

Sunday July 24, 2022

Justin Craig

2 Corinthians 5:14-21

14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 15 and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. 16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come. 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Big Idea: God's calling for our lives is to be an expression of hope, a reflection of change and an extension of Christ.

In looking at this passage we saw that it contains the specifics and tools for embracing our God-given calling in our lives. First we noted that *Jesus is the foundation of our calling by God* as we observed that Jesus was mentioned either by name or pronoun 13 times in these verses. We then observed three exchanges that every Christ-follower must make in order to step into this calling.

1. Death to Life vs. 14-16

We are controlled (covered, crowded around, or guided) by the love of Christ because of His death for all (every one) of us. His death was a substitute of his pure and sinless life for our corrupted and sinful lives. In other words "Jesus did not die on *behalf* of us but *instead* of us." Vs. 15 emphasizes that this death gives us a greater purpose in life, "that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised." Jesus did not die because we are worthy but because he loved us and, because of this, we live for a purpose beyond ourselves *only because of Christ*. This enables us to live with great hope and express it as we live in this troubled world.

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2. Old to New vs. 17

In Christ our life is changed and transformed from the inside out as we “allow our lives to take up residence with Christ”. To do this we must surrender ourselves increasingly to him and continually commit to this transformation, being constantly renewed by him. Our calling is to constantly reflect to the world the change that *only* happens in Christ.

3. Wandering to Purpose vs. 18-21

Through Christ God “reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation”. We are reconciled to God by his love, the barrier of sin between us is removed, and we are made ambassadors of God and Christ to the world. We are extensions of Christ as we live in this world because of his sacrifice for us! God calls us from wandering around, wondering about who we were made to be, and wondering what our calling is for life to *living life with purpose*. We are to “be an expression of hope, to be a reflection of change, and to be an extension of Jesus” as we live our lives on earth.

Suggested Questions

1. What is a calling? Is it our occupation or work or is it something more?
2. What is the foundation of our calling? Where does it come from?
3. What is one of the most important things that God wants our lives to express as Christ-followers?
4. Vs. 17 of our passage says we are “new creations”. What brings about the “new self “ in our lives? What kind of things might prevent that from happening?
5. What is our call in the world as we exhibit our “new self”?
6. What is our task as an ambassador of Christ? How might that look in your life?