

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 3 (January 11-17, 2015)

The material we will study this week comes from 2 Corinthians 5:11-21. It is my favorite chapter on the subject of **New Life in Christ**. Allow God's Word to minister to your heart.

Sunday, January 11 (read 2 Corinthians 5:11-15)

Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. (2 Corinthians 5:11)

I want you to learn to take the Word of God **literally** and **personally**. It is His love letter to you, the believer! This passage is very personal to me. I am not trying to push my beliefs on others, but I have found so much joy in serving God and believing His Word that I want everyone to experience this peace. I do not **fear** the Lord as you might define "fear," but I respect Him and His Word enough to tell others of the joy and peace He offers (v. 11). My personal credentials are unimpressive; however, that allows God to get all the glory for each accomplishment (v. 12-13). I am often called a **fanatic**, but how can anyone say he believes the Word of God without following it and allowing it to change his life completely? We will continue this passage in tomorrow's devotion.

Monday, January 12 (reread 2 Corinthians 5:11-15)

*For Christ's love compels us, because we are **convinced** that one died for all, and therefore all died. (2 Corinthians 5:14, emphasis mine)*

I hope that you are **convinced** that Jesus loves you so much that He would have gone to the cross, even if you had been the only sinner. This kind of knowledge and love will **compel** you to tell others about Him and His message of salvation (v. 14). Many people tell others about their church or their pastor, but there are not nearly enough Christians talking about the finished work of Jesus Christ and His offer of salvation to everyone who believes. Consequently, there are few believers who talk about the way Christ has changed their lives completely and how a relationship with Him will change the listener as well (v. 15). May the love of God **compel** you to share His wonderful gift of salvation with everyone you know!

Tuesday, January 13 (read 2 Corinthians 5:16-17)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Many in the church regard Christ from a "worldly point of view" (v. 16). As a result, they think Jesus came to give them health and wealth as they live comfortable lives in this world. Some TV ministers have gotten rich by teaching this ungodly and unbiblical concept. Be sure that you understand that Jesus did not come into the world to take man out of the slums; He gave His life to take the slums out of the man. All who receive His offer of salvation are born again and their name is placed in the Lamb's Book of Life. Everything the new believer has ever done, said or thought is erased from his/her record, never to be remembered or to be held against him/her again (v. 17). Not only that, but nothing a believer ever does in the future will be placed on his/her record, because Jesus' blood has washed away all sins (past, present and future). Do you fully understand what He has done for you? If not, read John 13:1-17 and take note of the question our Lord asks in v. 12. Begin today to give Him praise and glory for His wonderful works on your behalf!

Wednesday, January 14 (read 2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.. (2 Corinthians 5:18, emphasis mine)

From the printed verse above, do you understand that “**all this is from God**”? There is nothing we can do or give that would qualify us for heaven. Salvation is a **gift of God** so that no one can boast of his/her personal accomplishments (see Ephesians 2:8-9). No matter how often I preach this truth, I still hear folks at funerals say, “You know he/she is in heaven, because he/she was a good person.” Since God has committed His message of reconciliation to us (v. 19), shouldn’t we be talking about what **He** has done instead of praising the deeds and accomplishments of **people**? I believe revival will take place when we share His message of reconciliation with a world that could use some good news. He has committed this message to you! How well are you communicating it to others?

Thursday, January 15 (read 2 Corinthians 5:20-21)

*God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.
(2 Corinthians 5:21)*

I believe today’s printed text is the most important single verse in the Bible. The entire plan of salvation is summarized in that truth! Paul gives a twofold command in v. 20: 1) Be reconciled to God so that you can tell others about salvation from your personal experience; and 2) Report for duty as His ambassador (one who speaks on behalf of the Sender). The message is very simple: “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” He exchanged **your** sins for **His** righteousness! Can you dedicate 2015 to offering His reconciliation to others?

Friday, January 16 (read 2 Corinthians 6:1-2)

As God’s fellow workers we urge you not to received God’s grace in vain. (2 Corinthians 6:1)

The entire plan of salvation depends on God’s **grace**! No one can understand redemption unless he/she knows that “all this is from God” (5:18) and that we are righteous in His sight only because Jesus became sin for us (5:21). You might ask, “How is it possible to receive this grace in vain” (v. 1)? The answer is that You could hear the message, understand the truth, and yet, never ask Jesus to live in your heart. All the signs of His second coming are now present in greater intensity than at anytime in history. “I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation” (v. 2b). Can you afford to go on living as if none of this were true? Isn’t it time to get serious about your relationship with Jesus? Tomorrow is not promised to anyone!

Saturday, January 17 (read Luke 7:11-17)

*The young man sat up and **began to talk**, and Jesus gave him back to his mother. (Luke 7:15, emphasis mine)*

I want to close the week by using this passage that tells of one of the three people in the Bible who **physically** receive new life from Jesus (see also Luke 8:40-56, John 11:1-44). After losing her husband, this poor widow lady has lost her only son (v. 11-12). Jesus observes the situation and “His heart (goes) out to her” (v. 13). He comforts the lady and then touches the coffin, commanding the young man to “get up” (v. 13-14). The dead man awakens, sits up in his coffin, and **begins to talk**. This amplifies the entire week’s lessons! You have **spiritually** received new life in Christ (5:17)! You are His ambassadors (5:20)! Go out and tell others about Jesus and His plan to reconcile the world!