

**WHAT JESUS DID AND  
WE CELEBRATE AT CHRISTMAS**  
**2 Corinthians 5:14-21**  
**December 13, 2020**

**INTRODUCTION:** By way of introduction, let me address the *motivation* behind this message. Paul said, “**the love of Christ compels us**” – means a firm hold that controls; spurred on by his own sense of that mighty, all-conquering love.

Paul went on to say, “**that if One died for all, then all died.**” Paul believed that mankind as a whole was under a sentence of death. Because all were dead, Jesus went down into death, and now He brings them up with Him in resurrection life (if they will believe). This truth reminds us that no person has life in himself, but “**Jesus died for all that they which live**” (.15)

**2 Corinthians 5:15, “and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.”**

Paul felt with all of his heart that people were under the sentence of death and yet, the Lord had given him a message of life; what *motivation!*

**“Jesus, thank you for the cross.”**

**NOTE:** This *motivation* of God’s love in Christ changed Paul’s *evaluation* of Christ and others.

**2 Corinthians 5:16, “Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.”**

Paul no longer looked at others from a purely human standpoint. His outlook was changed and now his assessment was different. It is common for people to judge one another by such human and external standards as wealth, race, family background, personality, looks, and skills.

Paul no longer looked at Jesus from a purely human standpoint. He, at one time, thought of Jesus as a religious teacher from Galilee, untrained in any rabbinical school, who made messianic claims and was alleged to work miracles. However, when Saul of Tarsus met Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, he now was able to view Christ with the enlightenment of God’s Holy Spirit.

## **I. THE TRANSFORMATION THROUGH THE CROSS 17-18**

vv. **14-16** speak of the transformation in our *attitude*, while vv. **17-18** speak of the transformation in our *actions*. One speaks of the *inward* change while the other speaks of the *outward* change. Remember, *repentance* is a change of mind, and I believe it always changes our life.

**“in Christ”** – speaks of a new position as well as a new disposition (nature).

Note the 3 **“things”**

**A. OLD THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY.  
17a**

All the past is gone, every sin of the flesh has been forgiven. After a person is saved, 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 things no longer control him.

**B. ALL THINGS HAVE BECOME NEW.  
17b**

The believer can live a brand new existence. The grammar indicates that this newness is a continuing condition of fact. Spiritual matters become crucial, where once the sinner was dead to them. Jesus Christ performs a fresh work of creation every time a person is saved. The perfect tense indicates this change has come to stay.

**C. ALL THINGS ARE OF GOD. 18**

Paul is saying that all this dramatic change is derived from God.

## 1. RECONCILIATION. 18

**“who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ”** - means changed completely; to affect a change or to exchange. Through the death of Christ on the cross, sinners have exchanged death for life, hell for heaven, unrighteousness for holiness, and depression for hope.

To be **reconciled** refers to God’s act of changing man’s relation to Him by removing, through Christ’s work at Calvary, the barrier caused by sin. This is the **objective** side of reconciliation. It makes salvation possible. However, reconciliation in the New Testament is not precisely the same thing as salvation. This aspect of reconciliation makes salvation possible for man by paying sin’s penalty thus removing this obstacle, but it does not save everybody. Christ’s death was sufficient for all, but not all are saved, for the benefits of Christ’s death are applied only to those who believe.

## 2. OBLIGATION. 18

Now there is also a subjective side of reconciliation. For this reason God Who reconciled all things (that is, changed completely their position in relation to Him) has given the means of reconciliation to His servants. They are to proclaim the gospel, announcing God's reconciliation to Him.

## II. THE IMPUTATION THROUGH THE CROSS. 19, 21

### A. INCARNATION. 19

“God was in Christ” – the point is that God's act of reconciling the world was done in Christ. That God the Father not only used Christ, but also was in Him in the unique union that characterized the incarnation.

Oswald Chambers, April 6<sup>th</sup>, Utmost for His Highest, *“The whole meaning of the Incarnation is the Cross. Beware of separating God manifest in the flesh from the Son becoming sin. The Incarnation was for the purpose of Redemption. The center of salvation is the cross of Jesus, and the reason it is so easy to obtain salvation is because it cost God so much.”*

## **B. IMPUTATION. 19, 21**

**“impute”** – a banker or accountant term; to put to one’s account; to your credit.

### **1. Imputation’s Claim. 19**

**“not imputing”** – not counting your sins against you because He placed those sins on Christ instead.

**Isaiah 53:6, “All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”**

(personal substitution) – (5:21)

### **2. Imputation’s Cross. 21**

**“who knew no sin”** – Jesus Christ Whom God chose to reconcile us to Himself through is the sinless Son of God

**Romans 5:10, “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.”**

**Ephesians 2:16, “and that He might reconcile them both to God in one**

**body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.”**

**Colossians 1:19-20, “For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”**

**“to be 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. On the cross, He did not become a sinner, but remained as holy as ever. He was treated as if He was 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 whom He died.

**“that we might become the righteousness of God”** – that which is credited to the believer’s account. 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 have His righteousness. God treated Jesus as if He committed believer's sins, and treats believers as they did only the righteous deeds of the sinless Son of God.

Jesus Christ, in being sin for us, bore sin's guilt, penalty, and shame.

### **III. THE INVITATION THROUGH THE CROSS. 20**

#### **A. THE PRIVILEGED PERSON. 20a**

Sometimes we can be embarrassed to confront people with the claims of Jesus Christ. But remember, you are an ambassador, an official representative of the King. What an honorable and yet solemn responsibility.

There is nothing to be embarrassed about. In fact, the people I visited should have been grateful that one of Christ's ambassadors came to see them.

**EXAMPLE:** Ralph Hawkins (Hawk White Cloud)

**EXAMPLE:** Neville Chamberlin was sent by Great Britain as an Ambassador to deal with Hitler: Chamberlin, despite the warnings of Churchill, compromised with

Hitler. He came home declaring “*peace in our time.*” Great Britain and the world discovered the high price of using a weak ambassador. We must never compromise the message of Christ, lest souls perish because of our failure.

## **B. THE PLEADING PERSON. 20b**

**“as though God were pleading through us”** – as God was in Christ accomplishing the grounds of reconciliation, so in a roughly analogous way Paul suggested that God was in him and others (now that Christ was absent) issuing the appeal to men to accept by faith what God had done.

Why is the **appeal** so important?

- The objective aspects of reconciliation were accomplished by Christ.
- The subjective aspects require man’s response for salvation to be received.

It is as if God was issuing a personal and direct invitation through them to their hearts to enter into the benefits of the reconciliation already achieved by Christ.

The appeal issued in Christ’s name, this message of reconciliation, is the God-

designed link between the objective work  
of reconciliation and its subjective  
appropriation by the sinner.