

THE BIG IDEA: Reconciliation comes from God, through Christ, for His glory.

Good morning, I want to start off this morning by asking you a question... Have you ever had something that was revealed to you that it just blew your mind and changed everything about you? Well look, I get it, we are in church, so obviously those of us who have experienced salvation have experienced this moment of revelation. For me, there have been many different times in my life where things were revealed to me and they drastically changed the person I have been. Whether it be something good or something that was bad I know what it's like to have something revealed that has been life changing. From my salvation experience, to my call in ministry, even to the Spirit revealing aspects of scripture. There are so many things that have needed to be revealed to me. One more recent experience of this in my life was with fasting. About a year ago, the Holy Spirit pricked my life to study fasting. This was something that I had done some but not to the extent that God was wanting me to know. So I took time, and dug through scripture. I spent days going to the park and spending time with God and allowing Him to lead me into verses that spoke about fasting and what it meant to fast. Isaiah 58 was one passage that really blew my mind, because God laid it out plainly for me to understand the basics of fasting. As this discipline was revealed to my spirit and body, I began to start asking people about fasting and what God had taught them on the subject. As God grew this knowledge in me, I began to want to talk about it with everyone. I have been at a total of four churches in my whole life, and I have attended two Bible Colleges, yet it seems as though Biblical fasting had evaded my mind and my spirit. I went to my dad, and spoke frankly with Him, and was like dad why hasn't this spiritual discipline been taught to me? The Holy Spirit has led me to study this, but why haven't we studied this as a family? You see, being a grown adult I was able to have these conversations with my parents. I knew that my dad cared about my spiritual walk, so why haven't I heard of this. I wasn't mad, I just wanted to know why people in my life had not been teaching me this incredible gift to pursue God. I was elated that God's Spirit spoke this into my life, because as God directed my studies, the discipline of biblical fasting was such a great weapon of those who call on the name of God. As time went on, I found myself talking to more people about what God was showing me. You see, it wasn't just enough for God to reveal to me the understanding of fasting and what it meant for my spiritual walk, I wanted more people to know this opportunity. I have found this statement to be true; when someone discovers something incredible, it is almost impossible for them not to share it. Today, I feel that God is leading me to share with you a message that will empower you to share who God is and what He has done in your life... Today we are going to look at 2 Corinthians 5:14-21.

I want to share with you the big idea first "Reconciliation comes from God, through Christ, for His glory." As humans, we have a desire and need to be reconciled for we are broken and sinful people. From God, we see that we have new reconciliation came into the world through Jesus, for the Glory of God. Today as I share the 3 points, I hope that you see that this reconciliation comes from God, through Christ, for His glory. From verse 15, we see that Christ has died for all, so that those who live may no longer live for themselves but will live for Him. The first experience we see in reconciliation is that Christ changes our purpose. When thinking about purpose, a lot of people immediately begin to think of the task that they call their work. But when we understand who God is and what God has done, we realize that purpose is much more than just the work that we do as a career. Now for some their purpose is fulfilled through their career. But I want you all to think of purpose as the thing that you were created for.

As you think about this, do you begin to see a difference in what your purpose was before Christ and after Christ? When we look at reconciliation we see that Christ has changed our purpose by reconciling us to God. Before Christ, we did not have relationship with God and there is no other way in which we can experience relationship with God other than through the death and resurrection of Christ. The work of Christ in His death and resurrection led us to a place where relationship with God is attainable, not through our own power but through Christ.

The question that I am constantly asking myself is, "why would God want to reconcile me, a sinner, to Him?" What could He have for me that He would desire to have a relationship with me? The answer? It's pretty simple, God wants to reconcile us and change our purpose, because He wants us to live our lives with a purpose much greater than what we could want for ourselves... You see, we desire the things that gratify our flesh, or things that we see as valuable. But how often do we see things as valuable for a time period but then realize that they lose value over time. For me, college sports was this thing. I valued college sports on a fanatic level. Meaning I would revolve my schedule around being able to watch the UNC basketball games.

As I grew older and realized the things that truly matter in life, I began to realize that the value I once placed on watching and focusing on really weren't valuable to me anymore.

What happens when we do the same with our purpose? What happens when we value things for a time, but then as we grow we begin to see that they are not so valuable? This is what God is wanting to reconcile. Our purpose in God is something that is greater than anything that this world can offer us. From education to career, the value that God has placed on our purpose of living for Him trumps everything. The major difference between our value and God's value, is this, God never changes Himself, and through that the things that are valuable to Him are things that have been valuable for all eternity, and will continue to be valued throughout all eternity.

But with our purpose being changed by Christ, through this reconciliation, God has given us a new purpose. Let's look at Galatians 4:1-7. Here we see that God has given new purpose because of what Christ has done for us. We are no longer slaves, but God sent His Holy Spirit to us to be known by Him and to lead us to fulfill the new purpose which He has poured out over us. Look at Saul/Paul Galatians 2:20

When we understand that Christ has changed our purpose and made our lives to be lived for Him, every aspect of our lives begin to change also. We can no longer continue to live the same way for we cannot fulfill the purpose of which God is now giving to us.

Thinking on this fact, that we cannot live the same way and still achieve the purpose of which we have now been called, we begin to understand that we no longer possess the ability to live up to the standard that we will be judged. All humans will be judged by God according to His law, and we will all stand before God and give an account for the life we live. Unfortunately, we do not have the power to live up to the life that God has called us to live. I mean think about this. Has anyone ever said that they would come to God when they had their life fixed? Meaning that they would somehow fix the sin problem they have and then they would turn to God. How ridiculous is that? We know that no one will ever live up to God's standard and so why would we try this? If we want reconciliation with God, then we must rely on God's power to change us. This leads us to the second experience we see in reconciliation Christ changes our power.

When we look at verse 15 of 2 Corinthians 5, we see that anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. This led me to think about God creating humans. You see, when God created man, He created us in His image. So why would God need to create us new? Because of our sin that has corrupted the person and creation that God made. We are a new creation because God has changed the sin problem in us and has made it to where we do not have to be slaves to sin, but now that we have power to over. As I thought about this in scripture and in my life, I thought about Saul/Paul again. You see, God had created Saul in His image, but sin had made Saul into someone whom God did not want to him to be. You see this is where we deal with the mystery of reconciliation. Think about this, the only perfect and holy being, GOD, said that He wanted us to have relationship with Him. Yet God recognized that on our own power there was no way in which we could reconcile ourselves to God, because we cannot overcome the sin problem on our own. So God, desiring this communion with man, sent Jesus to die and be resurrected that there may be power by which man could be reconciled to Him.

I want you to think about this in your life. If you are in Christ, on what power do you stand? As I think about the life that I live, I realize that the power I stood on before salvation was mine. I tried to be better and do better, but I was constantly failing in the attempts to live a righteous life. But when I received salvation from God, I was made aware that I am not able to produce the power to live a righteous life, but rather that God through Christ must live through me. But take notice of your life, did God change the person that He created? Were you created not in His image but then He created you new in His image? Of course not, rather He created us in His image in the beginning but when we experience salvation and reconciliation to God, then He takes what He created and gives power to it. Look at 2 Timothy 1:7 where Paul tells Timothy that God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and self-control. God does not allow us to continue to walk in a spirit that is not able to live the life He has called us to, instead through Christ our power is changed and we are empowered by God's Spirit who now lives in us.

Because God had a great purpose planned for us, Ephesians 2:10, He has changed the power of which we live by. We are called to walk in this purpose and to be empowered by the Spirit of God, so that we can fulfill the calling of sharing the mystery of reconciliation to the world. Look at 2 Corinthians 5:19, where Paul explains that we have been entrusted with the message of reconciliation to God.

Since God has changed our purpose and power through Jesus Christ, we then see that the things we pursue are changed. This is the third experience of reconciliation, Christ changes our pursuit. Now I want you to understand what I mean by Christ changed our pursuit. When you think about a pursuit, you most likely

think about achieving a goal or a police officer pursuing a criminal. What is happening in the pursuit, is that someone sees something that needs to happen and they go after the desired thing until they attain the goal. This is different from Christ changing our purpose, because our purpose is what God has created us for, by the desired pursuit, is a seeking to be used by God. While we live for Christ, if we do not pursue the experience of seeing others reconciled to God then we cannot achieve the full purpose of Christ in our lives. Why should we be content, as people who have been reconciled, with a world that is constantly drowning looking for the one thing that can fill their world, when we have been found by the One who can fulfill all that we could ever want? If we are reconciled to God and have experienced relationship with Christ, we cannot be content with the world not knowing of this mystery of reconciliation that God has entrusted to us. You see, Christ changes our pursuit because He changes our purpose and our power, so that we can be ambassadors for Christ, which we may share with the world the reconciliation which have already received. Look at 2 Corinthians 5:20, Paul tells us that we are ambassadors for Christ. I love the idea that God has chosen to take us, make us His own, change us, and use us to share this reconciliation. Think about it, God does not need anything that we can offer. We can give to God nothing that He needs, because God is not dependent upon anything. Even though God could make His appeal to the whole world on His own, He instead decided to use those who call on His name to make His appeal to the world. God doesn't need anyone but chooses to use the person that He has created you and me to be, to make His appeal to the world. Because He wanted us to have a role in the ministry of His word to the whole world, that we may be used by God for His glory. When God created Humans, He created a being that He knew He wanted to pursue. To the point that even when pursuit meant sending His only Son, to be beaten, mocked, and killed, for the very people who was doing this to Him. God has never stopped pursuing you or me.

When Christ changes our pursuit, we begin to pursue things that look radically different than what we were pursuing before Christ. But why? Because Christ has changed our purpose and the power we live by, which means that the pursuit we have is now for God first and the world to receive reconciliation second.

As I thought about my pursuit for God and reconciliation, I realized that God has drawn me into relationship with Him, but my ambassadorship to the world is a pursuit given when we walk in the spirit. You see, in Galatians 5:25, says that if we live by the Spirit, then we will walk in step with the Spirit. If we walk in step with the Spirit of God, then we will be changed in our purpose by Christ, we will be empowered by Christ, and our pursuit will led us to God and reconciliation, where we fulfill the call of God in our lives.

I want you to understand why this walking in step with the Spirit is so important. Let me share with you something I have noticed in the physical that relates to the spiritual aspect of our lives. Walking with Chantal. When we walk in step with the Spirit, Christ changes our pursuit from what we desire to the things that God desires, which is reconciliation for the whole world. That all people would come to know Christ as their savior and that their purpose, power, and pursuit would Change for the sake of God's glory.

Check out this passage in Romans 11:36, all things are from, through, and for God's glory. When we say that we have new purpose, it is because God has given it to us. We receive new purpose from God. When we say that we have new power, it is because of the power of God in us through Christ. And when we say that we have a new pursuit, it is for God's glory. We as Christ followers do not seek glory for our name, instead we seek to bring glory to God. From whom all things are given, through whom all things are derived, and for all things will praise.

As God gave me this message, I felt it should be titled "The mystery revealed to..." because to the lost world, there is a mystery why Christians live a life the way that they do, and why anyone would serve to become great. But through studying, I have found that "when we become reconciled to God, Christ changes how we live, who we live for, and why we live a certain way, so that through our lives we, the reconciled people, may help others find reconciliation in Christ, so that the glory of God may be shown to be the greatest triumph that has ever been. One day we will all proclaim this simple truth that God's glory cannot be rivaled and that He is the victorious One. We can either play a part as an ambassador revealing this mystery to the world, or we can sit back in a church thinking that we are golden because we have our get out of Hell free card. The truth is that God has given us a new purpose, with new power, and given us a new pursuit, so why would we sit back to waste away until we see Him face to face.

So where will you reveal this mystery? Will it be in the colleges that these students are going? Will it be in this church as we seek to fulfill Christ mission? Will it be in your job, where you serve men, but serve God by honoring those whom He has put you around?

This mystery is one that needs to be shared. If you don't believe me then let me share with you a part of my heart. Reconciliation is for the world, that God would move in people's hearts and draw them to Him. People are dying every day and are going to Hell. Why we would sit back and just let it happen. For me, I want to stand in this world and allow God's purpose, God's power, and God's pursuit to change my life because of what God has allowed me to experience. I will not be unchanged by Christ, for the truth is, Christ changes us in reconciliation and is constantly growing us to be more like Him.