

Sermon Title: The Facet of the Gospel

Sermon Text: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to fulfill the mandate to be serving slaves of reconciliation.

Sermon Proposition: There are 4 key concepts of the mandate of reconciliation.

Introduction: One of the most awesome requirements of God made upon men and women is that they be righteous, that is conform to His ethical and moral standards. *Psalm 15:2* He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; *Micah 6:8* He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?

Since God is holy, He cannot allow sinners into His presence (*Isaiah 6:3* And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" *4* And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. *5* So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.") Since all persons are sinners, they could not be saved apart from the supernatural intervention of God. (*Romans 3:10* As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; *Romans 3:23* for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,).

The righteous demands of God (found in the law of God) coupled with the inability of man might present an insoluble dilemma. The loving God Himself, however, has graciously solved the problem. He sent Christ, who never sinned, to die for our sins and thus satisfy His own wrath toward us. Simply put, it means that God, at the cross, treated Christ as though He had committed our sins even though He was righteous.

On the other hand, when we by faith believe in Christ, He treats us as though we were as righteous as Christ. (*2 Corinthians 5:21* For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.)

The Bible calls this type of righteousness "imputed righteousness" (*Romans 4:6* just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:). That simply means that God puts into a bankrupt spiritual account the very worth of Christ, much as though He were a banker adding an inexhaustible deposit to our spiritual bank account.

Unfortunately and quite sadly, many people in and outside of the church still refuse to believe that such an abundant blessing can be theirs as a free gift (*Ephesians 2:8* For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, *9* not of works, lest anyone should boast. *10* For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.).

The Bible (according to the Scriptures) urges all men to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and thus be considered as righteous by God (*Romans 4:24* but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,). (*Isaiah 61:10* I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.; *2 Corinthians 5:21* For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.)

I. The messengers of the Gospel of Reconciliation. V.17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

The term new nature or creation refers to the spiritual transformation that occurs within the inner man when a person believes in Christ as Savior.

The Christian is now a new man as opposed to the old man that he was before he became a Christian. (*Romans 6:6* knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.; *Ephesians 2:15* having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace.; *Ephesians 4:22* that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, *23* and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, *24* and that you put on the new man which was created according to

God, in true righteousness and holiness.; **Colossians 3:9** Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, **10** and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,)

This concept of newness may be traced to an important choice between two Greek words both meaning “new.” One word means “new” in the sense of renovation (to repair something), the other means the sense of fresh existence. It is this latter definition that is used to describe the Christians. The new man/creation, Christian is not the old man renovated or refreshed; he is a brand-new (something or someone who has never existed before) man with a new family, a new set of values, a new set of motivations, and new possessions.

The new man, to be visible, must be put on as one puts on a new set of clothes each day. (**Colossians 3:10** and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,). In other words, the new nature must be cultivated or nurtured by spiritual decisiveness to grow in Christ. The new man/creature in Christ no longer focuses on unrighteousness and ungodliness (sin) but on making decisions about righteousness and godliness in Christ Jesus. (**Titus 2:11** For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, **12** teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, **13** looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, **14** who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. **15** Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.; **Ephesians 5:8** For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light).

Characteristics from Colossians 3:

1. Seeks what is above where Christ is at the right hand of the Father. V.1-4
2. Puts to death whatever in them that is worldly. V.5-7
3. Puts away all that is characteristic of the old man. V.8-11
4. Puts on the characteristics of the new man. V.12-17

II. **The ministry of the Gospel of Reconciliation. V.18-19**

v. 18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ (**Romans 5:11** And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.) and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. (Greek-allasso change or exchange)

Reconciliation involves a change in the relationship between God and man or man and man. It assumes there has been a breakdown in the relationship, but now there has been a change from a state of enmity and fragmentation to one who is in harmony and fellowship. (**Romans 5:6** For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. **7** For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. **8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **9** Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. **10** For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. **11** And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.) Because of the change or exchange (reconciliation) we become new creatures. It is a change in the total state of our lives.

v.19 that is, that (through the cross) (**Rom. 5:1**) God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, (Reconciliation is an objective of God through Christ) not imputing their trespasses to them, (Reconciliation is also related to justification (**Rom. 5**) We have been justified through faith (**Rom. V.1**) by his blood (**Rom. V.9; Hebrews 9:12** Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. **13** For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, **14** how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?) and committed to us the word of reconciliation.) (**Romans 5:11** And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.) (**Heb. 9:18-28**)

Most unsaved people do not think of themselves as enemies of God. (*Colossians 1:21* And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled; *Rom. 3:9-20*). Because they have no conscious feelings of hatred for Him and do not actively oppose His work or contradict His Word, they consider themselves, at worst, to be “neutral” about God. But no such neutrality is possible (*Psalms 7:11* God is a just judge, And God is angry with the wicked every day.). Every person who is not a child of God is a child of Satan (*John 8:44* "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.).

III. The methods of the Gospel of Reconciliation. V.20

V. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us; (Pleading to people; pleading to God; Pleading for Christ) we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. (Reconciliation is a subjective relationship.) The sinner is spoken of as being reconciled. Reconciliation is made possible by the cross of Christ, but is applied when we make the cross and death of Christ applicable to our life or our relationship.

IV. The meaning of the Gospel of Reconciliation. V.21

V. 21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (Jesus Christ).

(The ultimate aim or (facet) is that we are not only justified, but that we might become the righteousness of God.)

The message of reconciliation of sinner to God, through Christ, by those who are in Christ (reconciled people, reconciling, unreconciled people to God, through the message about Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.). The message of the new nature is a message of supreme hope: the Spirit of God can accomplish a life changing transformation for all who will only believe in Christ.

“It is not so that believers may be free to sin that their salvation is secured. The very purpose and effect of salvation is to free men from sin, not to free them to do it. ‘Having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness,’ Paul reminds the Roman believers later in this letter (Rom. 6:18). A professing Christian who persistently and consistently sins proves that he does not belong to the Lord. As the apostle John said of certain apostates in the early church, ‘They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us’ (1 John 2:19). Later in that epistle John wrote: ‘No one who is born of God practices sin . . . Anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God’ (3:9-10). The true believer will begin, from salvation on, a new pattern of righteousness springing from his new nature which hates sin and loves God. He will not be perfect, but his desires will be different and so will his patterns of behavior. That new development toward holiness is God’s work as we shall see in coming chapters.” (MacArthur, John, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Romans 1-8*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1991, pp.278)

Conclusion: Characteristics of the New Man (*Col. 3:1-17*)

1. Reconciliation is by the will of God. V. 17-20
2. Reconciliation is by the forgiveness of God. V.19
3. Reconciliation is by the obedience of faith. V.20
4. Reconciliation is by the gift of Substitution. V.21

Synonyms: Faith, Justification, Redeem, Redemption, Salvation