

## Wednesday Evening Bible Study

July 6, 2022

Series - *The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul*

The Corinthian Letters

*The Last Letter* (Second Corinthians)

Text – 2 Corinthians 5 – *God's Ambassadors*

Memory Verse – 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.*

### Introduction

Paul had begun this subject of his ministry in chapter four. There he explained some of the negative aspects of his ministry, but he also revealed his motivation for serving God. Here he will tell us in more detail about ministry for the ambassador for Christ. We will again get a glimpse into his motivation, but we will also get an understanding of his viewpoint. We will see how Paul viewed the world and how he viewed himself in God's big picture.

#### I. An Eternal Perspective [Observation] (vs. 1 – 8)

Paul had witnessed a lot of things in his life. He witnessed and approved the murder of Stephen (Acts 7:58); he may have even witnessed the mock trial and crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ; he witnessed the Lord on the road to Damascus when he was converted. But perhaps the greatest event Paul had witnessed was when he got to take a little peek into heaven (2 Corinthians 12:1 – 4; Acts 14:8 - 22). Paul's perspective on this life was forever changed by this event. He could no longer look at the things that are temporary. He saw everything with a view towards eternity. It would do us well to take a long, hard look at eternity: at an eternal heaven and an eternal hell; then perhaps we could see people and this world from an eternal perspective. Do we really believe what we say we believe?

##### A. The Things of this Earth are temporary

1. Our bodies
2. Our possessions
3. Our wealth

##### B. The Things of God are Permanent

Note – God has created (v. 5 *wrought*) us for eternity, not just for this earth.

The wise believer will live his temporary life here on this earth for the things that are eternal.

Illustrate - When Lester Roloff died, he did not have enough money in the bank to pay for his

funeral. Some said that he was a bad businessman; he claimed that he just kept his money in a different bank.

*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.*

*And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; (Philippians 1:21-25)*

## II. An Eternal Promise [Motivation] (vs. 9 – 16)

Paul will now again address the motivation he had to serve the Lord (*Wherefore we labor...*). God has called all His children to be His ambassadors, but why do we do what we do. Here are listed some good reasons and some not so good reasons to serve God. It should be noted however that even if our motivation is not entirely pure, the work that we do will help the cause of Christ, though you may not be rewarded for it.

*Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. (Philippians 1:15-18)*

### A. Wrong Reasons

1. Focus on Self – you want to be in the spotlight (3 John 9)
2. Filthy Lucre (1 Peter 5:1 – 3)
3. Fear of People; Guilt (vs. 12 – 13; 16)

### B. Right Reasons

1. Obedience
2. Love for People (Romans 9:1 – 3)
3. Love for God
4. Love of God (v. 14)
5. Rewards (vs. 9 & 10; 1 Corinthians 3: 11 – 15)
6. New Creature – the working of the Holy Spirit (v. 17)

## III. An Eternal Purpose [Reconciliation] (vs. 17 – 21)

### A. God has Converted Us (*reconciled* v. 18)

*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were **reconciled** to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. (Romans 5:8-11)*

B. God has Commissioned Us (vs. 18 – 21)

1. We stand *in Christ's stead* (v. 20) as ambassadors
2. We have been given the ministry of reconciliation.
3. We have been entrusted with the **word of reconciliation**

*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matthew 28:18-20)*

*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15)*

*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)*

*So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. (Luke 14:21-23)*

*Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. (Luke 24:45-49)*