



Bethel South Sermon Notes – “What Are You Living For?”

Speaker: Ps Mike Gowans

Series: Awesome God

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:9–20

Main Idea

The fear of the Lord makes pleasing Christ our goal, the love of Christ makes living for Him our response, and the gospel of Christ makes reconciliation our mission.

1. The Fear of the Lord Makes Pleasing Christ Our Goal

2 Corinthians 5:9

“So we make it our goal to please him...”

Everyone is living for something.

For many people, the driving goal of life becomes:

- **Success**
- **Security**
- **Comfort**
- **Approval**
- **Achievement**

For Paul, there was one goal that governed everything else: **pleasing Jesus**.

The fear of the Lord means standing in such awe of God's holiness, greatness, and majesty that **His opinion becomes the opinion that matters most**.

The fear of people leads us toward compromise.

The fear of God gives us courage.

We Will Give an Account

Paul reminds us that we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

For those who belong to Jesus, this isn't a judgment determining our salvation. Jesus has already secured our salvation through the cross.

But we will give an account for **what we did with the life He gave us**.

That reality should not produce condemnation. It should produce **holy sobriety**.

Our lives belong to Jesus, and we should want them to count for eternity.

2. The Fear of the Lord Gives Us Urgency

2 Corinthians 5:11

“Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others.”

When eternity becomes real to us, it changes the way we see people.

We know:

- **Eternity is real.**
- **Sin separates people from God.**
- **Jesus has made reconciliation possible.**
- **The Gospel is too important to keep to ourselves.**

The fear of the Lord creates an urgency to share Jesus with others.

Following Jesus wholeheartedly may cause some people to misunderstand us or even think we're “out of our minds.”

That's okay.

We live for an audience of One.

3. The Love of Christ Makes Living for Him Our Response

2 Corinthians 5:14–15

“For Christ’s love compels us...”

The fear of the Lord shapes our priorities, but the **love of Christ compels our response.**

When we begin to understand how deeply Jesus loves us and what He has done for us, we cannot continue living only for ourselves.

Jesus died for us so that we would now **live for Him.**

Christianity isn't simply adding Jesus to the life we already wanted.

It's surrendering our lives to the One who gave His life for us.

4. In Christ, You Are a New Creation

2 Corinthians 5:17

“If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

Your past doesn't define you.

Your failures don't define you.

Your shame doesn't define you.

Your struggles don't define you.

Jesus does.

In Christ, we have been made new. We no longer have to live according to who we used to be because Jesus has given us an entirely new identity.

5. The Gospel Makes Reconciliation Our Mission

2 Corinthians 5:18–20

God didn't only reconcile us to Himself.

He gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

Every follower of Jesus is now an **ambassador for Christ**.

An ambassador represents another kingdom. Wherever we go, we carry the message and heart of our King.

Our mission is to tell a broken world:

You can be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.

Final Challenge

Ask yourself: **What is actually governing the way I live my life?**

The fear of the Lord calls us to make pleasing Jesus our goal.

The love of Christ compels us to stop living for ourselves.

The Gospel gives us a mission worth giving our lives to.

We have been reconciled so that we can become **ambassadors of reconciliation**.

Don't simply receive the Gospel. **Carry it.**

Look for opportunities this week to represent Jesus, share the Good News, and help someone else encounter the God who reconciled you to Himself.

Discussion Questions

1. Paul says, “We make it our goal to please Him.” What goals or opinions can compete with pleasing Jesus in your everyday decisions?
2. How does knowing that we will one day give an account of our lives to Jesus change the way you think about your time, priorities, relationships, and calling?
3. Ps Mike contrasted the fear of people with the fear of God. Where are you most tempted to compromise because of what other people might think, and how could the fear of the Lord give you greater courage?
4. “Christ’s love compels us.” How should receiving and understanding the love of Jesus change the way we live for Him and relate to the people around us?

5. **Scripture says we are ambassadors for Christ who have been given the ministry of reconciliation. Who has God placed in your life that you could intentionally pray for, encourage, or share the Gospel with this week?**