

A New You in a New Year

2 Corinthians 5:12-21

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We are not commanding ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

2 Corinthians 5:12-21, cont.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:12-21, cont.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The Troubled Triumphant Church

- Corinth – great beginning, but were divided by strong personalities – “carnal” or “fleshly”
- “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us” (2 Cor. 4:6-7).

Returning to the Basics of the Christian Life

- The higher calling
- The new reality
- The new purpose

1. Recognize the higher calling to live unto Christ, 5:12-15

- **What is a Christian?**
 - Cultural “Christians”
 - Self-righteous “Christians”
 - Confessing Christians: believing in Christ, repenting of sin, growing in grace

Living unto Christ, 5:12-15

“We are not commanding ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”

2. Recognize the new reality of life in Christ, 5:16-18

- A new spiritual identity in Christ
- 5:16: “We regard no one according to the flesh.” Who does the world say that you are?
- 5:17: “If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”
- 5:18: “All this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself.”

3. Recognize the purpose of our new existence, 5:19-21

- 5:18-19: “The ministry of reconciliation ... the message of reconciliation”
- 5:20: “We are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us”
- 5:21: “For our sake he made him to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

The Christian Life is...

- A Divine Calling to be embraced
- A New Life to be received
- A New Purpose to be fulfilled