

Privilege of the Gospel

The Aim

Introduction: Last week the HOPE of the Gospel

- We know that when these bodies (tents) are dissolved, we have a new body not made with hands that is eternal.
- We grieve, waiting for the purpose of God already alive in us to be realized at the coming of Christ.
- We are confident that our future state of being, absent from the body and present with the Lord, will provide more meaningful intimacy with Him.
- We walk by faith until then!

That HOPE directs our AIM—the focus of today’s message!

Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. 2 Corinthians 5:9 NKJV

AIM—to please Him!

- Because of our hope—our highest aim, now and eternally will be to please Him.
- Paul’s injunction to Colossians

And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Colossians 3:17 NKJV

And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men. Colossians 3:23 NKJV

- In verses 10-21 sets forth five attitudes of the one whose aim is to please Christ.
- Deal with them in reverse order in text

I. One whose aim is to please Christ will acknowledge a sense of urgency and accept their personal responsibility on Christ’s behalf.

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. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 NKJV

A. Note first the message of reconciliation

1. Original creation—all brought into being by the Word of God
2. Also true of “new creation” (v. 17)
 - a. New soul
 - b. New body
 - c. New worship
 - d. New man
 - e. New Covenant/new promise
 - f. New Jerusalem one day

“Behold, I make all things new.”

3. Reconcile (katalasso)

- a. To change or exchange (from enemy to friend)
- b. God (author and finisher)

“Reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ” (v. 18)

- c. All begins and ends with God
- d. All performed through Christ

For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 2:5 NKJV

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. John 14:6 NKJV

4. Sin tore us apart—man in rebellion to God—God and His wrath
5. Irreconcilable differences

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV

6. Through Christ—differences bridged

B. If I want to please Him—I acknowledge a sense of urgency.

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. 2 Corinthians 5:20 NKJV

1. Pleading (parakateo—come to side and call them)
2. Imploping (deomai)—beg, as binding oneself

NOTE: Urgency

C. If I want to please Him I accept my responsibility

D. Condition of the world

1. Lost
2. Message of reconciliation is what they need

(ILL) Billy Graham sound check—John 3:16 Larry Ross Media firm—multi-media for 23 years—*If I can't communicate the Gospel clearly the sermon, at least the cameraman will have heard it.*

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear. 1 Peter 3:15 NKJV

Reach3

If I want to please Him, acknowledge urgency and accept responsibility.

II. One whose aim is to please Christ will see others through the lens of the Imago Dei.

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. 2 Corinthians 5:16-17 NKJV

A. The world's standard of value is respect of persons in their outward appearance.

For we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have an answer for those who boast in appearance and not in heart. 2 Corinthians 5:12 NKJV

B. But God looks on the heart

For there is no partiality with God. Romans 2:11 NKJV

And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him. Ephesians 6:9-10 NKJV

But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. Colossians 3:25 NKJV

1. Race, gender, socio-economic status should not guide our vision of others.
2. The lesson Jesus was teaching

While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. 47 Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You." 48 But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" 49 And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother." Matthew 12:46-50 NKJV

C. Paul knew Christ after the flesh?

1. Knew Him as a crucified Messianic pretender
2. But Damascus road happened
3. New view of Christ

D. This is what happens when someone embraces salvation

1. See Christ differently
2. See others differently
3. Not through flesh, but Imago Dei

III. One whose aim is to please Christ will unashamedly surrender to the constraining love of Christ.

For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; or if we are of sound mind, it is for you. 14 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. 2 Corinthians 5:13-15 NKJV

A. Paul criticized for being “beside himself”

(existemi=ecstatic expression or mystic or insanity)

1. One of the charges leveled against him
2. Family of Jesus

But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind." Mark 3:21 NKJV

3. Accusation of Festus

Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!" Acts 26:24 NKJV

B. Paul was refusing to be safe—passionate about Christ!

Helen Keller (1st deaf, blind, person to earn a bachelor's degree)

"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing. Security does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than exposure. The fearful are caught as often as the bold."

C. Christ's love compelled Paul—He surrendered

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. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 NKJV

1. One died for all
2. All potentially dead to old life (I am crucified)
3. So we may live
4. Hell is real

(ILL)—Dick Brogden—This Gospel

Nothing Other than Preaching

We must surrender the idea that the peoples of this world will be won by anything other than preaching. The verb "preached" comes from the Greek word kerysso. It means the verbal announcing, the spoken proclamation, and the audible hearing of a message.

In Acts 6, the apostles said, "it is not right that we should give up preaching the word of god to serve tables... But we will devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the world" (vv. 2, 4). Stephen is chosen, and as a result "the word of God continued to increase, and the number of disciples multiplied... Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people... but they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking... and they set up false witnesses saying, "This man never ceases to speak... for we heard him say..." (vv. 7-8, 10, 13).

It is academic to us that super apostles, leaders, luminaries, pastors, and clergy devote themselves to prayer and proclamation. But note what pedestrian Stephen, the table waiter, did—he opened his mouth and spoke. Grace, power, signs, and wonders accompanying, Stephen did not shut up. His spoken wisdom—controversial as it was—could not be countermanded. We know nothing of the tables that Stephen served, but we have 53 verses in Acts 7 of Stephen's proclaimed sermon.

"Words, words, words," says Eliza Doolittle. "I am so sick of words." She has a point because the words of man are pompous, hypocritical, and self-serving. Humanity is sick of the empty words of the do-littles and do-nothings of the world. The cure is not to overcompensate and say little. The cure is to open our mouths, die to our silence, and proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ because faith still comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. And how will they hear unless we preach (Romans 10:14)?

The forces of your age seek to muzzle you. The siren song of respectability urges moderation. Powers within, powers without, and powers from below make it their one ambition to silence the compelling, consistent verbalized presentation of the gospel. You are pressured not to offend. You are persuaded not to inflame. You are badgered towards suffocating

tolerance. Impress on your thinking anew, Jesus' words brought division. He came to bring not peace, but a sword. The words of John the Baptist brought his beheading. Stephen's steady sermons summoned stones down on his head. Yes, in the kingdom we attack injustice wherever we find it, but you want a justice issue? Let us not waver from the greatest of them all! Not all are poor, not all are trafficked, not all are illiterate, not all lack clean water, and not all have AIDS, but we have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Sin is the universal malady. You want a justice issue? Men and women, boys and girls, young and old, rich and poor, they perish. They die eternally. They suffer. They march in their legions towards damnable hell, not because of the excesses or hypocrisy of our fathers, but because of our thundering silence!

Our prayers, our finances, our mission, and our action must prioritize the proclamation of the gospel among the unreached. Entire people groups are damned and rumble towards incalculable horror because the church will not proclaim in power. The unparalleled injustice of our day is simply this: 6,500 unreached people groups—or two billion people—have not heard the gospel. And yes, faith comes by hearing. The unreached are blind because the church is mute and because of our self-protecting silence. God have mercy on us all! We must surrender our words, and our lack of them, for this gospel must be preached to every people and then the end will come.

If I want to please Him (my aim) His love will constrain me—I will surrender!

IV. One whose aim is to please Christ, will guard the integrity and perception of their witness.

Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences. 12 For we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have an answer for those who boast in appearance and not in heart. 2 Corinthians 5:11-12 NKJV

A. Unlike the point before, this persuasion of men is not about the claims of Christ.

1. Paul is seeking to persuade men about his own integrity.
2. Accusations against him as a fraud
3. He is saying...I know how serious this is—the terror of the Lord
4. I would not live deceitfully
5. Sought to guard the integrity of His witness

B. Those who want to honor Christ, guard their reputation and character

1. At Walmart
2. Hotel
3. On the phone
4. At a restaurant
5. Words, actions

(ILL) Minister's Conference –Pastor ahead of me in line

6. Flea the appearance of evil—Guard your witness

- V. One whose aim is to please Christ will keep the reality of judgment always before them.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 2 Corinthians 5:10 NKJV

- A. Last week believer's hope—hope of being transformed into His likeness
- B. But does not exonerate us from considering ourselves right now
- C. There is for every believer of Jesus—a day of reckoning—ALL

For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things (done) in the body, according to what he hath done, whether (it be) good or bad. 2 Corinthians 5:10 ASV

“Made manifest” phrieroo (fen-ay-rah-o)

- To be exposed
- To be laid bare
- All hypocrisy, pretense, stripped away

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:12-13 NKJV

- D. Not to determine justification—but reward

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 NKJV

Do you want to please Him?

Conclusion:

That Which is Hidden Will Be Revealed

James Denney, 1856-1917

It is Christians only who are in view here. All that we have hidden shall be revealed. The things we have done in the body will come back to us, whether good or bad. Every pious thought, and every thought of sin; every secret prayer, and every secret curse; every unknown deed of charity, and every hidden deed of selfishness, we will see them all again, and though we have not remembered them for years, and perhaps have forgotten them altogether, we shall have to acknowledge that they are our own. Is not that a solemn thing to stand at the end of life?

In the choir it is easy to fake the words, but one day we shall all sing solo before God.—Author Unknown

True Story: Henry Morrison had been a faithful missionary in Africa for 40 years. When he finally headed home he found himself on the same boat as the American President, Theodore Roosevelt. As they entered New York harbor, Morrison began to feel quite dejected as he saw the great fanfare that Roosevelt was receiving. 'Surely I should get some recognition after 40 years in Africa', Morrison thought to himself. It was at this stage that Morrison heard a still small voice say to him—'Henry, you're not home yet!'

You see, there is a 'fanfare' coming for those that are faithful to the Lord. And it comes when we truly 'arrive home'. Nothing has been overlooked, nothing has been forgotten. Your life has been noted and recorded. So make the most of 'today' by living for 'tomorrow'.

“Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he had done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.” Revelation 22:12-13