

2 Corinthians Chapter 5 Continued

2 Corinthians 5:11 "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."

“The terror of the Lord”: This is not referring to being afraid, but to Paul’s worshipful reverence for God as his essential motivation to live in such a way as to honor his Lord and maximize his reward for his Lord’s glory (7:1; Prov. 7:1, Acts 9:31).

“We persuade men”: The Greek word for “persuade” means to seek someone’s favor, as in getting the other person to see you in a certain favorable or desired way (Gal. 1:10). This term can mean gospel preaching (Acts 18:4; 28:23), but here Paul was persuading others, not about salvation, but about his own integrity. The Corinthians’ eternal reward would be affected if they defected to the false teachers and left the divine teaching of Paul.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. We do know from the account of Moses bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt, that the people greatly feared God. They heard the voice of God thundering the Ten Commandments to them, and it frightened them so badly, they asked Moses to speak to God for them.

The terror of the Lord is best understood in the general sense of “the fear of the Lord as it is found throughout the Scriptures (7:1; Acts 9:31; Rom. 3:18; Eph. 5:21). It denotes a deep reverence for God, here particularly in view of the judgment seat before which all must stand.

It is a healthy thing to have great reverence, or fear, of the Lord. Paul realizes that he too is accountable to God as all men. To those God gives much knowledge of Him, He requires more of them.

“Made manifest”: Paul’s true spiritual condition of sincerity and integrity was manifest to God (Acts 23:1; 24:16), and he also wanted the Corinthians to believe the truth about him.

Many ministers today, threaten people out of hell, rather than love them into heaven. We know that it is correct to fear God, but what God really wants from us is pure love. God wants us to follow Him and believe in Him, because we love Him, not because we fear Him. Paul says, I hope you finally understand why I am a minister for Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:12 "For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to [answer] them which glory in appearance, and not in heart."

“Glory in appearance”: Those who have no integrity, such as Paul’s opponents at Corinth, must take pride in externals, which can be any false doctrine accompanied by showy hypocrisy (Matt. 5:20; 6:1; Mark 7:6-70).

Paul is explaining that things are not always what they appear to be from the outside. The Lord is interested in the heart of man. Paul is explaining that the Lord wants their love. Jesus did not come to condemn, but to save those who were lost.

Paul refuses to brag about his ministry on his own behalf. Those who wear fine clothes belong in palaces. Do not let the outward appearance of man fool you.

2 Corinthians 5:13 "For whether we be beside ourselves, [it is] to God: or whether we be sober, [it is] for your cause."

“Beside ourselves”: This Greek phrase usually means to be insane, or out of one’s mind, but here Paul used the expression to describe himself as one dogmatically devoted to truth. In this way, he answered those critics who claimed he was nothing more than an insane fanatic (John 8:48; Acts 26:22-24).

“Whether we be sober”: Meaning sober minded and in complete control. Paul also behaved this way among the Corinthians as he defended his integrity and communicated truth to them.

Undoubtedly someone had said that Paul was mad. I surely am disturbed about the carnal living of those in our country who proclaim Christianity. Paul, perhaps, seemed to be mad, by those who did not understand what he was preaching. Whatever state he was in, it was unto God.

He was very serious (sober), about giving the message that might save their souls. Stop looking with the physical eye. Things are not always what they seem to be at a glance.

2 Corinthians 5:14 "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:"

“The love of Christ”: Christ’s love for Paul and all believers at the cross (Rom. 5:6-8). Christ’s loving, substitutionary death motivated Paul’s service for Him (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:19).

The word "constraineth" means to hold together. This refers to pressure that causes action. Paul emphasized the strength of his desire to offer his life to the Lord. Death had been pronounced on the whole human race. We were all guilty of sin, punishable by death. Paul is saying, can't you understand that Christ loved us so much, that He gave His body on the cross that we might live?

“One died for all”: This expresses the truth of Christ’s substitutionary death. The preposition “for” indicates He died “in behalf of,” or “in the place of” all (Isa. 53:4-12; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 9:11-14). This truth is at the heart of the doctrine of salvation.

God’s wrath against sin required death; Jesus took that wrath and died in the sinner’s place. Thus, He took away God’s wrath and satisfied God’s justice as a perfect sacrifice. (Rom. 5:6-11, 18-19; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Eph. 5:2; 1 Thess. 5:10; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24).

“Then were all dead”: Everyone who died in Christ receives the benefits of His substitutionary death (Rom. 3:24-26; 6:8). With this short phrase, Paul defined the extent of the atonement and limited its application.

This statement logically completes the meaning of the preceding phrase, in effect saying “Christ died for all who died in Him,” or “One died for all, therefore all died” (John 10:11-16; Acts 20:28). Paul was overwhelmed with gratitude that Christ loved him and was so gracious as to make him a part of the “all” who died in Him.

Christ loved us. We are His creation. We were all living under sentence of death, until Jesus Christ paid our penalty in full for us and brought us life.

Colossians 2:13 "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;"

2 Corinthians 5:15 "And [that] he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

As he defended his integrity to the Corinthians, Paul wanted them to know that his old, self-centered life was finished and that he had an all-out desire to live righteously. For all genuine believers, their death in Christ is not only a death to sin, but a resurrection to a new life of righteousness (Gal 2:19-20; Col. 3:3).

We see in the verse above, that the life of selfishness and pride should be no more, when we receive our new life in Christ.

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

You see, we no longer are our own. We have been bought and paid for with the precious blood of the Lamb (Jesus Christ).

1 Timothy 4:10 "For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe."

(Romans 10:9-10), tells you how you too can be saved. “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

2 Corinthians 5:16 "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we [him] no more."

Since Paul's conversion, his priority was to meet people's spiritual needs (Acts 17:16; Rom. 1:13-16; 9:1-3; 10:1). Paul no longer evaluated people according to external, human, worldly standards (10:3).

“Know we him no more”: Paul as a Christian, also no longer had merely a fallible, human assessment of Jesus Christ (Acts 9:1-6; 26:9-23).

This was not just dangerous for Paul's time, but is still a problem today. Many people cannot see beyond the flesh of Jesus. They see Him as a good man who lived upon the earth. Paul had been included in that number, until Christ revealed Himself to Paul in the great Light.

Jesus was "Immanuel" (God with us). He was God in the beginning when He was known as the Word. He was God in the flesh of man when He was known as Jesus. He is God our King now. Read (John 1), to realize who He really was, and is. Paul's eyes were opened and he saw the Lord.

Have your eyes been opened so that you see Jesus as more than just man?

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man [be] in Christ, [he is] a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature”: What Paul particularizes (in verse 16), he generalizes (in verse 17). Paul could no longer think of Christ in purely carnal terms, because of the universal truth that has been applied to him personally. That is, when a man comes into vital union with the risen and glorified Lord, he is a “new creation” (John 3:3; 15:5; Rom. 8:1, 9; Gal. 6:14-15), and perceives Christ in a new way.

“In Christ”: These two words comprise a brief but most profound statement of the inexhaustible significance of the believer's redemption, which includes the following:

1. The believer's security in Christ, who bore in His body God's judgment against sin;
2. The believer's acceptance in Him with whom God alone is well pleased;
3. The believer's future assurance in Him who is the resurrection to eternal life and the sole guarantor of the believer's inheritance in heaven;
4. The believer's participation in the divine nature of Christ, the everlasting Word (2 Peter 1:4).

“New creature”: This describes something that is created at a qualitatively new level of excellence. It refers to regeneration or the new birth (John 3:3; Eph. 2:1-3; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 5:4). This expression encompasses the Christian's forgiveness of sins paid for in Christ's substitutionary death (Gal. 6:15; Eph. 4:24).

“Old things are passed away”: The aorist tense indicates a decisive break with the old life, at the moment of salvation. After a person is regenerate, old value systems, priorities, beliefs, loves, and plans are gone. Evil and sin are still present, but the believer sees them in a new perspective and they no longer control him.

“Behold, all things are become new”: (Literally, “new things have come to be”): Paul changes to the perfect tense to stress the abiding results of the Christians union with Christ (Isa. 43:18-19; Isa. 66:17; Eph. 4:24; Rev. 21:4-5). The Greek grammar indicates that this newness is a continuing condition of fact.

The believer’s new spiritual perception of everything is a constant reality for him, and he now lives for eternity, not temporal things. James identifies this transformation as the faith that produces works (Eph. 2:10; James 2:14-25).

God does not make new things. He takes the old and changes it. We know that before we are born of the water and the Spirit, we are flesh man. We are living to please the flesh. The new life we get in Jesus allows that flesh man to die and the new spirit man to live. We are born, again, unto God.

John 3:5 "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and [of] the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

When we are baptized, it symbolizes being buried in a watery grave. We leave that old person in the watery grave. The person, who comes up out of the water, is a new creature in Christ.

Romans 6:4 "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

When we become that new creature in Christ, the slate is wiped clean. We start all over again. We are not condemned for the sin that Christ has forgiven. We are clean, washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Romans 8:1 "[There is] therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

We must however, walk in this salvation that the Lord purchased for us. We no longer live, but Christ liveth in us.

2 Corinthians 5:18 "And all things [are] of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;"

“And all things are of God”: All the aspects related to someone’s conversion and newly transformed life in Christ are accomplished by a sovereign God. Sinners on their own cannot decide to participate in the new realities (Rom. 5:10; 1 cor. 8:6; 11:12; Eph. 2:1).

“Reconciled us to himself”: God initiates the change in the sinner’s status in that He brings him from a position of alienation to a state of forgiveness and right relationship with Himself. This again is the essence of the gospel.

The word “world” should not be interpreted in any universalistic sense, which would say that everyone will be saved, or even potentially reconciled. “World refers rather to the entire sphere of mankind or humanity (Titus 2:11; 3:4). The category of beings to whom God offers reconciliation, people from every ethnic group, without distinction.

The intrinsic merit of Christ’s reconciling death is infinite and the offer is unlimited. However, actual atonement was made only for those who believe (John 10:11, 15; 17:9; Acts 13:48; 20:28; Rom. 8:32-33; Eph. 5:25).

We did not reconcile our self to Him. He did it for us. Freely we have received, freely give.

Mark 16:15-16 "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Romans 8:15 "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

Galatians 4:6 "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

Jesus reconciled us to the Father. We are adopted sons of God. Jesus is the natural Son; we are adopted sons.

2 Corinthians 5:19 "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

“God was in Christ”: God by His own will and design used His Son, the only acceptable and perfect sacrifice, and the means to reconcile sinners to Himself (verse 18; Acts 2:23; Col. 1;19-20; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5-6).

“Reconciling the world”: God initiates the change in the sinner’s status in that He brings him from a position of alienation to a state of forgiveness and right relationship with Himself. This again is the essence of the gospel. The word “world” should not be interpreted in any universalistic sense, which would say that everyone will be saved, or even potentially reconciled.

“World” refers rather to the entire sphere of mankind or humanity (Titus 2:11; 3:4), the category of beings to whom God offers reconciliation, people from every ethnic group, without distinction.

The intrinsic merit of Christ’s reconciling death is infinite and the offer is unlimited. However, actual atonement was made only for those who believe (John 10:11, 15; 17:9; Acts 13:48; 20:28; Rom. 8:32-33; Eph. 5:25). The rest of humanity will pay the price personally for their own sin in eternal hell.

Not to impute sin means to forgive (Rom. 4:5-8; Col. 2:13; 2 Tim. 4:16). The present tense here emphasizes a continuous action (1 John 1:9). This may also be translated “reckoning.” This is the heart of the doctrine of justification whereby God declares the repentant sinner righteous and does not count his sins against him because He covers him with the righteousness of Christ the moment he places wholehearted faith in Christ and His sacrificial death.

“Word of reconciliation”: Here Paul presents another aspect to the meaning of the gospel. He used the Greek word for “word” (Acts 13:26), which indicated a true and trustworthy message, as opposed to a false or unsure one. In a world filled with false messages, believers have the solid, truthful message of the gospel.

Jesus was actually our substitute for our sins. Where God is concerned, we have no sin. He does not count our past sins, because those sins died on the cross upon the body of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:20 "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [you] by us: we pray [you] in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

An "ambassador for Christ" means that we will represent Christ here on the earth, to all who will hear. We will not carry our own message, but will carry Christ's message. A good ambassador does not bring his own message, but the message he was sent with. Mankind was alienated from God. The good news of the gospel that God has sent us to the world with, if accepted, will put those accepting it in right standing with God. In other words, it will reconcile those receiving it to God.

The word ambassador is related to the more familiar Greek word often translated “elder.” It described an older, more experienced man who served as a representative of a king from one country to another. Paul thus described his role, and the role of all believers, as a messenger representing the King of heaven with the gospel. Who pleads with the people of the world to be reconciled to God, who is their rightful King (Rom. 10:13-18).

“As though God did beseech you”: As believers present the gospel, God speaks (literally “call,” or “begs”), through them and urges unbelieving sinners to come in an attitude of faith and accept the gospel, which means to repent of their sins and believe on Jesus (Acts 16:31; James 4:8).

Acts 26:18 "To open their eyes, [and] to turn [them] from darkness to light, and [from] the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

"In Christ's stead" means He would bring the message Himself, but since He has gone to heaven, we do it for Him.

2 Corinthians 5:21 "For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Here Paul summarized the heart of the gospel, resolving the mystery and paradox of (verses 18-20), and explaining how sinners can be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. These Greek words express the doctrines of imputation and substitution like no other single verse.

“Sin for us”: God the Father, using the principle of imputation, treated Christ as if He were a sinner though He was not, and had Him die as a substitute to pay the penalty for the sins of those who believe in Him. (Isa. 53:4-6; Gal. 3:10-13; 1 Peter 2:24).

On the cross, He did not become a sinner (as some suggest), but remained as holy as ever. He was treated as if He were guilty of all the sins ever committed by all who would ever believe, though He committed none. The wrath of God was exhausted on Him and the just requirement of God’s law met for those for whom He died.

“Who knew no sin”: Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God (Gal. 4:4-5; Luke 23:4, 14, 22, 47; John 8:46; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 Peter 1:19; 2:22-24; 3:18; Rev. 5:2-10).

“The righteousness of God”: Another reference to justification and imputation. The righteousness that is credited to the believer’s account is the righteousness of Jesus Christ, God’s Son (Rom. 1:17; 3:21-24; Phil. 3:9).

As Christ was not a sinner, but was treated as if He were, so believers who have not yet been made righteous (until glorification), are treated as if they were righteous. He bore their sins so that they could bear His righteousness. God treated Him as if He committed believers’ sins, and treats believers as if they did only the righteous deeds of the sinless Son of God.

Three aspects of Paul’s concept of imputation are seen in this passage. (In verse 19), God imputes not iniquity (Psalm 32:2). Then He imputes sin to Christ, the spotless Lamb of God (John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:19). Finally, God imputes the righteousness of Christ to the sinner’s account.

This truth may be viewed from the side of justification, whereby the sinner is declared righteous based on the merits of Jesus Christ (Rom 3:24-25), or it may be viewed from the side of sanctification, wherein the righteousness of Christ is daily applied. This latter sense is probably in view here (compare 3:18; see also 1 Cor. 1:2).

Jesus took our sin upon His body on the cross. Sin for the believer, died on the cross, which was the greatest trade that was ever made. He took our sin, and in return clothed us in His righteousness. We are in right standing with God, because Jesus washed us in His blood.

2 Corinthians Chapter 5 Continued Questions

1. The _____ of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
2. What frightened the Israelites about God?

3. Who did they ask to speak to God for them?
4. Many ministers threaten people out of _____, instead of loving them into _____.
5. Does God want us to fear Him, or love Him more?
6. Things are not always what they _____ to be on the outside.
7. The Lord is interested in the _____ of man.
8. What had they accused Paul of being?
9. Who thought him to be mad?
10. What does "constraineth" mean?
11. _____ had been pronounced on the whole human race.
12. When was the penalty of death lifted?
13. We have been bought and paid for with the _____.
14. Where do you find the verses that tell how you can be saved?
15. Many people can not see beyond the _____ of Jesus.
16. What does "Immanuel" mean?
17. In the beginning, Jesus name was what?
18. What was different about Him, when He was known as Jesus?
19. Who is He now?
20. Have your eyes been opened, so you see Jesus as more than just man?
21. If any man be in Christ, he is a new _____.
22. Does God make new things? Explain.
23. How are the Christians to walk?
24. What were we reconciled to God by?
25. What are the Christian ministers spoken of in verse 20?
26. Jesus took our sin upon His _____ on the cross.
27. What did we receive in exchange for our sin?