me He will keep My word." "He'll live for Me." If you're in Christ the right response to the resurrection is to no longer live for self, but for Him who loved me, gave Himself for me, and rose again.

Vs16

Now when he says, "We regard no one according to the flesh," it kinda takes us full circle back to the idea of not boasting in appearance. We don't evaluate people according to the flesh, if you're rich it doesn't matter. If you're poor it makes no difference, your social status, your ethnic background, your academic stature, all of those things are irrelevant as it pertains to **the kingdom of God**. You see we don't live for ourselves but for Christ, we're to see people through the eyes of Christ, and in that you're either in Christ or you're not. We don't regard people according to the flesh. In Christ there's neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian nor Scythian, male nor female, slave nor free, we're all one in Christ.

So we see people in 1 of 2 categories, saved or unsaved, in Christ or not in Christ, we don't relate to people based upon their status in this world.

Vs17

The passage of scripture that we're in today is just so rich; it's difficult to squeeze it all into 45 minute window. We've talked about what Christ has done *for me*, He died and rose again, paying my penalty in Himself. We've talked about how I'm to respond to that practically, realistically, in no longer living for myself but for Him who died and rose again. Now I'm seeing what His sacrifice means *to me*, it means old things have passed away, my old self, the self life, fleshly perspectives and perversions and all things have become new, I'm a new creation. What a precious promise to cling to; who this promise made to? "Anyone" again gender, social status, ethnic background, where you've been, what you've done, it doesn't matter, the offer goes out to *anyone*. But there is qualifying context, it's not a promise to anyone who's in to any particular religion, it's not a promise that's to anyone who's simply sincere in their efforts, or to anyone who does right by people and doesn't every intend to harm anyone. This promise is contained exclusively in the person of Christ. It's an "exclusively all inclusive" promise. It goes out to anyone, but only under 1 condition, if you want old things to pass away and all things to be made new, clean slate and a fresh start, you have to be *in Christ*. He's the way the truth and the life, *no one* come to the Father except *through* Him. Paul is speaking here of the principle of regeneration, being born again, being given new life. I don't mean to pick on anyone but I have a beef with the bumper sticker that says, "Christians aren't perfect, they're just forgiven." Because it's misleading, it's true we're not perfect, but we're *way more* than just forgiven. You're a new creation altogether, old things have passed away, all things have become new.

and It's a work that God alone is able to do in us, it's not "turning over a new leaf" or "getting our act together." God makes you a new creation altogether, and He does so *in Christ*.

"How do I get *in Christ*?" In much the same way you got *in* those clothes this morning. You made a conscious/willful decision to put something off, and put something else on. As we come to Christ the bible teaches us that we *put off* the old man, that is we repent of our sin, and we *put on*, that is we make a conscious/willful decision to turn *to* Christ. and As we turn *from* our sin, and turn *to* Christ, He robes us in His righteousness, He makes us brand new.

and If you can receive it the work of His new creation is even more awesome than His work of the original creation. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and He did so out of nothing, that's incredible. But there's a sense in which that which was created was passive at best, there was nothing to resist Him, or stand in the way *of* Him. But the work of the new creation isn't that way at all. In the new creation He had to wrestle with me, overcome my stubborn will, my resistance of His way and my love for sin. So often God drags us kicking and screaming all the way into the Kingdom. "Behold what manner of love is this, that we should be called the sons of God." So as incredible as it was for God to make the world, it's even more awesome that He could make of me, or make of you a *new* creation.

Vs18-19

When he says, "...all things are of God," what that means is that from beginning to end, salvation, sanctification, reconciliation, it's all of Him and nothing of us, we don't have part in any of it, He does the whole thing. God initiates, we respond, we don't seek Him, He seeks us, we don't choose Him, He chooses us. and Here's the amazing part, He's the innocent One, we're the guilty party. You'd think that since we violated Him, it'd be up to us to come to Him, but He reaches out to us in the person of Jesus Christ That what it means when it says that God has reconciled us to Himself. He doesn't need reconciled to us, we need to be reconciled to Him. and He's done the work of reconciliation *through* Christ. He didn't just say, "Hey, can't we all get along here, how about I issue a get out of hell free card to the world?" No, His holiness demands justice, and His justice was poured out full strength upon the person of His Son, He reconciled us to Himself *through* Jesus Christ

and Where we read that God was *in Christ* reconciling the world to Himself what that means is that the Father and the Son were working together, God was fulfilling the work through the means of His Son. He didn't impute the penalty of the world's sin upon the world, but rather upon Christ. God imputed the penalty of our trespasses upon Christ, the work of redemption is finished. Now it's a matter of getting out that message, God committed the *method* to Himself, He's committed the *message*, the *ministry* to us, He's committed to us the *word* (notice) of reconciliation. What that means is that God has chosen to place the treasure of the message and ministry of Jesus Christ in earthen vessels like you and me. He's chosen to communicate the gospel *to* man, *through* man. That we can be saved, reconciled to God through faith in Christ who has loves us and given Himself for us.

Vs20

I'm not sure which thought is more captivating, which is more stunning. The idea that Christ would utilize the likes of us to be His ambassadors, His representatives, His negotiators (if you will) to be the reflection *of* Him and a speaker *for* Him to the world. Or the idea of God actually *pleading* with man to come to Christ, to through Christ be reconciled to Himself. Why should God *plead* with us, it's we who should be *pleading with Him!* But such is the magnitude, the magnanimous nature of the love of God that passes our ability to comprehend. But I want you to notice something here, this is where the mystery of God's sovereignty and man's freewill are basically seen at work together.

Because we noted that God is the One who initiates, God is the One who seeks, who chooses, who pleads with man to be reconciled to Himself through Christ, all things are of God, from beginning to end, salvation, reconciliation it's all of Him. But do you have a choice in the matter? Absolutely, the imperative goes out, the urgency is noted, "Be reconciled to God." But whether or not you choose to respond to God's initiative is up to you. Freewill is always in force, you can choose to be reconciled or not. God is pleading with you through the work of Jesus Christ upon the cross. He demonstrated His love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. But you have a choice, receive reconciliation or reject it, you can humble yourself, submit yourself to reconciling work of God on your behalf, or rebel against it and choose to reject it. God has done everything He can, even down to pleading with you to receive His work on your behalf, but He won't force your hand, that's up to you.

Vs21

Now it's important to notice the way this is phrased. It doesn't say that He made Him who knew no sin to be a sinner. Christ was never a sinner, He was made sin, but He was never a sinner. He was in all ways tempted as we are yet with out sin. The spotless Lamb of God, with out blemish, with out fault sacrificed for the sake of others. Namely you and me. So though God imputed all of our sin *to* Him placed our sin in someway *upon* Him, there was never sin *in* Him, He didn't have a sin nature like you and I do.

and Listen I don't consider myself a great business man but I'd like to think that I recognize a good deal when I see one. He was made sin for me, that I might become the very righteousness (not of Adam prior to the fall, He's lifted us much higher) the very righteousness of God Himself. His body was broken that I might be mended and made whole, He died that I might have everlasting life. **He took my guilt that I might have His innocence, experienced God's wrath that I might experience God's grace, and on and on it goes. He was in that moment forsaken of God (My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?) that in Christ I might never be left nor forsaken.** He inherited my punishment, that I might inherit His privilege, bore the heat of God's fury, that I might be *free* from the bondage of sin and death... Who would refuse such an offer? One died for all, and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

Prayer Points:

God may we realize that a surefire recipe for misery is to be all about ourselves and seeking to live for ourselves. To understand that we were created to fulfill *Your* purpose, *Your* pleasure, not to live for ourselves, but for Christ who died for us and rose again. and We praise You Jesus that death had/has no power over You, and that because You live, we live also. You are the resurrection and the life. He who believes in You, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in You shall never die. Lord, we believe it. and We praise Your name.

If you've never been reconciled to God through Christ, you've never given your heart to Jesus I can think of no better time, no better day than today. The bible says that if today you hear His voice don't harden your heart, receive the offer of His salvation, His reconciliation through Christ. As though God were pleading through me, I implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. Jesus was made sin for you, that you might become the righteousness of God in Him. It's a gift of God's grace, through faith in Jesus Christ receive it today in Jesus name.