

ZOOM

"A NEW POINT OF VIEW" 2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-6:2

This Week's Core Competency

Salvation by Grace— I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by his grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8-9, *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Salvation is the term we use to refer to a cluster of doctrines implicit in and entailed by the death of Jesus "for all" (2Co 5:14). Paul speaks specifically about the doctrine of reconciliation in his second canonical letter to the Corinthians. He writes: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who *reconciled* us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of *reconciliation*: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God" (5:17-20). Theologians define reconciliation this way: "Reconciliation means a change of relationship from hostility to harmony and peace between two parties. People can be reconciled to each other (Matt. 5:24, *diallasso*; 1 Cor. 7:11, *katallasso*), and people have been reconciled to God (Rom. 5:1-11; 2 Cor. 5:18-21, *katallasso*; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20, *apokatallasso*)" (Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 336).

***Though the world has been reconciled,
man needs to be reconciled by changing
his position about Christ.***

— Charles C. Ryrie

Reconciliation is needed because the relationship between God and mankind is marked by hostility and enmity. Consider the illustration of the "two chairs." Two chairs facing each other represent the relationship between God and mankind before the fall. There is no hostility; there is fellowship. Then Adam disobeys and effectively turns away from God. He turns his chair to face in the opposite direction, indicating that sin has affected his relationship to God. Since a holy God can have no fellowship with sinful man, God turns his chair to face in the opposite direction, indicating that Adam's sin affects God's relationship to him also. There is now hostility; there is no fellowship. And so Paul writes: "Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned" (Ro 5:12). But a loving God takes the initiative to put an end to the hostility and enmity between himself and mankind by sending his son "who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2Co 5:21). Because Jesus died for our sins, God is reconciled to mankind. He turns his chair back to face man. All that remains is for man to be reconciled to God—in terms of the illustration, all that remains is for mankind to one by one turn their chairs back to face God by believing in Jesus.

Regarding the doctrine of reconciliation, theologians disagree over the answer to this question: "Who is reconciled to whom?" Some argue that God is reconciled to mankind; others that mankind is reconciled to God, and still others that both are reconciled to each other. While it is true that the New Testament speaks *explicitly* of mankind being reconciled to God, i.e., that we are the recipients of a relationship to God marked by peace and harmony, *implicitly* both it seems are reconciled to each other. One theologian writes: "When we say that God can be thought of as

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reconciled to man, that does not mean that, with various imperfections, He alters completely His attitude to man. Rather it is our groping way of expressing our conviction that He reacts in the strongest possible way against sin in every shape and form, and that man comes under His condemnation accordingly; but that when reconciliation is effected, when peace is made between man and God, then that condemnation is removed and God looks on man no longer as the object of His holy and righteous wrath, but as the object of His love and His blessing" (Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 221). In other words, "there remains a sense in which, after man has received personally the reconciliation, both parties, man and God, may be said to be reconciled in that they have come together" (Ryrie, 338).

One last clarification is needed. There is a sense in which reconciliation is *universal* (2Co 5:19) and a sense in which it is *particular* (5:20). The world has been reconciled to God, but individuals need to be reconciled to him. In the universal sense, reconciliation changes the position of the world from being unsalvable to being salvable. In the particular sense, reconciliation through faith in Jesus brings peace and harmony to an individual's relationship to God as that one goes from being unsaved to saved.

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2

11 Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. 12 We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. 13 If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of you. 14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new

has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6:1 For God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says,

*'In the time of my favor I heard you,
and in the day of salvation I helped you.'*

I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Circle "fear" in v. 11.
- * Circle "conscience" in v. 11.
- * Bracket "out of our mind" in v. 13.
- * Box "so" indicating result in v. 16.
- * Underline "from now on" and "no longer" in v. 16.
- * Bracket "from a worldly point of view" and "in this way" in v. 16.
- * Box "therefore" indicating result in vv. 17, 20.
- * Circle "new creation" in v. 17.
- * Highlight "reconciled," "reconciliation," and "reconciling" in vv. 18-20.
- * Circle "the world" and "men's" in v. 19.
- * Bracket "not counting men's sins against them" in v. 19.
- * Put a question mark over "us" in v. 19.
- * Circle "ambassadors" in v. 20.
- * Circle "sin" in v. 21.
- * Box "so that" indicating purpose in v. 21.
- * Bracket "in vain" in 6:1

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Paul says, ". . . one died for *all*, and therefore *all* died. Explain.
2. Explain the *contrast* in verse 15.
3. From the time we become Christians, we "regard" people and Christ differently. How so?
4. Illustrate the truth of verse 17 from personal experience.
5. The pronoun "us" occurs twice in verse 18. To *whom* does it refer?
6. Given what God did (vv. 18, 19), why should we not *inform* people that they have been reconciled rather than *implore* them to be reconciled?
7. Paul calls those to whom the message of reconciliation is committed, "ambassadors" (v. 20). Explain the significance of this metaphor.
8. According to one commentator, verse 21 describes a "sweet exchange." What would you say is exchanged for what?
9. **Discussion:** Talk about how one can "receive God's grace *in vain*."

day 3 **EXAMINE** – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Got any idea who wrote 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2? Take a wild guess. If you guessed Paul, you'd be right! Who else could pack so much theology in so few verses and make it all so very practical to boot? Unpacking what he has to say is no easy task; nevertheless, here goes.

The passage is divided into two paragraphs in the NIV: 5:11-15 and 5:12-6:2. The first paragraph pertains to Paul's work in Corinth and follows hard on verse 10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad." That said, Paul goes on to describe his ministry there: "Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men" (v.11a). The sense of verses 11b-14a that follow is expressed nicely in the NLT, which renders it somewhat paraphrastically: "God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. Are we commending ourselves to you again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart. If it seems we are crazy, [as Paul's critics may have charged], it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit. Either way, Christ's love controls us." Christ's love is determinative in that he died "for all," i.e., *in place of all as their substitute*, which implies logically that "all died." He died so that those who believe in him and thereby live should live for him and not themselves.

The second paragraph is chock full of theology. Paul states that anyone who is "in Christ" is a "new creation." In other words, the person who puts his faith in Christ is a *new person*, a different person, belonging to a *new era* in salvation history—the new covenant era. Faith in Christ changes everything. More specifically, it changes how we view everything, including people but especially people. Things that used to determine our regard for them—fame and fortune, power and pedigree—are no longer determinative. What matters more is their relationship to Christ. Everything else changes, too. "Obviously there is both continuity and discontinuity that takes place at conversion (justification). Paul was not denying the continuity. We still have the same physical features, basic

personality, genetic constitution, parents, susceptibility to temptation (1 Cor. 10:14), sinful environment (Gal. 1:4), etc. These things do not change. He was stressing the elements of discontinuity: perspectives, prejudices, misconceptions, enslavements, etc. (cf. Gal. 2:20). God adds many new things at conversion including new spiritual life, the Holy Spirit, forgiveness, the righteousness of Christ, as well as new viewpoints (v. 16). The Christian is a new creature (a new man, Rom. 6) in this sense" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on 2 Corinthians," 54, www.soniclight.com).

This drastic change in us resulted from something God did for us and not anything we did for ourselves. Through Christ's death he reconciled us, i.e., "he changed us from enemies into his friends" (v. 18 TEV). Paul explains that "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ." In other words, because Jesus died in our place, God no longer holds our sins against us. He can now make us his friends because our sins no longer stand in his way. Skipping from verse 18 to verse 21, he explains further that God "made him who had no sin to be sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." In other words, at the cross we exchange our sins for Christ's righteousness. Sin was imputed to him so that righteousness might be imputed to us. Here reconciliation is seen to entail justification.

What's more, "he gave us the task of making others his friends also" (v. 18 TEV). In other words, he reconciled us to reconcile others, which brings us to the theology's practical side. A lot rides on the antecedent of the pronouns in verses 18-20. Do "us" (vv. 18, 19) and "we" (v. 20) refer to Paul and his colleagues only or to all those who have been reconciled including Paul and his colleagues? While opinion is divided, "us" in the clause "who reconciled us to himself through Christ" in verse 18 most likely refers to all those who have been reconciled given its close connection to "if anyone" in verse 17. That being the case, it seems more likely that "us" in the clause "gave us the ministry of reconciliation" refers to all those who have been reconciled as well. Certainly it refers to Paul and his colleagues who had to defend their ministry and authority

against the accusations of naysayers in Corinth, but, surely not to the exclusion of all God's other friends. And if that's the case, then perhaps Paul and his colleagues aren't Christ's only emissaries. God has given to all his friends the ministry of

reconciliation; we are all his ambassadors. We are all reconciled reconcilers! We all must be careful, then, to faithfully declare his message of reconciliation by imploring people to be reconciled to him.

The Message of the Passage

God has made us his friends and commissioned us to be his ambassadors to implore everyone on his behalf, "Be reconciled to God."

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 *living questions* to apply what you have learned this week.

• **Journal your answers to the following *living* questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

- v. 11 *fear* Not being "afraid" of the Lord but being "accountable" to him at the judgment (see v. 10).
- v. 11 *conscience* "For Paul the conscience was a human faculty whereby a person either approves or disapproves his or her actions (whether already performed or only intended) and those of others" (Colin G. Kruse, *2 Corinthians*, TNTC, 70).
- v. 13 *out of our mind* Of the possible ways of taking Paul's words, this one seems most likely: Paul is responding to his critics who charged that he was mad because his teaching offended them (see Kruse, 121; cf., Ac 26:22-25).
- v. 14 *for* The Greek preposition, *hyper*, can mean "for the benefit of" or "instead of." Both nuances seem to pertain in this instance (cf., v. 21): "since one man died on behalf of and in the place of all men, all had undergone death (v.14b)" (Murray J. Harris, "2 Corinthians," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 10:351).
- v. 16 *So* Or "as a consequence of this," i.e., Christ's death and its transforming effects on people. "The 'so' draws the conclusions from 5:14-15" (David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, NAC, 281).
- v. 16 *from now on* "As a result of that moment from which we 'no longer' live for ourselves but for the One crucified and risen for us [v. 15], 'from now on' we believers do not 'know' anyone, Christ in particular, 'according to the flesh'" (Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, 293).
- v. 16 *from . . . view* Lit., "according to the flesh" (NASB, ESV, NKJV). Cf., "by human standards" (TEV), "from a human point of view" (NRSV, NLT). "Flesh signifies 'human nature perverted—not perverted because it is material but because as a totality it has fallen away from God and is living anthropocentrically' (1 Corinthians, p. 149). If this is the meaning of flesh it is easy to see what knowledge according to the flesh is. It means that one's estimates are based upon purely human, and especially self-regarding, considerations (C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, HNTC, 170).
- v. 16 *in this way* Lit., "according to the flesh."
- v. 17 *therefore* Same Greek word translated "so" in v. 16 marking a further consequence of Christ's death.
- v. 17 *in Christ* Cf., "belongs to Christ" (NLT, CEV), "joined to Christ" (TEV). "This phrase, 'in Christ,' can mean several things that are *not mutually exclusive*: that one belongs to Christ, that one lives in the sphere of Christ's power, that one is united with Christ, or that one is part of the body of Christ, the believing community. Paul's assumption is that being in Christ should bring about a radical change in a person's life" (Garland, 286, italics added).
- v. 18 *reconciled* "God through Christ has already reconciled (the aorist participle is used) us to himself. He has broken down the tremendous barrier which alienated us from him. What that barrier was [sin] and how it was broken down ["God made him who had no sin to be sin for us"] Paul describes in vv. 19, 21. However, before doing that he foreshadows in the words and gave us the ministry of reconciliation the fact that the reconciling process is in another sense still incomplete. The preaching of reconciliation has to be carried out and people must hear the call to be reconciled to God. Unless they respond to that call they cannot actually experience the reconciliation" (Kruse, 126, 27).
- v. 18 *us . . . us* "God has committed the message of this provision to those who have experienced reconciliation, and our ministry is to present it to all people (Matt. 28:19-20). Paul was perhaps speaking primarily of his own ministry of bringing people back to God as well as the ministry of his fellow apostles. However all believers clearly share this ministry since God has reconciled us all. The word of reconciliation is the gospel message" (Constable, 55).
- v. 18 *of reconciliation* Perhaps a genitive of content as implied by verse 19 (Garland, 291). "The ministry of reconciliation therefore involves more than simply explaining to others what God has done in Christ. It requires that one become an active reconciler oneself. Like Christ, a minister of reconciliation plunges into the midst of human tumult to bring harmony out of chaos, reconciliation out of estrangement, and love in the place of hate" (291, 92).
- v. 20 *ambassadors* I.e., Christ's ambassadors acting not by their own authority but by God's speaking on behalf of Christ (Garland, 295).
- v. 20 *be reconciled* "God has brought people to Himself by dealing with our sins in Christ . . . God is the reconciler, and He has reconciled everyone to Himself, the elect and the non-elect alike (cf. Rom. 5:10-11; Col. 1:20-22) . . . The fact that God has reconciled everyone does not mean that everyone is justified, however. People still need to respond to the offer of salvation by believing the gospel to receive justification (v. 20)" (Constable, 55).
- v. 21 *sin* "Christ became sin; that is, he came to stand in that relation with God which normally is the result of sin, estranged from God and the object of his wrath . . . We correspondingly have come to stand in that relation with God which is described by the term righteousness, that is, we are acquitted in his court, justified, reconciled. We are no longer his judicial enemies, but his friends" (Barrett, 180).
- 6:1 *in vain* I.e., ignoring one's responsibilities as an ambassador given the coming judgment (v. 10) is to receive God's grace in vain (Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, 218).
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Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

In our text this week, Paul reminds us that we become a new creation when we trust Christ as Savior. Try this fun summertime boredom-buster activity to have a discussion with your child about what it means to become a new creation in Christ. Make play dough to sculpt new creations. Here is the recipe for making homemade dough. It's way more fun than store-bought! Ingredients: 1 cup all purpose flour, 2 TBSP cream of tartar, 1/2 cup salt, 1 to 2 TBSP cooking oil, 1 cup water, food coloring (optional). Directions: Mix flour, cream of tartar and salt in a saucepan. Mix coloring with water and then add to the pan. Use a whisk to remove lumps then switch to a metal spoon. Cook over medium heat until thick (about 3 to 4 minutes, mixture will begin to pull away from pan). Cool and then knead until smooth. Store in a plastic bag or container. Have your child sculpt an object and then change it into something else. God does that to us when we trust in Him. He makes us into someone new! We can change our outward appearance but only God can change our hearts. He does that through the power of His Holy Spirit.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read 2Co 5:11-6:2

1. Who did Jesus die for?
2. What happens to the person who trusts in Christ?
3. What does verse 20 call us?

What Do You Think

List some things that change. Some things, like caterpillars, undergo major changes. Our hearts do too! What are some ways we change when we trust Christ?

What R U Going To Do

Take a picture of your play dough creation and email it to kids@pantego.org. We will have a "creation contest" and name a winner!

Core Comp

Salvation by Grace - I believe that I become a child of God through faith in Jesus, not because of anything I do.

Memory Verse

2 Co 4:18 - *So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed *Scrolls* _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.

Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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