



2 Corinthians 5v11- 6v2

This week at Magdalen Road church we continued our series in 2 Corinthians and considered 4 reasons why it is worth persevering in ministry.

1. Because we fear the Lord (v9-13)

Paul says there is a *right* kind of fear and awe that motivates the believer to steward the gifts we've been given well for the glory of God. v11 links back to v10 - perhaps God will ask what did you do with the message / opportunities (etc) I gave you? Paul's fear is not the verdict of others, but rather the verdict of Jesus (v12).

2. Because Christ's love compels us (v14-16)

Jesus's death deals with the universal, unnatural problem of human death. Death is what happens when humanity walks out on the God of life, thinking we can do it our way. But because of the extraordinary extravagant love of God says Paul, Christ love compels us to tell others. The 'compel' word is sometimes used in the military world, to describe a city that has been surrounded overwhelmed and besieged. In the same kind of way Paul knows we are totally surrounded by Christ's love - he just has to look to Jesus and he has no choice about telling others!

In these verses Paul outlined both the message but also the manner in which we minister as well. We are no longer free agents; we belong to him.

3. Because we are ambassadors of reconciliation

Paul outlines the power that we have to bring both re-creation (v17) and reconciliation (v18-20). Because sin is 'de-creative' (undoing God's good work at creation) so God's word is powerful to recreate. It is also powerful to bring reconciliation. Paul describes us as Christ ambassadors, representing our king and arriving with his authority and power. This impacts how we see our identity - through the week, we are his ambassadors.

At the heart of this passage is v21 where we see a beautiful sacrificial exchange and symmetry happening. God the son *became* sin for us and we in the son become the righteousness of God.

This idea of a sacrificial substitution is not something that God has dropped up at the last minute but rather as a central drumbeat of the expanding story of the Scriptures. (E.g. Genesis 22 Abraham and Isaac, Exodus 12 Passover, Leviticus 16 Day of Atonement and Isaiah 53 the Suffering Servant).

4. Because this is the day of salvation

Paul quotes from Isaiah who is looking ahead to the time of return and restoration following the Exile. This is the day of restoration Says Paul, this is the time we been waiting for. And so here is our opportunity to speak.

Here are some questions for your group to start the ball rolling...

Taken from chapter 5 of 'Caring for One Another' :

« Though we might think that real help comes through dramatic and new insights, most help tends to come in more ordinary ways. It comes through our personal engagement with each other, our attention to Christ, and prayer. »

1. When have you been encouraged by the personal responses of others, someone really listening to and hearing you?
2. What things are we listening for when we ask how another person is really doing?
3. The movement from knowing others to praying with them face-to-face can be hard. Why might that be? How do you hope to grow in praying with others?

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- What do you remember so far from the series?
- When do you think you question whether it's worth keeping going as a believer? What makes it hard to open your mouth and speak to people about Jesus?
- From v9 to 11 How does the fear of the Lord affect Paul? What does this mean for us? Does this undermine salvation by grace?
- How does Christ's love shape of the message and the manner of Paul's ministry? Could we say this with Paul? Why or why not?
- What does it mean to be an ambassador of reconciliation? How does reconciliation come about?
- How was the day of salvation? How should this motivate us to speak about Jesus?