



## Sermon: Sunday, April 6, 2025

### “Be Reconciled to God”

**2 Corinthians 5:16-21** <sup>16</sup>From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we no longer know him in that way. <sup>17</sup>So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being! <sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup>that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. <sup>20</sup>So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

#### Introduction: A Life Centered on Jesus

Today is the fifth Sunday in Lent. In 2 Corinthians 5:20, Paul said, “Be reconciled to God!”. The word “be reconciled” means that the Corinthians were at odds with God. We feel very uncomfortable when we experience discord in our relationships. Our entire lives are shaken by discord in our relationships. However, we can easily understand discord in human relationships, but it is difficult to feel discord with God. This is because God is invisible to us and cannot be grasped by our hands. Therefore, Paul’s words to “be reconciled to God” do not resonate with us as we are busy with our daily lives.

However, the biblical writer argues that ‘our discord with God’ is deeply embedded in our daily lives. Our discord with God is manifested in our lives through anger, worry, confrontation, hostility, pride, and the inability to experience inner fulfillment. So how does our reconciliation with God begin? In verse 15 of our text for today, Paul said, **‘And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.’**

However, in this passage, Paul suggests a way of life that modern people find difficult to accept. It is, “Do not live for yourself.” Most people today are obsessed with living for themselves. Therefore, Paul’s words, “Do not live for yourself,” are very difficult for modern people today to sympathize with. But why does Paul tell us not to live for ourselves? Does Paul say this because he thinks our own lives are meaningless? Of course not. Paul’s words is that the more we are obsessed with ourselves, the more impoverished our inner lives become. We can see this in the fact that modern people today often fall into a state of ‘burnout’ because they are obsessed with their own lives.

Therefore, Paul said to live for ‘Him who died and was raised for them’. This is because only by living this kind of life can we escape from a life obsessed with ourselves. I will give you a simple metaphor to illustrate this kind of life. Mothers do not live for themselves, but for their babies. They focus on raising their babies healthily. And although parenting is very hard for moms and dads, it is also their greatest joy.

In today's text, Paul speaks of Jesus Christ as the one who died and rose again for us. Jesus Christ is the only Son of God and the Savior. Therefore, those who put Jesus at the center of their lives receive God's life through Jesus. In other words, they are saved. This is the core of the Christian faith that has continued for the past two thousand years. However, people in the world do not acknowledge this fact. Sometimes, even among Christians, there are those who find it difficult to realize this fact.

#### Body: Living Following a human point of view VS Living Experiencing God

However, just as many people today have difficulty acknowledging Jesus as our Savior and the Son of God, Jesus' disciples also misunderstood or doubted who Jesus was. So, among Jesus' disciples, there were those who wanted to follow Jesus and fulfill their own political ambitions. Also, many people were disappointed in Jesus when their expectations were not realized through him.

In fact, only a very small number of disciples experienced Jesus as the one who rose from the cross. They experienced the essence and depth of life through Jesus. This was a very intense religious experience. Through this experience, they were able to overcome even the fear of death. That is why Paul could confess in verse 16 of today's text, **"From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view."**

However, all people in the world live according to the flesh (**κατὰ (according to) σάρκα(flesh)/kata sarka**). All the things we consider happy, social activities, business activities, political activities, school activities, family relationships, are all living according to the flesh. Through this, people are recognized in the world and live their lives. This fleshly life is essential to our lives, but it is not through this that we can obtain a true life. So, in verse 16 of today's text, Paul confessed, **"Even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way."** Paul previously knew Jesus as a great teacher or prophet, but now he goes beyond the physical dimension and experiences true life through Jesus Christ. Based on this experience, Paul exclaimed in verse 17, **"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"** Paul confessed that we have become new creatures, new beings in Christ. However, even though we have become new beings in Christ as in this passage, we still must raise children, study, engage in economic activities, and continue physical activities. We still live a life of the flesh, but the inner self of a person who has truly met Jesus Christ is transformed. A person who has truly met Jesus becomes a person who has met God. Such a person no longer lives 'according to the flesh.'

So, the experience of God in our daily lives is the best. As Paul said in today's text, reconciliation with God is the best in our lives. Because God is the Creator and the source of life. And He is with us here and now. Paul said in verse 21 of today's text, **"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."**

According to this passage, knowing the 'righteousness of God' (δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ, dikaiosynē theou) is the experience of God. 'Righteousness of God' means that God considers us righteous. The Bible says that this happened in Jesus Christ who died miserably on the cross.

Jesus is 'without sin.' There is no trace of sin in him. He did not care about himself. Jesus did not try to be recognized by people. He suffered in the face of death on the cross, but he eventually obeyed God. Jesus completely entrusted his future to God. If we rely on, have confidence in, and believe in this Jesus, we are recognized as righteous by God. This is the experience of God and reconciliation with God that today's text speaks of.

However, it is not easy for us to enter this depth of faith. In the Bible, there were many people who came to Jesus and then returned. One example is a rich man who came to Jesus and asked what he must do to inherit eternal life. (Mark 10:17-22)

The rich man may have lived a religious life faithfully, but he may have lacked spiritual fulfillment or may have been struggling with the routine of life. He did not obey the command to give his wealth to the poor and follow Jesus. We can sympathize with this rich man's heart, because we want to be disciples of Jesus, but at the same time, we cannot accept giving up our wealth.

### **Conclusion: A life of reconciliation with God in Jesus Christ.**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! How can we live a life that is sufficiently satisfied with just being recognized as righteous by God? The best thing to do is to become more intimate with Jesus and focus more on Him, even if it is just a little bit.

As we come closer to Jesus and enter the depths of His Word, we will be a little freer from the worries of life. Also, the freedom and peace that the Lord gives will replace our worries, concerns, fears, and guilt. So above all, **"Be diligent in living a life of reconciliation with God in Jesus Christ!" Amen!**