

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Life in Light of The Resurrection

2 Corinthians 4:7-5:10

Keywords: Easter, resurrection, hope, gospel, suffering, shame, endurance

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: The Apostle Paul was a man who took risks, lived life on the edge and suffered much because of the gospel message he brought wherever he traveled. Now he is

I. Introduction.

- A. I have two goals today.
 - 1. First to speak to those here who are not Christians, that you might understand what being a Christian looks like.
 - 2. Second, to speak to you who are Christians, to encourage you to press on in your life of following Jesus Christ, keeping the truth of the resurrection of Jesus forefront in your mind.
- B. Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-5:10.
 - 1. What is going on in this passage? The Christian is to live and serve in light of the resurrection.
 - 2. Everything we see and do is primarily not to be define by the now but in what is to come. All of this is because Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.
 - 3. In light of the sermon last week on Smyrna and the reality of suffering and the call to faithfully endure to death it is fitting to consider the critical relationship of endurance in the face of tribulation and the resurrection.
 - 4. In many ways you should listen to last week's sermon to better grasp this one.
- C. Background of Paul's situation in 2 Corinthians.

I. Resurrection power found in weakness (4:7-15).

- A. Vs 7 gives us the reality of believing in the gospel.
 - 1. Gospel is described as a "treasure." What is this treasure? It is explicated in vss 1-6.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- a. A life embracing the shame this age puts upon him. Recognizing that the gospel achieves its purpose one way or another in bringing people to Jesus or having them reject Him.
 - b. This leads him to acknowledge that it was God who worked His mercy in the heart of Paul so that instead of seeing Jesus as a person to hate and reject, He was a joy and revelation of God.
2. But. . .
- a. Instead of a victorious experience as defined by this current age, this wonderful, life-giving, God-revealing, sin-destroying message of good news is hidden in weakness and shame.
 - b. “Earthen vessels” simple, everyday pots that mean nothing and have no real value. Often used for chamber pots.
 - c. The hard lesson is that God has designed the life of a Christian to be one that is made up more of weakness than power and personal victory.
3. Why? That . . .
- a. The purpose is for when all is said and done that only the power of God is seen rather than the clever speech that we so love.
 - b. For Paul, and may we pray that it is true for us, there was a pressing apprehension that the gospel was never designed to be marketed, packaged, or sold.
 - c. He grasped that it sounds weak and even foolish for it was designed by God to be that way.
 - d. Only a power that is greater than the soul-killing spirit of this age can take a message like the gospel and make it something to be believed, loved, and life-giving.
 - e. Weakness and shame that is strength and honor:
 - (1) Matthew 16:21-26.
 - (2) 1 Corinthians 1:17-31.
 - (3) 1 Corinthians 2:1-9.
 - f. If you are waiting to speak to friends or family about the gospel when it won’t sound weak then you have only two choices. Never

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

share it, or not really give them the gospel and its call to believe and obey.

- g. We need to embrace the shame, the potential for scorn and speak of the gospel.

“I could never myself believe in God, if it were not for the cross. The only God I believe in is the One Nietzsche ridiculed as God on the cross.

In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it?

I have entered many Buddhist temples in different Asian countries and stood respectfully before the statue of the Buddha, his legs crossed, arms folded, eyes closed, the ghost of a smile playing round his mouth, a remote look on his face, detached from the agonies of the world.

But each time after a while I have had to turn away. And in imagination I have turned instead to that lonely, twisted, tortured figure on the cross, nails through hands and feet, back lacerated, limbs wrenched, brow bleeding from thorn-pricks, mouth dry and intolerably thirsty, plunged in God forsaken darkness.

That is the God for me! He laid aside his immunity to pain. He entered our world of flesh and blood, tears and death. He suffered for us. Our sufferings become more manageable in the light of his.

There is still a question mark against human suffering, but over it we boldly stamp another mark, the cross that symbolizes divine suffering.

The cross of Christ ... is God's only self-justification in such a world as ours...

‘The other gods were strong; but thou wast weak; they rode, but thou didst stumble to a throne; But to our wounds only God's wounds can speak, And not a god has wounds, but thou alone.’”

John R.W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ*

B. 8-15.

1. Paul now expands on his point from vs 7, putting shape and life to words that could easily be watered down or misconstrued.
2. Note in vss 8-9 Paul does not varnish the truth of his service to Jesus Christ. It is painful. It is not out of strength and victory.
3. What is important to see here is how the resurrection is to affect us here and now rather than simply at the end of this age.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- a. Vss 10-11 shows that we carry the dying of Jesus, which is the first part of each of those statements in vss 8-9.
 - b. But in doing so, as we endure and continue forward undaunted, we also proclaim and live out the resurrection life of Jesus as well, which is the second part of those vss.
4. In vss 13-14 we learn how being convinced of the resurrection of Jesus is the motivation to speak the gospel to others.
- a. Do you truly believe? Does this capture your mind?
 - b. Or is this sermon the moment where God begins to bring you back to the core of the Christian faith?
 - c. The promise of the resurrection is rooted in the faithfulness of God the Father. He raised His Son.
 - (1) In doing so one thing that this showed was that the work of Jesus Christ as the perfect sacrifice for our sin was accepted.
 - (2) A second thing is that the power of sin, which is death, could not hold Jesus.
 - d. Therefore, because of your connection with Jesus you and I shall be raised as well.
 - (1) The point is simple, you cannot lose as you trust your life and soul to Jesus.
 - (2) Key word is “knowing” for it speaks of confidence, or faith. Much more than merely acknowledging something or not arguing against something. It is something you bank your life upon.
 - (3) And therefore you are free to embrace the weakness and shame of the gospel in this age, knowing that this is designed by God so that His power is seen rather than our cleverness.
 - e. So let me ask you that question. Do you know that Jesus was raised? Do you know and are convinced that He shall raise you as well?

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

II. Resurrection vision produces endurance (4:16-5:5).

A. Therefore.

1. In light of what I just described. In light of the faithfulness of God to His promises. Therefore we do not lose heart.
 - a. Here is the heart cry missions.
 - b. Here is what confidence in God and the promise of the resurrection and eternal life looks like.
2. Paul is determined to fully embrace the shame of the gospel and what comes with it.
 - a. Remember that the church in Corinth has a slew of teachers coming in that are saying that Paul is not a true apostle and that the gospel he is teaching is not a true one.
 - (1) They point to the shamefulness of his message, how it is one of weakness not triumph.
 - (2) They offer a much nicer, cleaner and pleasant gospel.
 - (3) This sort of good news can be found in churches throughout our city and land. It is an American gospel.
 - b. But Paul simply says that though there are real and hard effects to believing and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ it does not affect how he lives.
3. The ability to stand firm in the time of hardship and tribulation, in persecution and suffering, is confidence in God's promise.
4. But when this happens then you can take all that this world throws at you and bear up under it. But it takes faith in God and then apply that faith so that you rightly interpret events.
 - a. Notice how Paul gives you a glimpse into his thought process:
 - b. A series of contrasts (4:16-5:1).
 - (1) outer - inner.
 - (2) decaying - renewing.
 - (3) Momentary - eternal.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- (4) Light affliction - a weight of glory.
- (5) Things seen - things not seen.
- (6) Earthly tent - building.
- (7) Torn down - eternal.
- c. This is what Paul meant back in vs 10 about carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus while also showing forth the life of Jesus.
- 5. It is normal for us to desire pleasure and rest. But it takes a life changed by God to see through the shame of the gospel and endure in our hope in God's faithfulness.
- 6. You can only endure suffering and call it light and momentary (17) when you see what it is producing.
 - a. You need to see the clear and necessary connection between this affliction and the glory that awaits those who by faith endure for the sake of Jesus Christ.
 - b. It is similar to Romans 8:17. Note the logic of that passage. Then vs 18 to show how this affects Paul's counsel. Think back to last week to what Jesus said to the suffering and persecuted church in Smyrna—"Stop being afraid."
 - c. In case you are wondering if this is just Paul saying these things consider 1 Peter 1:12-19, take them through the logic of this text.
- B. Indications of a resurrected life (5:1-5).
 - 1. It is not a vague hope, but one born out of knowledge (1).
 - a. Why do you and I know this?
 - b. Because God has promised it. Therefore we can rest even now.
 - 2. It does not pretend hard things happen (2-3).
 - a. Now is a time of groaning. We live in a broken, fallen and sin-filled age.
 - b. Our moments of respite are just that, moments.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- c. But notice that the groaning is not just because of the suffering. It is more because we are reminded that since there is suffering that we have not yet entered into the fulness of our salvation.
- 3. A resurrected life lives with anticipation (4).
 - a. This is one reason Paul told us in Romans 12 that we are not to be conformed to the thinking and wisdom of this age.
 - b. It is easy to go with the flow and seek our joy to be full now.
 - c. But in reality we are to be in a life that anticipates what is to come for that is what a Christian is designed to be and have. It is one of the strange privileges of speaking to dying Christians, their anticipation.
- 4. A resurrected life is one that sees the work of God in life (5).
 - a. He has not left us to our own devices and to suck it up in our own strength.
 - b. Each and every hardship and trial comes through the will of the sovereign God.
 - c. He has put us on this road and He knows its every twist and gully.
 - d. And He has not left us alone, but has given each of us the Holy Spirit to us as a pledge/a promise that He will not abandon us. (See also the logic of Ephesians 1:14 and 4:30, “day of redemption.”)
- C. And so Paul shows that because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the fact that we are vitally connected to Him through faith in the promises of God, we live a very different life right now in light of the promise and guarantee of our resurrection.

III. Resurrection certainty produces holiness (5:6-10).

- A. Paul now brings this whole thing back around to how we live in light of the promise of the resurrection.
 - 1. Notice how in 4:1 he said that he has not lost heart—because of the resurrection.
 - 2. Now he says in vs 6 that he is of good courage.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

3. This is what the resurrection does for us. It gives us the power to stand and press on. It gives us a certain and firm beacon on which to fix our eyes in the midst of pain and discouragement.
 4. This is the point of vs 7.
 - a. I can say with a high degree of confidence that when you are overcome with fear or resentment it is because you are living by sight.
 - b. It is necessary for you to go back to the Easter message of resurrection before you begin to see things differently and react differently as a result.
- B. Physical death is a reality but it is not what defines a Christian (8).
1. Few look forward to death though this is more true of those whose lives are secure and comfortable.
 2. But in death the Christian enters into the beginning stages of this promise of resurrection. They are with the Lord.
 3. Now they only wait for the final resurrection when they will be joined with the resurrected bodies forevermore.
- C. The promise of the resurrection also calls us to a life of holiness and care (9-10).
1. Paul now takes everything he has said and makes a summarization of it all.
 2. What motivates Paul? How does Paul make his many life decisions? When hardships and false accusations fly at him how will he work through them?
 - a. The answer is simple, what is pleasing to the Lord?
 - b. Think how different this is than how so often we think through a difficulty.
 - (1) Think of how complex we make the situations. And before you think that today we live in a more complex world realize that Paul's decisions were often at the level of life or death.
 - (2) Think on how self-centered our decisions are as well.
 - (a) We don't want to suffer.
 - (b) We don't want a loved one to suffer.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- (c) We want to be liked.
 - (d) We want to be promoted.
3. But it is not merely a desire to please the Lord that motivates Paul, it is because at the resurrection we shall face the judgment of the Lord.
- a. This is a reminder that we are not saved from our sin to continue in sin.
 - b. The gospel/good news is that through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ the power of sin is now broken. We do not have to give in to sin.
 - c. Frankly, when we do give in it simply means we have forgotten the resurrection and the judgment that comes with it.
4. Notice that this time of judgment is very individualistic (each one . . .).
5. What shall be judged? What you and I do as Christians.
6. What is the criteria of this judgment? Was it good or bad.
- a. It is that simple. No careful arguments that look for the loophole.
 - b. For those of you wondering how to figure out what is good or bad I would suggest that you probably are already over-thinking it all.
 - c. What is the motivation for your actions?
 - (1) To please God?
 - (2) To walk in true love for one another as Jesus loved you?
 - (3) To reject the call to conform yourself to this age?
 - (4) To pursue unity with one another?
 - (5) To see others well-being more than your own?
7. We learn in passage such as these that how we are called not only to believe and trust in the life and person of Jesus Christ but also to live in a manner that is proper and fitting.

IV. Conclusion.

- A. To those who are not a follower of Jesus Christ, understand the call of Jesus. It is a life that embraces both the death of Jesus and His life. This is not a call of fixing

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

your life in this age. It is not on how to be happy and fulfilled. It is the call to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ as your King. To take up the shame of the cross and carry it with you to the end. This only happens if you know that the death of Jesus was not the end.

- B. To those who are followers of Jesus Christ understand that your purpose is not found in the death of Christ but in His resurrection. It was there that your true enemies were fatally wounded. Victory is found because sin's grip is gone, swallowed up in the life of our Lord. Live in light of that truth. Shake off the slumbering temptations to just muddle along. Rise up each day with the glorious reality, Our God is not dead! He is alive, He is alive.