



# SERMON SERIES STUDY GUIDE

## Ministers of Reconciliation, Pt. 2

Pastor John Riggs

### Main Scriptures:

- 2 Corinthians 5:14-21
- 2 Corinthians 5:17-20
- 2 Corinthians 5:10-11
- 2 Corinthians 4:1-12
- 2 Corinthians 4:3-5
- Ephesians 5:15-17
- Ephesians 2:1-3
- Psalm 90:12
- Romans 5:9-11
- Romans 10:9-15
- Romans 1 (referenced thematically regarding God giving people over)
- 1 Corinthians (referenced regarding the Bema seat judgment and wood, hay, and stubble)
- 1 Peter 3:18
- Philippians 2:12
- Acts 4:12
- John 3:16
- 1 John 3:16
- John 15:13

### KEY POINTS:

- Every born-again believer holds the ministry of reconciliation, not just ordained ministers or clergy
- Reconciliation means being decisively changed from a position of enmity with God to a position of sonship and adoption through faith in Christ
- God took the initiative to reconcile humanity to Himself because no person can climb to a holy God through religious effort or moral achievement

- The ministry of reconciliation carries a stewardship that involves responsibility and a future accountability before the judgment seat of Christ
- Two things compel faithful stewardship of this ministry: reverent fear of the Lord, knowing all will give account, and the constraining agape love of Christ
- The love referenced is not sentimental or emotional but sacrificial, demonstrated supremely in Christ laying down His life, and it is this same love that drives believers to risk rejection and persecution in sharing the gospel
- The primary purpose of the Christian life is to know God and to make God known
- The gospel is the only means of reconciliation; Jesus Christ is the sole provision for salvation, and there is no other name by which people can be saved
- Believers function as mail carriers, responsible only for delivering the message faithfully, not for the response of those who hear it
- The Christian life requires continual dying to self so that the life of Christ may be manifested and others may receive life through the gospel
- The current age is marked by increasing moral depravity, which Scripture describes as the result of God giving people over to the consequences of rejecting Him
- Christians must be discerning and grounded in the Word of God, particularly regarding eschatology, avoiding dogmatic positions that could leave them spiritually unprepared for what is ahead
- Artificial intelligence and emerging global systems are reshaping humanity in ways that parallel biblical descriptions of the last days, making spiritual vigilance essential
- The love of most people will grow cold as wickedness increases, making it necessary for believers to actively stoke their love for Christ and for the lost.

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**Question and Answer:**

Paul describes the love of Christ as something that 'controls' or 'compels' us, using language that suggests being arrested as a prisoner -- in what ways have you experienced the love of Christ as a compelling force in your life, and where have you felt that compulsion growing cold?

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The sermon draws a distinction between God coming down to man in Christianity versus man climbing up to God in other religions -- how does this foundational difference shape the way you understand salvation and your relationship with God?

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The pastor describes stewardship, responsibility, and accountability as three interconnected realities of the ministry of reconciliation -- which of these three do you find most challenging to embrace personally, and why?

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The sermon warns that deception in the last days will not appear as a stark contrast between right and wrong but will feel gradual and gray -- what spiritual disciplines or practices do you believe are most essential for guarding against this kind of subtle deception?

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5 that God was reconciling the world to Himself through Christ, not counting their sins against them, and has entrusted believers with this message -- how does the weight of that trust change the way you think about your everyday interactions with unbelievers?

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The pastor argues that dying to yourself is a repeated, ongoing requirement of the Christian life and is necessary for the gospel to produce life in others -- what specific areas of self-denial do you sense God calling you toward in order to more faithfully carry the message of reconciliation?

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The sermon connects Romans 1 and the progressive giving-over of a society to its sinful desires with the current cultural moment -- how does understanding God's judgment in this form change the urgency with which you approach sharing the gospel with those around you?

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The pastor challenges the assumption that a pre-tribulation rapture is a settled matter and warns that an overconfidence in that view could itself become a form of spiritual unpreparedness -- how does your understanding of end times theology affect the seriousness with which you pursue holiness and gospel witness today?

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The sermon identifies the primary purpose of every believer as first knowing God and then making God known -- in an honest assessment of your current life, which of these two purposes receives more of your intentional attention, and what would it look like to bring them into greater balance?

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The pastor observes that new believers often cannot stop talking about Jesus, but that prolonged exposure to lukewarm Christianity can extinguish that fire -- what practices, relationships, or habits do you believe are most responsible for either stoking or smothering a believer's passion for Christ and His gospel?

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## **Small Group Guide: Ministers of Reconciliation**

### **Based on 2 Corinthians 5:14-21**

#### **Overview**

This guide is designed to help your group dig deeper into the message of reconciliation and what it means for every believer to serve as an ambassador for Christ. The sermon drew from 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 and challenged believers to take seriously their God-given ministry of sharing the gospel with others.

#### **Key Takeaways**

- 1. Reconciliation Is God's Work, Received by Faith** God did not wait for humanity to climb to Him. Through Christ, God came to us. The entire provision of our reconciliation was accomplished by God and is received through faith in Jesus Christ alone.
- 2. Every Believer Is a Minister of Reconciliation** This ministry does not belong exclusively to pastors or church leaders. Every born-again believer has been entrusted with the message of reconciliation and is called to serve as an ambassador for Christ.
- 3. Stewardship, Responsibility, and Accountability** Being entrusted with the message of reconciliation carries weight. We are stewards of this message, responsible to share it faithfully, and we will one day give an account before Christ for what we did with it.
- 4. Two Things Compel Us** According to 2 Corinthians 5:11 and 5:14, two realities should drive us to share the gospel: a reverent, holy fear of the Lord knowing we will stand before Him, and the love of Christ that has arrested and compelled us.
- 5. Dying to Self Is Part of the Mission** Drawing from 2 Corinthians 4:1-12, the sermon made clear that carrying this message requires dying to ourselves repeatedly, setting aside fear of rejection, persecution, and relational loss, so that life in Christ might reach those who are spiritually dead.

## **Opening Question**

Think back to the moment you first understood what Christ had done for you. What was that experience like, and how did it affect how you related to the people around you?

## **Discussion Questions**

### **On Reconciliation**

1. The sermon described the Greek word "katalasso," meaning to decisively change or bring estranged parties into harmony. In your own words, what does it mean to be reconciled to God? How does understanding that God came to us, rather than requiring us to climb to Him, change how you think about the gospel?
2. The pastor described the position every person is in outside of Christ as one of enmity with God, awaiting His wrath. How does keeping this reality in mind affect the way you see the people around you who do not know Christ?
3. Romans 10:14-15 raises a series of questions about how people can believe if they have never heard. What does this passage stir in you personally when you think about people in your life who have not heard or responded to the gospel?

### **On Stewardship and Accountability**

4. The sermon defined stewardship as the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care. How seriously do you treat the ministry of reconciliation as a stewardship? What does responsible management of this trust look like in your everyday life?
5. The pastor pointed to 2 Corinthians 5:10 and the reality that every believer will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account for what they did with what they were given. How does this reality shape or challenge the way you are living right now?
6. The sermon referenced 1 Corinthians and the image of a believer's works being tested by fire, with some things burning up like wood, hay, and stubble. What do you think that image is meant to communicate, and what does it motivate you to change?

### **On the Love of Christ**

7. The pastor described the love of Christ using the Greek word that means to arrest as a prisoner, to compel, constrain, or hold a person. When did you last feel genuinely compelled or arrested by the love of Christ? What does it look like when that love begins to grow cold?
8. The sermon drew a comparison between the sacrificial love we honor in soldiers who lay down their lives for others and the love of Christ who did the same. Why do you think it is easier for people to celebrate that kind of sacrifice in a military context but feel uncomfortable with it in a church context?
9. The pastor was transparent about his own struggle to keep his love for Christ hot in the face of the world's increasing wickedness. How do you personally guard against

growing cold or indifferent in your love for God and for the people who need the gospel?

### **On Being an Ambassador**

10. The sermon described the role of an ambassador as carrying a message from a King to the people, with no personal stake in how the message is received. How does thinking of yourself as a mail carrier rather than the author of the message take pressure off you when sharing the gospel?
11. The pastor challenged the group to think specifically about family members, spouses, and friends who do not know Christ. Who in your life came to mind during that part of the message? What has held you back from sharing the gospel with that person?
12. Drawing from 2 Corinthians 4:8-12, the sermon described the Christian life as one of being afflicted but not crushed, perplexed but not despairing, struck down but not destroyed, and always carrying the death of Jesus so that His life might be seen in us. What does dying to yourself look like in a practical, everyday sense as you pursue this ministry?

### **Practical Applications**

#### **This Week, Choose One of the Following:**

- Write down the name of one person in your life who does not know Christ. Commit to praying for that person every day this week and ask God to open a door for a conversation about the gospel.
- Reflect on 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 each morning this week. Before you start your day, remind yourself that you are an ambassador for Christ and ask God to make you aware of opportunities He places in front of you.
- Have an honest conversation with God about the temperature of your love for Him. If it has grown cold, confess that and ask Him to rekindle it. Consider what spiritual disciplines, such as prayer, Scripture reading, or fasting, might help stoke that fire.
- If there is a family member or close friend you have been avoiding this conversation with, ask God for courage and wisdom this week to take one step toward that conversation, even if it is simply letting them know you care about them.
- Read through 2 Corinthians 4:1-12 as a group or on your own and meditate on what it means to be a jar of clay carrying a great treasure. Journal about what that image means for how you see your own weaknesses in the context of this ministry.

### **Closing Reflection**

The sermon closed with this challenge: we are living in an urgent moment. The harvest is plentiful, the workers are few, and the days are pressing. The ministry of reconciliation is not optional for the believer, it is the central purpose of our life in Christ. To know God and to make God known.

Close your time together by praying specifically for the people each group member named, asking God to open hearts, soften resistance, and give each of you the courage and love to carry the message faithfully.

### Suggested Scripture for Further Study

- 2 Corinthians 5:14-21
- 2 Corinthians 4:1-12
- Romans 10:9-15
- Ephesians 2:1-10
- Ephesians 5:15-17
- Psalm 90:12
- 1 Peter 3:18
- Romans 5:9-11
- John 15:13
- 1 John 3:16

**NOTES:**

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## Sermon Transcript:

Today's message is important because it's teaching us about our role and our responsibility and our ministry in this aspect of the harvest.

Jesus said that the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few, so pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into the field.

It's not that we don't have a harvest that is plentiful in our time.

It's that we are those who have been called by God to enter into His field, the field of harvesting souls, and to take part in the work there that He has called for us to do.

And today's message is going to help us better understand our role and our responsibility in this great purpose that God has included us in, and that is the message of reconciliation.

And so follow along with me, if you would please, in 2 Corinthians chapter 5.

We're going to look at verses 14 through 21 this morning.

Paul writes here to these Corinthian believers, he says, For the love of Christ controls us.

Some of your Bibles might have the word compels us.

Because we have concluded this.

That one has died for all, that is Christ 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.

From now on, therefore, Paul says, we regard no one according to our flesh.

He says,

The old has passed away, behold, the new has come.

All of 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 sins against them, and entrusting to us, Paul says, the message of reconciliation.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ.

There's no greater calling than to be an ambassador for Christ Jesus, God the Son.

Let me just say that.

That is God making His appeal through us.

Paul says, "...we implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

For our sake, He who knew no sin became sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus."

This passage right here gives us a clear picture of the ministry of every single born-again believer in Jesus Christ.

We all are ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the ministry of reconciliation.

I think oftentimes people just think that I'm just supposed to be a minister, which I am called by God to a specific part in the church, and that is for the teaching and the equipping of the saints of God for the works of ministry.

But every single person in this room who is in Jesus Christ is a minister of this message of reconciliation.

And everyone in this room who is in Christ is an ambassador of God, an ambassador of Jesus Christ.

This is important for us to understand because it gives great purpose and meaning to every aspect of our life as Christians.

Now, over the past several weeks, we've been learning together what God teaches in His Word concerning the significance and the urgency of our time.

And I say this in our day, there is a sense of great urgency of the time.

It's going to be a great challenge for us in these days because of...

Just the time we're living in.

And frankly, as I've mentioned to you before, many people are flat out exhausted today.

And the idea of even contemplating the reality of our time and the days we're living in is overwhelming to most people.

And to many Christians, they don't want to really think about the reality of the times that we're living in.

Why?

Because it's exhausting to think about the times we're living in, let alone what it means for us as Christians that Christ is coming again.

Some of the evidences that we have, which I will be teaching on in the future, are the significance of this uprising in artificial intelligence and what it's doing in moving us to this finality of the new world order system that we are all going to be part of.

That's why we need to understand the significance of what is happening in our day so that we have our minds correctly fitted and suited for the times so that we're not caught up in deception, which will be so deceiving that Scripture says even the elect themselves would be deceived if God doesn't shorten the days of that time.

That is, that what's going on in the world is not going to be like a slap in the face, a stark contrast.

It's not going to be like black and white.

It's going to be like everything's going to be gray.

And here's the thing about deception.

Deception is meant to deceive.

So it's going to be a very tricky time as we move into these days.

We've been in the last days since Acts.

In fact, that's what Peter says.

He says, as the prophet Joel spoke about the last days, even in his first preaching, Paul says, we're here in the last days.

We now are in the latter, latter part of the last days.

And I know you've been hearing this for a long time, and some of you might even be rolling your eyes figuratively thinking, well, like Scripture says, well...

Where is this coming, this promised coming of the Messiah?

Well, all you need to do is begin to look around and see where we're headed as a world, and you can see the new world order system that is already here and in place and where this thing is moving at a very, very rapid pace.

Things like the data centers that are going to be built here in our community.

Three of them that I know of.

One of them in Archer makes four.

Childress has two.

These things are all part of this system in the last days.

But what happens is it's going to be such a transitional period.

It will be like we move into this without it really even being a major shock to people.

But there's a great shock coming.

We have to have our minds right for the time.

And I know that if you attend here, you obviously are serious about knowing the word of God because people who aren't won't stay here long because we teach and preach the word of God.

And people just are exhausted from all of these things.

They'd rather go to a church where nothing's required of them.

They can come in, listen to a little short, little blip of a commercial, if you will, maybe one scripture, no more than two.

Let's give something really soft, requires no thought, no mind, no obedience, nothing from us.

We can simply just relax in the moment, hear some music, and then walk out and continue on with our lives.

Here's the problem with that.

Time has passed.

We are in the time where we have to take this serious, Christian.

And so I'm not so concerned about numbers.

There was a time in my ministry where I was more concerned about that, but in our day, time's passed for that.

We're not here to just fluff things up and make people want to come here because it's just fun and easy.

We want for you to be equipped for these last days because that's what's going to matter.

So let's continue on here with this passage.

Now, we've spent a few weeks laying some groundwork for us when we talked about the hourglass of time.

I hope you remember those messages.

If you don't and haven't heard them, go back and listen to them.

You can find those online.

It was about the hourglass of time, which was meant to ensure that we might have wisdom from God so that we don't waste our lives.

We don't want to waste our lives.

but that we use our time that God has given us wisely, our talents, our resources.

We want to use them wisely, and this was to bring our attention to the stewardship of our time.

In these very challenging days, we studied a few key passages like Ephesians 5, 15 through 17, which states this, the Apostle Paul reminds those Christians in Ephesus to look carefully then how they live or how they walk, not as unwise, but as wise.

Man, we got to have the wisdom of God today, Christian.

making the best use of our time.

Why?

Because the days are wicked.

They are evil.

Therefore, Paul says, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Psalms 90, 12, we looked at that and we taught about this verse here as well, where it says, to God, teach us to number our days that we may, what?

Get a heart of wisdom.

Understanding the significance of our time is very, very, very important.

And understanding the significance of the timeline that we are living on and the time that we're in is very important.

For the past few weeks here now, we've been learning about the ministry that God has entrusted us.

or committed, if you will, to every born-again man and woman in Jesus Christ.

And that is the ministry of reconciliation.

This is speaking of the stewardship, not only of our time, but now we're looking at the stewardship of our ministry, what our ministry is.

And that is the ministry of reconciliation for every single born-again believer.

In 2 Corinthians 5, 17 through 20, as we've just read, if anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation.

The old has passed away.

Behold, all has become new.

All this is from God, Christians, 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 or their sins against them, and He has entrusted, we're going to look at this closely, He has entrusted us with this message of reconciliation.

Therefore, we're ambassadors for Christ.

That is, God is making His appeal through us to mankind on how to be reconciled to God through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

This is our ministry.

We learned what it means for us to be reconciled to God through Christ, and we learned about the Greek word katalaso, meaning to decisively change.

If we're looking at this word, what it means, the Greek word reconcile means to change as when two parties reconcile when coming to the same position.

This is significant because everyone who has ever been born in Adam has been born in sin.

Therefore, we sin.

And what happens when we sin is we have been separated from God who is holy, righteous.

And so, here's the problem.

There's no way for man to ever get to God.

That's what all the religions in the world are doing.

If you put God at the top of a mountain, all the major religions in the world are men climbing to God.

That's what they're doing.

But here's the difference.

In Christianity, the Word of God teaches that God came and took upon flesh and dwelt among men.

There's a vast difference between the two.

Everyone else climbing to God, Christianity is God coming to man.

This is the difference.

You can't get to God because God is holy.

We don't understand the holiness of God and our sinfulness.

Therefore, no man can climb his way to God.

God had to do something in order to reconcile us in our sin to Him in His holiness and His righteousness.

That's why God came in the second person of the triune Godhead, God the eternal Son, who came at the will of the Father and laid down His life in order that He could reconcile us to God.

This is the beauty of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This is our message.

So it means that we are what reconciled to the same position.

We speak about being in our position in Christ.

When you believe in faith and trust in Christ and are born again of the Spirit, we now move a position.

Our position is in Christ.

And now we have been reconciled positionally, judicially, legally.

We have been reconciled to God in Christ Jesus, even in our position.

This is incredible.

And we stand in this place by faith in Jesus Christ.

Now,

To change us from a position of enmity or an enemy of God waiting for His wrath, that's the position of all humanity, to a position of sonship, friendship, adoption.

These are the realities of what happens in the reconciliation that Christ has brought for us.

Catalasso is a verb, and it denotes bringing estranged parties into harmony.

In Scripture, its principal focus is the restoration of sinners to God through the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

We were all at one time separated from God by our sin.

None of this is new, but I'm covering it again.

And we're by nature, our very nature, we were children of wrath.

We all hear about the love of God often from an unbelieving world.

But what they never speak of is the reality of the wrath of God which is to come.

God's wrath.

We have been spared the wrath of God.

That ought to make us grateful in and of itself.

Amen?

In passages like Ephesians chapter 2, 1 through 3, which those of you who attend here are very familiar with this passage, Paul reminds the Ephesian believers after he explains to them their incredible gift of salvation, all by God's will, His predestined plan that we would be chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, be holy and blameless in His sight, and he mentions everything that God has done to reconcile us to Himself.

And then Paul reminds them, though, of who they once were.

This is important because this is where everyone else remains outside of Christ regardless of their religious affiliation.

We have to understand this.

And so here it says, Paul writes, and you, Paul says, speaking to the Ephesians, you were dead in your sins and trespasses in which you once walked.

That's how they lived.

They followed the course of the world, followed the prince of the power of the air, which is Satan, which is now the spirit that is work in the sons of disobedience.

among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

We need to remember this, and Paul reiterated this, because it has to do with our ministry of reconciliation.

It has to do with the significance of our God-given ministry

command, if you will, or God-given ministry that we now are by God's grace used by Him to tell others how they can be reconciled to God as we have been through faith in Christ Jesus.

We also can look at verses like 1 Peter 3.18.

For Christ, He suffered once for sins.

This is important, Christian, for us to note.

We talk about this often.

Jesus Christ did not come because of all of the elements of the world.

The social justice gospel is a false gospel.

That Jesus Christ came because there was injustice in the world.

No, all of the social injustices are nothing more than a symptom of the root cause, the very reason in which Christ came.

It's because of sin.

And because of sinful men and women, the result of that are all of these things that come from this root, which is sin.

So when people say, well, Jesus came to solve poverty, or Jesus came to solve social injustice of whatever flavor you want to call it.

No, Jesus came and died for sin.

That's why He came.

It is sin that Jesus Christ came and died in order that He could atone us and free us from the penalty of sin, the power of sin, in order that we might now live for Him.

And notice it says, "...he died once for sins," which is important, "...the righteous being Christ, for who?

The unrighteous being us."

that he might bring us to God.

That's the same meaning of being reconciled to God.

That's the purpose.

Notice, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

We know the gospel, according to Paul, is that Jesus Christ died, he was buried, and he was raised from the dead.

All of this according to the scriptures.

This is the beauty of the gospel.

And because he was raised from the dead, we too have the promised hope of the resurrection because Christ has overcome death and the grave.

See, here's the interesting thing about our time.

Men are trying to make a way where they can come to a point of immortality.

In other words, to deal with this problem of death.

Those that are very, very involved in this artificial intelligence, they're really, really, really, really trying to work to a point where we, through being somehow joined with these computer systems, will somehow evolve to a higher level of humanity.

And the hope is that they themselves will be able to what?

Come to a point with the technology that they're making and building where

where we as humans will one day be able to overcome the enemy of all humanity, which is death.

It's never going to happen.

So what they're doing is they're usurping God, going all the way back to Babel.

Nothing is new here.

They're usurping God, and their goal is to what?

Become like God themselves.

The same lie that was in the garden, the same thing that Adam did when he sinned, was to what?

You don't need God.

You can be like God.

You can know good and evil.

That's the whole thing.

So mankind right now, through artificial intelligence, which by the way, has become God-like for most people.

Artificial intelligence is omnipresent in that all things that we've ever known, it's able to record, it's able to also give you in a second of time.

People use AI as a God, if you will.

Why?

Because anything you ask it, it gives you an answer.

It's got omniscience.

It's got omnipresence because it's pretty much anywhere and everywhere today.

What we're seeing is this false God being built before our eyes.

And not only that, it's going to drastically change the way we as humanity move forward in this world in ways that you and I are not able to comprehend, but in ways that all the experts who build AI and who are involved in it are telling us it's going to accomplish in a few years.

It's serious, and it will happen.

And here's the thing.

These guys that have developed this will tell you they don't even understand how it does what it does.

This thing is getting crazy, folks.

And it's going to have a drastic impact on the lives of humanity.

Drastic.

This is why we need to understand that we are not of this world Christian.

We are of a kingdom.

There's two kingdoms in the world.

The kingdom of this world, or the kingdoms of this world, and the kingdom of God in Christ Jesus.

We are in this world with a great purpose, but we are not of the world.

And that's the difference.

As in Daniel's day, King Nebuchadnezzar was like what we're having built today.

This great image, this great thing that's being built.

And Nebuchadnezzar had to come up with this image and he makes all the people bow down in worship and pay homage to the image that he had created.

But there were a few who were not of that part of the world.

They were from a different place, if you will.

You got Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego.

You also have who?

Daniel.

They did not bow to that idol.

No.

Because why?

Because that idol was necessary for them to pay homage to.

It's no different than the times of the Caesars.

What did the Caesars do?

Man, the Caesars required that the people worship them as God.

And then you have the Christians over here.

And the Christians, like Daniel,

They would not bow down to the Caesars.

So what did the Caesars do?

The same thing that old Neb did.

They actually were killed because they would not bow down.

Same thing is going to be in this last day.

Those of us who have our heads right, who have them grounded in Scripture, who are living close to God in this time...

We will not bow down to what is coming.

But unfortunately, many people will.

And it's not going to be a hard transition.

That's why it's called deception.

Deception.

We have to really have ourselves zeroed in today.

I can't stress this enough.

You have to get your house in order.

And you have to keep your life in check.

You have to do it, Christian.

There's no options here.

One of the greatest possible deceptions may not be, it could be a deception, and it may not be because it could be that Jesus comes before the great tribulation.

But here's the problem with that.

Great theologians, brothers in Christ, many of them have a much different opinion of eschatology than that one.

What if the reality is that the pre-trib rapture doesn't come to pass?

What if that is not accurate because it's only one of the four proven, or not proven, the four theories of eschatology, if you will, of Scripture?

Here's the thing.

Anytime you have a preacher dogmatically tell you it's a pre-trib rapture, it ought to be a red flag.

Don't be dogmatic about your eschatology because what if that's not the way it comes?

We have so many Christians that think, oh man, because of the Left Behind series and all the books that have been written and the popularity in modern time that, you know what, we don't have to worry about the last days because Jesus is coming snatching us out of here.

Well, couldn't that be a great deception?

Christians not preparing for going through some very, very, very hard times in the future.

Be careful about who you listen to and what you believe.

Just stay in the Word.

It could be a plausible option.

I used to preach it years ago.

I don't anymore, and I've never preached it dogmatically.

The longer I study Scripture, we're told to endure, be prepared, be ready because of what is coming upon the world.

Christian, stay in the Word.

It's hard for me to stay on this one because I want to talk about the other one so bad, but we'll get to that later.

But here's the thing too, Romans 5, 9 through 11.

Since therefore we have now been justified by his blood.

That means because the blood of Christ, as it says in Revelation, washes us from all of our sin.

He's cleansed us from all sin.

Notice what it says here.

Since we've been justified, that means just as if we've never sinned is one of the best ways to look at that.

That's a judicial term.

We've been justified, set right before God by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by His death, by the death of His Son, much more now we are reconciled, we who are reconciled, excuse me, shall be saved by His life.

More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

We are reconciled to God.

The entire provision for our reconciliation, Christian, was all accomplished by God and is to be received by faith in Christ.

The foundational purpose of our life being part of the kingdom of God in Christ Jesus, the primary purpose of our life is this, and this goes for everybody.

Number one is to know God.

Secondly, to make God known.

If you could just put down two things, that is really it.

To first know God and then to make God known.

You can't make God known if you've never come to know God.

It's impossible.

We are to come to know God, and we're to make God known.

Let me show you this, 2 Corinthians 5, 17 through 21.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he's 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.

That is when we came to know God.

The second part, though, is this.

And he gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their sins against them and entrusting to us the ministry of reconciliation.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.

We implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

This is what we are doing in our ministry, which is what?

Making God known to the rest of the world.

To know God and to make Him known.

That is our main purpose in life.

To know Him and make Him known to others.

Now, we've been entrusted with the message of reconciliation.

This is speaking of our stewardship.

I want you to think about this.

This is important.

We have a stewardship with this ministry.

Just like you have a stewardship when you've been given something at work to do, you have a stewardship on how you accomplish that which you've been given to accomplish.

There's a stewardship about that.

Same thing with this.

Stewardship is defined as what?

The careful and responsible management of something that is entrusted to one's care.

What have we been entrusted with?

The ministry of reconciliation.

We need to think about this ministry as we would stewarding what God has given and entrusted to us.

There's a stewardship here.

Stewardship is also leading us to responsibility.

We have a responsibility, guys, before God to fulfill this ministry.

There's a stewardship there, and stewardship brings responsibility.

Responsibility is defined as a duty or task that you are required or expected to do.

In other words, it's your job.

Now, I know within Christianity we hate to hear anything about work because we all know the gospel, we're saved by grace through faith, not of works.

But that passage goes on and says some more, which we're going to get into here in a minute.

It talks about that we've been saved unto works, not by them, but unto them.

And this right here looks at our responsibility of what we've been entrusted with.

In other words, are we going to be dutifully responsible in what we do with this great trust that we've been given?

And the third one is responsibility will ultimately bring a time of accountability.

Accountability.

Accountability is defined as the obligation to explain, justify, and take responsibility for one's actions.

So here's the question we have to think about when it comes to the ministry of reconciliation.

We are to steward this, be responsible for it, and realizing that we have an accountability to God for what we've done with what he's given to us.

And remember, our first ministry, it all begins in our home.

It's where it starts, and then it goes out from there.

Let me read to you from Romans 10, 9 through 15.

If you want to turn there, you can.

And we're going to look at some verses here as we move forward.

This is why this is so important.

And I know there are going to be great challenges in our time.

Why?

Because it's becoming, the world is becoming that which so many people have no desire for the things of God anymore.

And that's part of the increase of wickedness in the last days.

It's just the reality of the time we're in.

It's also living in a world or a nation like America who's had the gospel like the rest of the world has so much of it for so long where God gives people over.

He just gives them over to what they want.

You don't want God.

You want to worship creation.

You want to worship self.

Well, he just gives them over.

Their minds become moronic.

They don't think right anymore.

They move into sexual revolution.

He gives them over to the sexual revolution in Romans 1.

Moves from a sexual revolution.

Still will not pay attention.

Still don't heed the warnings of God.

God gives them over to a homosexual revolution.

From there, he gives them over to what?

A debased mind.

A depraved mind.

A mind that cannot even think correctly.

And that's where we are today.

When you have a governor in the state of Minnesota...

who has determined that now they're going to give out dolls to four-year-olds that are transgender dolls so that children can now learn how to remove and put parts on the doll because we've got to figure out what this doll is going to be.

You get to a point where we are in our nation where people don't even have the capacity to think right anymore.

That is a result of God's judgment, and that is God giving people over.

There's nothing more fearful than God giving people over to what they want.

It's judgment.

It's where we are.

It's not going to change.

It's not going to get better.

It's going to continue to get more and more depraved.

Only in the gospel can men be made new.

This is why our ministry is so important.

Romans 10, 9 through 15.

Because there's the reason.

There's only one way for men to be made right with God, to be reconciled to God.

There's only one way.

There's no other way.

It's Jesus Christ alone.

He's the only way.

Listen to what Paul says.

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

For the Scripture says, everyone who believes in Him will not be put to shame, for there's no distinction between Jew or Greek or Gentile.

For the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing His riches on all who call upon Him."

in whom they have, excuse me, for everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

How then will they call on him in whom they've not believed?

And how will they believe in him in whom they've never heard?

Well, there's a lot of people that have heard about him in America.

And how will they hear without someone preaching or proclaiming?

And how will they preach unless they're sent?

As it's written, how beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news.

2 Corinthians 4, 3-5, Paul says this about the gospel.

As you share the ministry of reconciliation with friends and family, you're going to find that there's going to be this reality.

This is how this works.

And even if our gospel is veiled, in other words, they're unable to see the truth of the gospel, Paul says, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

In their case, the God of this world, that's Satan, the kingdom of darkness, has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ is Lord with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

Acts 4.12.

And there is salvation in no one else.

For there is no other name...

under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Jesus Christ is the only means to be reconciled to God.

And you in this world, going out in the world, you're going to find there are in the opinions of people all kinds of ways to God.

There's not.

There's one.

God alone is the provider of salvation.

God alone has the power to save.

God has chosen to include you and me in His great work, giving us the great purpose in sharing God's power and provision with man to be saved, to be reconciled to God.

We are not in any way accountable, guys, for the choice that people make once we give them the message.

I often say this on Sunday mornings, that I'm nothing more than a mailman.

I'm delivering the mail.

That's what we are with this ministry of reconciliation.

We are simply men and women sent by God as ambassadors with a message that we are to share from the King of Kings to people.

And we share the message of reconciliation.

I'm only responsible, accountable, and I'm only to steward this trust.

What they do with it, I have no part in.

That is a work of the Spirit of God, and that is a result of them choosing to believe in faith or rejecting the truth of the gospel.

I have no other part in them believing or not the gospel.

My job is to be a mail carrier.

And I carry the most important message ever to be delivered in this world.

And it is how sinful men and women separated from God, awaiting the wrath of God, have an opportunity during this time of grace in this message to be reconciled to God, set free from the guilt and penalty of sin, and adopted as children of God, born again, and given new life.

That is the message that we have.

Can you tell me a more important message?

There is none.

Why?

Because hell's coming.

And not only just hell, judgment is coming.

And not just judgment, we have the resurrection, the judgment, and then the lake of fire is coming.

This is forever.

This is serious.

And so that's why we have been given this great trust.

What an incredible privilege.

Now our message, as I mentioned to you, is no ordinary message, by the way.

Here's the confidence we have when sharing this message.

Do you know what it is?

Paul says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God.

When we share the message of reconciliation, God in His power through the Holy Spirit is doing a work.

Now, Paul says, it is the power of God to salvation for all who believe.

This is the beauty of the message that we have.

Oh, people do reject it.

Absolutely they do.

But that's not my decision.

That is theirs.

And that's not your decision.

That is theirs.

But Paul says, man, he's serious about this, man.

He pleads with people, be reconciled to God, man.

And that's what we do.

We desire that.

Paul was fully aware of his stewardship, his responsibility and accountability for this ministry of reconciliation.

The truth...

Now Christian, everyone, the unbelieving and the believing, will stand one day before Jesus Christ.

You and I as Christians who have been united with Christ, who have been made right or justified in Christ, whose position has been changed, who has been reconciled to God, I'm not standing before Christ in the judgment of those unbelievers.

That has been dealt with in Jesus Christ.

My sin has been dealt with.

Thank God for that.

But here's what I will do.

And here's what every Christian in this room will one day do.

You will one day stand before your Lord and your Redeemer.

And you will have a day of accounting.

There's a day of accounting coming.

And Paul knew this very well.

He talks about it in 1 Corinthians as well.

You can read about it there.

And what Paul is talking about is the reality that we as Christians will stand before Christ one day and give an account of this trust that we have been given.

What did you do with the message of reconciliation that I entrusted to your care?

Were you responsible to share it, to give it to others?

See, this is the reality.

We'll all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

And this is the Bema seat, which is the place where Christians will also receive their great rewards.

This is an incredible thing.

Sometimes you meet Christians that go, well, I just hope I make it in.

There should never be a response like that.

You're either going to be in or you're not.

And it's by faith in Jesus Christ.

And people that say, I don't care anymore about doing anything with the gospel or the trust that I've been given.

I just want to make sure that I get in by the skin of my tiny little teeth.

That's not what we're after for a Christian.

Why?

Because as we're going to learn, the love of God compels us to do this.

It's the love of Christ.

That's what compels us to do this.

That's what Paul says, 2 Corinthians 5.11.

Therefore, as we look right above the passage we've been studying, Paul mentions something here about this accountability.

He says, therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others.

And right above that, he talks about the fact that everyone will stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

And then Paul says, therefore, knowing this reality to be true, he says...

The Greek word for persuade here is phabos.

Excuse me, this is the Greek word for fear, I'm sorry, is phabos.

It has two meanings.

One is terror, the other is used of holy reverence for God.

It's used two ways here in the scriptures in the New Testament.

This is not a flippant fear, by the way.

And for the Christian, this is not terror, right?

This is a holy, righteous, reverent fear for God.

That's what we're looking at here.

Paul says, therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, he says, that we're all going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, he says, we persuade others.

This word here is founded in great humility and gratitude that brings worship to God, this kind of reverent fear.

Phobos is used this way in Philippians 2.12.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now not only in my presence but much more in my absence, Paul says, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Here it is that reverent, holy, righteous fear of God.

It's healthy.

It's reverent.

It's humble.

It's meek.

It's this reality.

This is the kind of thing Paul is speaking about here.

In 2 Corinthians 5.10, he mentions that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may receive what is due for what he or she has done in the body, whether good or bad, one or the other.

Paul, in reverent fear of the Lord, knowing that he would one day stand before him and give account for his stewardship of responsibility to the ministry God had called him to fulfill and

This truth aided in Paul's zealous work of persuading others to be reconciled to God.

And what's so sad is for many Christians, they yawn at this reality.

Here's why, because I don't think many Christians even believe that they're going to stand before Christ.

It's as if these have become more like Joan and the Whale stories for people.

No, this is really going to happen.

And it's a time where Christ will give out awards for those that have faithfully served him and have been true to the trust that they've been given.

These are the days that we'll be blessed by these incredible things.

But it also says there in 1 Corinthians that all of it's going to be tested by fire.

And for some, everything that they've done is going to be burnt up like wood, hay, and stubble.

And although they'll still make heaven, and for some Christians, they're like, that's good enough for me, man.

That's the wrong heart.

And if that's your heart, I would be greatly concerned.

But they will still enter in as if those who have gone through the fire have.

We want to be those that take this serious.

You're getting some information that will bless you for all eternity.

It's important here.

Now, secondly, we find this in 2 Corinthians 5, 14 through 15.

So there's two things that Paul mentions here that compels him, that drives him to share this ministry with others.

Be reconciled to God.

Number one is the reverent, holy fear of God.

Of the Lord because we're all going to stand before him.

Number two is this.

For the love of Christ, Paul says, controls us.

Because we have concluded this.

That one has died for all.

That's Christ.

Therefore all have died.

And he died for all that those who might live might no longer live for themselves.

But for him who for their sake died.

and was raised.

Paul says that it is the love of Christ that controls him and controls us.

Now, I want to stop here just for a moment and consider what Paul is affirming here.

The Greek word here for compels or controls, it means to arrest as a prisoner.

Figuratively, to compel, perplex, afflict, preoccupy, or constrain or hold a person.

Paul includes not only himself, but also the believers in Corinth and us as well.

We're included in that.

It is the love of Christ for us that has arrested us.

You experience the love of Christ?

Unbelievable.

It is the love of Christ which compels us then to share the love of Christ with others.

I know that some people get uncomfortable, primarily men, when we start talking about love.

I'm not speaking here of an oochie-coochie kind of love.

And I think sometimes we get around circles of Christians and stuff, you know, we kind of throw out this word love and it kind of, no, no, no.

We have a misunderstanding of what this love really is.

We're not talking about a touchy-feely kind of love.

We're not referencing the lustful, erotic love of our culture that's prevalent today.

We are speaking of the kind of love that God demonstrated for us.

This is agape love.

This love here is a sacrificial kind of love.

We honor, which is, it makes me, it kind of blows my mind.

I mean, kind of big on the internet today is all the special forces guys.

I mean, they've kind of got all the big platforms talking about being a Navy SEAL or Delta or whatever.

And guys love to watch all that stuff.

You know, war, hard things, everything going along with that.

But here, it's really interesting that men understand something about love in that context, but when we connect it to the church, it like it just falls apart.

Here's what I mean by that.

we honor, memorialize, and esteem men who lay down their lives for the sake of others.

We honor them.

Some of them we make heroes out of.

It's

We say things like, he loved his country.

He loved his fellow man.

You could go on with different phrases here.

And men just go, hoorah, hoorah.

That's love, man.

Take it for someone else so they can live.

That's a real man right there.

Lays his life down for someone else.

Sacrifices his own body so someone else can live.

But when we talk about Jesus and we talk about the church, it's lost.

And guys get all weirded out with the word love when we get around people in the church.

We're only here because this love was demonstrated by God.

That's the reality.

John 15, 13 says, greater love has no one than this.

Where do you think this whole concept comes from?

It doesn't come from man, it comes from God who demonstrated the greatest act of love ever.

God came and took upon flesh and lived as a man perfectly before God doing what no one else could do because you were all dead.

And God came, and he died and crushed his son, and Jesus died willingly, not because he deserved it, he'd earned it.

No, he came and said, Father, I'll go, and I'll give my life.

Crush me, break me, kill me.

For what reason?

So that others can live.

That's the love of God.

And in church, man, we go, ooh, love.

That's not the love I'm talking about.

I'm talking about this love.

This is the love we have for the brothers and the sisters.

It's not touchy-feely, oochie-coochie, kumbaya love.

No.

As you're going to see, our life is a life of sacrifice, Christian.

No different than our Savior.

And I'm going to point this out to you here in just a few moments.

1 John 3.16 says this, by this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for others.

Why would Paul take all the abuse that he took from his own people, from the Gentiles, all the stuff that Paul endured for the sake of the gospel?

Why would Paul do that?

Two reasons.

Because of the judgment that's coming that Paul will give an account.

Number two, because the love of Christ took a hold of Paul and controlled Paul.

And Paul had to tell others about this message.

Why?

Because he had experienced this love himself.

Therefore, he wasn't worthy to keep it quiet.

He had to share it with others so that dead men might live.

John 3.16.

Those are two easy passages to remember.

1 John 3.16 and John 3.16.

For God, here it is,

So loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him might not perish but have everlasting life.

This is what we're talking about here.

This is the love that constrains you Christian and constrains me.

This is the love that I have to protect because as the wickedness increases in this world the love of most according to Jesus will grow cold.

Your love Christian right now is growing cold if you're not stoking the fire of it.

We get to the point where we just get laissez-faire.

Well, they've heard the gospel, let them go.

We get to that point where we get cold-hearted and the love of God no longer constrains us nor compels us because we have grown cold and indifferent to this reality.

Love is the distinguishing hallmark of a Christian.

And I have to check myself all the time.

And preparing this, I have had to even confess the reality that my love is struggling to be hot for Jesus.

It's because of the world we're living in, man.

The garbage of this place.

It's what's going on.

All the sick depravity around us.

The laissez-faireness of a people who don't even care about Jesus.

You look at the church and you're like, where's the church, man?

It's become nothing more than a big commercial money-raising slush fund for these guys that have these mega... What is this all about anymore?

No, it's about the love of Christ that compels us, controls us, has arrested you.

Remember when you first experienced the love of Christ?

Oh, there's nothing more invigorating than to be around a new Christian.

You can't make them shut up about Jesus.

Why?

Because they have just been compelled and arrested by the love of God.

And it's so new and fresh in their life, they'll just tell people all about what Jesus did.

You let them hang around most Christians very long and they'll be sure and put that fire out as quick as possible because the rest of them feel guilty to be around people that actually talk about Jesus.

They'd rather talk about hunting and sports and the Dallas Cowboys losing season and you name it.

Talk about Jesus?

Hmm.

Hmm.

No, love is the distinguishing hallmark of a Christian.

It's what separates us from everyone else.

And this is the love of Christ, and you can't give it to someone or share it with someone if you've never received it.

Because you don't know what it is.

It's just a religious thing to you.

Oh no.

It's the love of God.

The love of Christ compels us to responsible stewardship of the trust that we have been given in the ministry of reconciliation.

For it was the love that God the Father sent Christ the Son into the world.

It was love that Christ came, lived, and died.

That he rose from the dead, overcoming death, hell, and the grave, so that in him we could be reconciled to God.

And it is the love that compelled Paul and compels us to tell others of his love through the message of the gospel.

It is this sacrificial love that causes us to set aside our feelings.

You're not always going to feel like going to somebody or talking to someone or sharing with someone about this.

You're not always going to desire this.

It's hard because of the reactions that you might receive.

It's hard because of the persecution you might actually come to feel or experience.

Let me tell you where it's real hard.

It's really hard among family.

It's really tough among family members because you're thinking, boy, I could possibly lose that family member and they could just peel out and be done.

What would make you do that?

What would make you tell the family member that might be upset at you telling them the gospel and say, you know what?

I'm just not in alignment with what you think.

You're nothing but a Bible thumper.

I'm out of here.

What would make you take that risk?

What would make you risk your friendship with someone else that you know is not a believer who's living a lifestyle of sin?

but yet you're with them all the time and they don't know Jesus, what would make you tell that person the gospel which they might reject or laugh at you or roll their eyes or kick clods down the road?

What would make you do this stuff, man?

Two things.

Stewardship and the day of accounting.

Number two, the love of Jesus Christ would compel you to do that.

And if that person says, I'm out of here, that's their choice.

No, you don't like that.

No, you don't want that.

But the reality is sometimes that happens.

Jesus said, I did not come to bring peace among the earth.

I came to bring a sword that will divide.

But do you love Jesus more than these?

That's what Jesus asked his disciples.

Do you love him more than John, Peter?

Do you love me more than all these?

I mean, are you willing to do what needs to be done to teach people and share the gospel?

Do you love me or do you love them more than me?

It's really what it boils down to.

It comes to ourself.

Here's the thing.

It's because we don't understand and haven't been living out this incredible love.

Let me show you what I'm talking about.

It's the fact that sacrificial love

This agape love, it is what causes us to set aside these things.

Love overrides the possibility of rejection, the possibility of persecution, the possibility that you might be alone or made fun of or set apart at your job where they no longer want to visit.

This could be the reality for you, but love, it drives us to do this.

We're ambassadors for Christ.

We're making this appeal to every man.

Turn with me to 2 Corinthians 4, 1 through 12.

I promise I will be done after this.

I know it's been a little lengthy.

Thank you for hanging with me this morning.

Hopefully you're not asleep.

We try to throw a little inflection in there every once in a while just to make sure.

I want to show you something here that's very important.

Why would Jesus say things like,

If you want to follow me, you've got to take up your cross daily and follow me.

The cross is all about dying.

Yet we live.

Why would we need to do that?

Let me show you something about this, Christian.

this agape sacrificial love that we elevate men in the military and those second responders and whoever, these heroes, if you will, because they lay their life down for others.

Let me show you what your life is to be as a follower of Jesus Christ.

You ready?

Paul says, therefore, having this ministry,

By the mercy of God, speaking of this gospel message that he is an apostle is to take out and to share.

He says, we do not lose heart.

But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways.

In other words, he's not here to be popular with the congregation or the people.

He's not there to do some pansy or ponzi rich scheme with a slush fund and all the stuff we have going on in these big mega churches where it's nothing but commercialization.

They're selling stuff.

People are buying stuff.

It's just a big charade, man, most of it.

And Paul says, no, we don't do any of this stuff.

He says, we refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word.

Paul says, I'm delivering the mail.

That's what I'm doing.

It's not my job to change the mail, I just deliver it.

But by an open statement of faith, we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

And even if our gospel, it's veiled, it's veiled to those who are perishing, in their case, the God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but who?

Jesus Christ is Lord.

with ourselves as your servants for the sake of Jesus.

For God who said, let light shine out of darkness, has shown 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.

It's what we are.

This old body is nothing but a jar of clay.

And we have this treasure that we have, that it's in us.

to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

Notice what Paul says.

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed.

Christian, that's good news.

Perplexed, but we're not driven to despair.

Persecuted, but not forsaken.

Struck down, but

but not destroyed.

Now notice, always, this is so important, you might underline this in your Bible, always carrying in our body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus also may be manifest in our bodies.

For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake.

Listen, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our mortal flesh, so death is at work in us, but life in you.

That's the crux of it all.

Dying to ourselves and sharing this message of reconciliation.

Why?

So that life can come to those who are dead.

And you will have to die to yourself over and over and over and over again.

Why?

Because you're going to hear these words.

They aren't interested.

This could be a division.

They might call you names.

You might lose this friendship.

They're going to think that you're nothing but a Bible thumper.

You're going to hear all these excuses going on in your mind.

And you know what you have to do?

You have to die to yourself in order that the gospel of Christ might live and others might come to know life.

We

are ambassadors for Christ our King.

And we bring to this world the kingdom of Christ message of reconciliation.

Now Christian, you have been entrusted in your jar of clay with the most valuable, most important, most critical message of all time.

And that is, in Christ, by faith, man can be reconciled to God.

That is our mission, to know God and to make God known.

That's it.

And in order for you to do it, you're going to have to die to yourself over and over and over.

And you know what?

That's being just like our Lord.

It's nothing new.

It's always been this way.

I know you don't hear this in most preaching.

I understand that.

God's a genie in a bottle.

You rub him when you need him.

Punch your golden ticket.

Might need Jesus or a prayer every once in a blue moon.

No, no, no, no, no.

This is not the gospel.

This is not salvation.

This, my friend, is what it means to be an ambassador for Jesus Christ.

And this gives everything you do the most critical, important mean.

Everything.

Your work, your hobbies, your marriage, your children, your friendships.

Everything.

Everything.

It's been driven by this love of Christ.

It controls us.

Maybe you're like me and you find yourself from time to time reflecting on your own heart and realize, man, I'm getting pretty cold hearted.

Maybe that's you this morning, I don't know.

Maybe you're here and you don't know Christ.

This morning you've heard him call your name and you need Jesus.

And today's the day of salvation, I don't know.

But I'm telling you, Christian, we're living in the days, guys, we've got to just take this stuff serious.

If you've got a family member that you have a relationship with that doesn't know Jesus, man, tell them about the message of reconciliation.

If you've got a spouse that doesn't know Jesus,

Tell them the message of reconciliation.

If you've got a friend that doesn't know Christ, don't lie to yourself and say, well, he's a pretty good guy, he'll probably get in.

No, don't lie to yourself and make yourself feel comfortable in it and deny the reality.

No, tell them the message of reconciliation.

That's what our trust is.

That's what our great joy is to do.

And it gives everything in your life a meaning that surpasses

The worthlessness of so much in this life.

It gives us great meaning and great purpose.

Let's close.

I've been too long.

Thank you guys for listening this morning.

Our food is probably going to be cold now, but we're going to go ahead and eat anyway.

I'd like the elders and lay pastors to come forward, please.

If there's anyone here this morning that you find yourself here, man, I'm just like, Lord, I have allowed my heart to just grow in different, Lord, in these days.

The wickedness of this world makes me just feel like no one wants Jesus anymore.

The reality is the dead world needs Jesus.

And maybe you're here this morning and you don't know Christ, you've been religious, you do a few things, you attend here, but you've never been reconciled to God.

Today's the day of salvation, friend.

Don't mess around with this and don't let it pass by.

I'd encourage you to come up if you need prayer this morning for anything whatsoever.

We are here to pray with you.

If you have a question for me that I didn't answer in this message, don't leave here and be wondering what in the world I meant.

Come up here so that I can reiterate that and clarify that for you.

Let's close in prayer today.

And if you need prayer, come forward, please, if you would.

Father God, Lord, we love you today.

As always, Lord.

Lord, I want to thank you for your word.

And Lord, what an incredible thing it is, Lord, for us to be brought into this purpose of knowing you, God.

That we have experienced what true love actually is.

Because God, you are love.

And you demonstrated that in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, God, who came and took upon flesh and gave his life.

God, you crushed your own son that we might live.

So, Lord, I pray if there's anyone here this morning that doesn't know you or listening this morning by radio or watching today live stream, God, that doesn't know you, Lord, I pray today your Holy Spirit would draw them to a saving understanding and knowledge, Lord, that they are lost in their sin.

They have no hope without you, God, in this world, and Jesus Christ is their only way to you.

Father, they repent of their sin and believe upon Jesus Christ today and that they would be saved.

Lord, for the rest of us here this morning, Lord, whatever our need may be, God, I ask that you would meet us where we are as you always do.

Lord, I pray that you would help us with our love, Lord.

We need a resurgence of the love we had for you, Lord, at first.

And I pray, God, that you would rekindle that fire within us, Lord, and an understanding of the significance of our time and the urgency of our message, Lord, especially with those people that we know and have contact with, God.

Thank you, Lord, that you're faithful to accomplish all that you set out to do.

Father, I pray that you would help us to carry the mail this week and deliver it as often as the opening of the day comes, Lord, that we would share Christ with those in need.

In Jesus' name we pray and ask.

Amen.

**NOTES:**

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