

5. What does Paul mean when he says that the “old has gone, the new has come” in those who are a new creation in Christ (vs. 17)?

Sin separates all people from God (Isa. 59:2; Rom. 3:10-23). God is completely justified as plaintiff and yet it is God who acts seeks and makes reconciliation. This reconciliation and righteousness is made possible without our effort by Jesus’ death (Rom. 3:21,22; Eph. 2:8,9). Paul says God made “him who had no sin to be sin for us” (vs. 21).

6. Consider the following descriptions of Christ: Jn. 8:46; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 Jn. 3:5; Gal. 3:13; Romans 5:1-11; 2 Cor. 5:14-21. How do these support the “Book of Common Prayer 1662” where it is said that Jesus Christ made “a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.”
7. What do you understand the role of an ambassador to be? What then, does this metaphor mean for Christians and the message of reconciliation?
8. If Christ has made reconciliation with God possible for all, why must people be urged to “be reconciled” to God? (vs. 20)

9. How might your own assurance that you are reconciled to God through Christ make you a better ambassador of that good news for others?



ten medical inventions: 10. Blood bank 9. Ultrasound 8. CPR 7. Penicillin 6. Polio vaccination 5. Oral contraception 4. Insulin 3. Pacemaker 2. Genetic Engineering 1. Band-aids (source www.inventors.about.com)

#5 The remedy of reconciliation 2 Corinthians 5:1-21

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.” 2 Corinthians 5:18,19 NIV

Warm Up

Begin your study with a mock game-show like “Family Feud” with two teams opposed to each other required to list the most common responses to a general knowledge question (or like David Letterman’s Top Ten). Ask each group to come up with a list of ten of the most important medical inventions of the 20th Century (give one point for each answer corresponding to the list on p.4)



Q. What remedies do people most commonly seek out to cure their relationship difficulties and conflicts?

Introduction READ 2 Corinthians 5:1-21

In chapter 4, the apostle explained his methods (v. 1-4), his message (v. 5-6), his reliance on God (v. 7), his own testimony (v. 8-12), and his motives (v.13-18). Paul’s great emphasis is God’s power and his own frailty. He goes further in chapter 5:1-10 to explain the great tension of wanting to be with the Lord (beyond death) and living by faith in that promise in the now despite the suffering incurred. In verse 11 he returns to his motivation and message and drills down to the essential core.

1. The Heavenly Tent—2 Corinthians 5:1-10

This section belongs with 4:16-18. Paul has in view his present struggles and his future hope.



1. In verses 1-4, what does the apostle mean by our “earthly tent” being destroyed? He says that Christians will “not be found naked” but will be clothed. How do these verses relate to 2 Cor. 4:14 and 1:9-10. Compare his teaching in 1 Cor. 15:12-57 and discuss the matter of a future, personal resurrection.
2. The life of the new age to come is produced by the Spirit of God, a guarantee or deposit (see vs. 5 and Eph. 1:13,14). How might we experience this work of the Spirit?
3. What does it mean to live by faith and not by sight in this life?(see verses. 6-9)

In Roman cities the governor sat on the judgment seat to hear cases. Soon though, Paul envisages a heavenly court room will come to pass (1 Cor. 4:5). Faith in Christ assures “no condemnation” (Rom. 8:1), but judgment and evaluation is coming.

4. How might the vision of a heavenly judge motivate the use of our time that remains on earth? What does Paul suggest is the purpose of life in the earthly tent (mortal body)?
5. Does the “judgment seat of Christ” (vs. 10) relate to Christians only? Why? Why not?
6. How do you understand the tension between the news of a guarantee of forgiveness and reconciliation (5:19) with the promise that God will judge what is done “in the body” (5:10).



2. The Ministry Of Reconciliation - 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

In the “warm up” we were thinking about remedies. Now Paul addresses the most significant remedy for human beings in all of history—reconciliation with God.

1. What do you think “fear” (or reverence) for the Lord has to do with persuading people about the Gospel of Christ (vs. 11)?
2. In verse 14 Paul reveals the chief motivator for his ministry. Compare Paul’s former compulsion in Acts 9:1 and Galatians 1:13. What sort of “love” now compels him to live for the sake of the Gospel? (e.g. Gal. 2:20; Rom. 5:8; John 15:13)

“Egocentricity has given way to Christocentricity” Paul Barnett

3. How might the love of Christ for you change your daily motivations and re-order your priorities? What about those of your church?

Newcomers to the Corinthian scene preached “a different gospel” (2 Cor. 11:4). Jesus was presented more as a law-keeping “Moses”, not the divine Son of the living God. Paul’s own pre-conversion opinion of Jesus of Nazareth certainly excluded any divinity, but after encountering the risen Jesus (Acts 26:12-18) Paul could say “God was in Christ”(5:19).

4. In verses 16-17 what do you think Paul means for us to regard no one from a worldly point of view (literally “according to the flesh”)?

“New Creation” (vs. 17), like new birth “from above” in John’s Gospel points to God’s new and creative work of salvation through faith in Christ in all who believe. For Paul, love had supplanted hate (vs. 14); serving Christ superseded self-centredness (vs. 15); and, acknowledgment of Jesus as Christ and Lord has blown away ignorance (vs. 16).