

God's Design for the Church

[2 Corinthians 5:14-21](#)

"The Ministry of Reconciliation"— January 22, 2023



Introduction

Sometimes we like to be a part of "movements." Fads and fashion trends come and go. Today, there is a movement of minimalism in home furnishing. The minimalist theme fits our passage today. Paul is sending a letter to a church that thought "more was better." Paul dealt with many issues with the church in Corinth. Here, he was trying to help them to know that doing church is not all about show. He was admonishing them to get back to what is simple.

When we think about the grace that God has given to the Corinthians, we see that they had been given many spiritual gifts. Paul was writing to remind them of the grace that God had given them.

Sermon Outline

1. The grace of regeneration vs. 14-17
2. The grace of reconciliation vs. 18-21

Read & Discuss

1. Read vs. 14-17

We often define people by putting them into categories that have been influenced by the world. God sees people differently. Before he came to Christ, Paul did the same thing. He thought of Jesus as only a man, and he wanted to rid the world of radicals like Jesus. Then he had an encounter with the living Christ which changed him completely. After that Paul would no longer look at others with respect to their physical characteristics. He would look at and speak to the heart. Do you find yourself defining people by their physical characteristic, what they do, or where they live? What would it look like to see people in light of the gospel?

When we come to Christ, we are a new creation. Our sinful nature has been exchanged for a new nature in Christ. We aren't patched up or renovated. Christ came to take over our life. We are re-created in Christ. While we struggle with the flesh in this life, ([James 4: 1-2](#)) we shouldn't let sin rule us. ([Romans 6:12-14](#)) Our flesh is dying, but our spirit is being renewed day by day. Inwardly, we groan in the flesh. ([Romans 8:18-25](#)) How has your life changed since coming to Christ?

2. Read vs. 18-21

We must be reconciled with God. When we think of reconciliation, it sounds good. However, we see a lot of conflict in the world which seems to have increased to alarming levels in recent times. It is everywhere - in families, in the workplace, in churches. Mankind doesn't have an answer. Outward fixes won't work. A heart change is necessary.

What is reconciliation? It is the process of two people in conflict coming back to an agreement. First, God reconciled us to Himself. If we are not reconciled to God, we will experience God's wrath. God is just to deliver judgment on sinful people, yet instead of condemning us, God has provided salvation through Jesus. ([Romans 5:8-10](#)) The wall of separation has been taken away. God's forgiveness makes us a family. ([John 15:15](#))

As God has forgiven us, we must forgive others. Are you willing to do that? What is standing in the way of being reconciled to a family member, fellow church member, or co-worker? We are ambassadors of reconciliation. This is an example to the world of what God can do. Ambassadors are very important. They can see and understand the customs and problems of the world, but they do not become like the world. As ambassadors for God, we must express His message to the world. We don't change or craft our own message. How are you doing as an ambassador of Christ? Do you take this charge seriously? Are you trying to be a good representative and deliver the word of truth? Are you an instrument of peace or contributor to the chaos?

As an ambassador, we have been given a message. Jesus bore the sins of mankind so that those who believe would become the righteousness of God. (Vs. 21) On the cross, our sins were left for Jesus to bear. This satisfied God's justice, and we can be forgiven and stand in the righteousness of Christ. This gives us hope. We must share this hope with others. With whom is God calling you to share this good news with?

Further Reading: Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:2; Galatians 3:13

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to com. If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

Next week's sermon text: we turn to Genesis 18:16-33 "Will God Do What Is Just?"
