

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The word of God for this morning is found in 2 Corinthians 5:14-21.

“For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; 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. 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. 17 Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18 Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. 21 For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

So far our text. Dear fellow redeemed.

Do you like getting the mail? It's always nice when you're eagerly awaiting something. It can be nice from day to day because we never know what's going to be in the box. How about the days that you get a bill? Is that a good day? I think we would have a consensus in that a bill is not the best piece of mail to find in ones mailbox.

What would happen though if you got a bill in the mail from God? On this particular bill we would find that we owed God for ten line items. 1. Thou shalt have no other gods. 2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain. 3. Thou shalt sanctify the holy-day. 4. Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother. 5. Thou shalt not kill. 6. Thou shalt not commit adultery. 7. Thou shalt not steal. 8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. 9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house. 10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is his.

But across the face of this bill you notice a stamp. One that has the strangest red color to it; it says, “Reconciled.” You frantically look for more information and at the bottom of the page you find a payer line signed in that same strange red color; and the name found there is “Jesus Christ.”

The simple dictionary definition of reconcile is “To settle or resolve.” I pray that the picture painted for you this morning is one that helps remind you how incredible it is to be reminded in our text today that **“You're reconciled to God.”**

And what better thing is there to motivate us? Paul put it this way, **“For the love of Christ compels us.”** Once we have received such a bill from our righteous God, yet to have it paid for in full by Christ, what else can even come close to motivate one to the service of God?

Paul used the plural in addressing the congregation in Corinth. Paul was stating that the love of Christ compelled himself, which is Paul, Timothy and also the love of Christ should compel you.

The inclusive nature of Paul's statement is grounded in Gospel truth, **"That if One died for all, then all died."** Paul didn't consider himself above anyone else because if Jesus had to die for all, then all owed God for breaking the entirety of the law as shown in the picture of receiving a bill in the mail. Paul witnessed in his own life that he was no better than anyone else by the fact that Jesus needed to die for him just like He needed to die for everyone else. Every single person sitting here today needed Jesus to die for them because we have all broken the holy, perfect Law of God.

So then Paul continues his comparison of us to Jesus, **"That those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again."** The life of Jesus was one of complete and utter service. Jesus was sent forth by the Father with a commission. To come and live a perfect life and die the death that we owed God. If we are compelled by the Law out of guilt and shame then we are trying to accomplish what only Christ could do. If we are compelled because Jesus already did that for us out of love then we are Gospel minded.

Yet at times we need to be reminded who this applies to. Who should receive this compulsion that we have received by the Holy Spirit. **"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. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."**

"We regard no one according to the flesh" Paul said. This particular phrase has been interpreted many, many different ways. But I believe doing so does such a wonderful statement disservice. Because in this statement we find the same idea as what was stated before that Christ died once for all. It doesn't make one bit of difference what sex you're. It doesn't make a difference how old you're. It doesn't make a difference if you were another religion at one time like it was during the early church with the issues between Jew or Gentile. It doesn't make a difference what kind of income you have or how outwardly beautiful you're. And most wonderful of all, it doesn't make a difference what you've done.

Because what we have done, we have all done in like manner. Every single one of us has sinned against God and deserved His wrath. I believe we forget this from time to time. Our willingness to hold a grudge because of what someone has done causes us to regard ourselves higher than others even though we're in the same condition as them. Certainly forgiveness should not be granted to someone without repentance but the way we interact during and after that can become convoluted and blurred at times with our unwillingness to not regard that person according to the flesh any longer.

This also applies to us individually. When we sin privately, we should no longer even regards ourselves according to the flesh. **"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."**

When we remind ourselves of that picture of God in Christ Jesus reconciling us to Himself we should see that new creation. All those things have passed away. You have become new in Christ.

And this confidence that we have in Christ is expressed this way, **“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ.”** When Paul says **“Now all things are of God”** he is making reference to the fact that our redemption in all ways is from Him. If we try to redeem ourselves, if we try to reconcile ourselves, if we try to pay back what we owe God the payment will never be accepted. But since all things are of God the bill is stamped reconciled.

The plan of salvation in Christ wasn't ours. The keeping of the Law wasn't ours. The dying on the cross wasn't ours. Being the First Born of the dead wasn't ours. And thanks be to God that is was all in Him. In the Father's Son Jesus Christ He was able to stamp and sign that bill in His blood, reconciled. **“You're reconciled to God.”**

Which leaves us in a wonderful position, **“Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.”**

You have the power of God to go into the world and stamp peoples bill of debt to God as reconciled with the blood of Christ through the preaching of His word. When you do this for yourselves, your family members, one another and to a stranger in the grocery store the God of reconciliation is pleading through you. Not with a message that originates from us, but the one that is from God. A message that we can have confidence in. One that truly needs to be proclaimed.

And we can see the importance of this in view of our VBS next week. The Lord blessed us by having a group of Christians within the CLC to come out and distribute some 4,000 flyers in the community. On each side of the flyer was the message that we still preach that God reconciled the world to Himself in Jesus Christ. But amazingly outside of members and relatives only two families responded to the flyer. Two out of 4,000! I mention this not because I was looking for a certain number of people. The angles in heaven rejoice over one soul that repents. It is truly worthy to have VBS for the sake of one soul. But it should also remind us of how needy the world truly is in hearing the message that they have been reconciled to God through Christ.

Implore those who you come in contact with, **“Be reconciled to God!”** Having confidence in the message you will preach that **“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

Therefore this week I joyfully begin with you, **“You're reconciled to God.”** Amen.