

2 Corinthians 5:18-6:1

Introduction

I. If someone asked you “what do you Christians believe?” Would you be able to answer them in a simple, clear, and compelling way?

- II. Every Christian should be able to
- A. Share the story of the gospel
 - B. Share the story of their own lives

The Passage

I. Our Role

- A. Ambassadors (v. 20)
 - 1. As an ambassador, you are sent by your country as its representative to speak on its behalf with its authority
 - 2. Paul saw himself as God’s ambassador speaking on behalf of Christ/God (v. 20) as a co-worker with God (6:1)
 - 3. We don’t have the same authority as Paul, but in our own smaller ways, God sends us out to share his message with world
- B. God is doing two things in the world (v. 18-19)
 - 1. Reconciling the world
 - 2. Sending reconciled people out to the world to share the message of reconciliation with them
- C. The posture of an ambassador
 - 1. Intentional, prepared, and confident
 - 2. Gentle, gracious, and respectful
 - 3. See 1 Pt 3:15 and Col 4:5-6

II. Sharing God’s message: reconciliation

- A. Sum of the gospel: “Reconciliation”
 - = Enemies becoming friends again
 - God is reconciling the world to himself, making peace, making it possible to be his friends again
- B. The bad news
 - 1. God originally created us for loving relationship with him
 - 2. We chose “selfish independence” (sin)
 - 3. As a result, our biggest problem is a relational problem with God (alienation)
 - a. On our side this plays out in selfish independence
 - b. On God’s side this plays out as wrathwrath = God’s holy, steady opposition to evil
- C. The good news
 - God has solved the relational problem: he has reconciled us to himself in Christ
 - v. 19: God is not counting people’s sins against them because he has chosen to count their sins against Christ
 - v. 21: “He made him who knew no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God”

= Jesus took on God's wrath so that we didn't have to

D. The call

1. Be reconciled to God (v. 20)
2. God has done everything to bridge the relational gap, He has come all the way to us through His Son, He has done everything to make peace with us
3. We simply have to receive/accept the peace He offers by putting our faith in Jesus and trusting that his death on our behalf makes us right with God
4. And then we begin to turn from our lives of selfish independence and start to live God centered lives

II. Sharing our personal story

We each should be able to share in a personal way how God reconciled us to Himself. Our stories don't need to be dramatic, but it is good to be able to articulate the key events, people, ideas, etc God used in our lives to draw us into closer relationship with Him

Conclusion

I. Challenge this week:

1 Pt 3:15: "Always be prepared to give an account of the hope you have." Spend some time thinking through the gospel story and your own story and share it with someone (spouse, friend, etc)

II. Matthew 9:35-38: Pray that God would send out workers to share the gospel with the world, and be praying that we might be those workers ourselves

Discussion Questions

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. On Sunday, the gospel was summed up in the concept of "reconciliation." If you had only one word (or one phrase) to sum up the gospel message to a non Christian, what word or phrase would you use?
3. On Sunday, sin was articulated as "selfish independence." Is that a good modern interpretation of the concept of sin? How would you articulate what sin is to a non Christian?
4. Share with each other one key event, idea, person, or passage God used in your own life to bring you into a closer relationship with Him.
5. As you think back on this series on "Reaching Out", what's your main take away? What main change in thinking, perspective, or behavior do you hope will stick with you in the months to come?