

Telling Your Story pt4

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Telling Your Story / 2 Corinthians 5:16–21

So now we come to the pay off...our why...

It has become really trendy in business circles to talk about your “why.” This is why I work here...as if everything has a deeper purpose or meaning. I do not deny that some people find existential meaning in selling carpet cleaners or Nikes, but let’s be honest, few people work in an industry for personal fulfillment. We do it to make money so we can support our families.

And that’s ok.

But when it comes to our faith, our Savior, that is ultimate meaning...following Jesus means something eternal, outside ourselves. And it has implications far beyond our temporal lives. And for others lives as well.

That’s why we spend 3 weeks teaching a class about how to share your faith in a post Christian culture. That’s why we spend 4 weeks talking about the aspects of our stories and how they help us to make much of Jesus.

Eternity is at stake.

And when we take that view, and that is our Why, an urgency should emerge. And if it doesn’t there is something very wrong with us.

Let’s look at how Paul frames this calling in [2 Corinthians 5:16-21](#).

So first let’s see how we look at people...that’s a change of perspective.

People are in one of two conditions- in the flesh or in the Spirit.

As follower of Jesus, we are in the second bunch identified in v17. We have been made into something new.

2 Corinthians (6) Persuading Others to Be Reconciled (5:11–21)

Paul now sees others according to their standing with Christ (see Rom 14:8–12) and concedes that all his previous judgments of others were wrong. God's verdict on our sin condemns us all and destroys any illusions of superiority or inferiority. Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female are all on the same level before God. All share a kinship with one another because of sin but also share kinship with one another because Christ died for all to redeem all. **When we see that we are all sinners dead in our sins and needing reconciliation from God, and when we accept Christ's shameful death on the cross as our death, then all previous canons we used to appraise others must be scrapped**

And with that new creation, we now see people differently. Look church, we no longer have the luxury of being angry at those without Jesus for acting like they do not know Jesus. And we should expect no less.

2 Corinthians (6) Persuading Others to Be Reconciled (5:11–21)

Christians see the world in a new way and become new when they are joined to Christ

More, **we can also no longer see them as enemies**. We cannot make enemies of our mission field. Write that down. They may treat us as enemies, but Jesus told us to love our enemies. So that has to be our default posture- everywhere.

2 Corinthians (6) Persuading Others to Be Reconciled (5:11–21)

To judge others according to worldly standards, or from a sinful point of view, only furthers division and discord rather than fostering reconciliation

Why are we like this because God intervened. (v18a) Look y'all, Jesus had to come to us for us to know Him- remember Paul, he didn't even recognize Jesus! Neither does our world, until they meet Him. And **our job is to make the introduction!**

2 Corinthians (6) Persuading Others to Be Reconciled (5:11–21)

Paul is not primarily concerned to set forth his doctrine of atonement but to establish the basis of his ministry of reconciliation. Everything begins with God's initiative

2 Corinthians (6) Persuading Others to Be Reconciled (5:11–21)

When Paul says "all this" (lit. "all these things) is from God, he makes clear that the new creation (5:17) is exclusively God's work. He continues in this mode by asserting that humans have done nothing to reconcile God; God has instead acted to reconcile them. **Reconciliation therefore begins with God, who acts unilaterally.**

(v18b-19) Our ministry is the ministry of reconciliation- we are building the bridges between a lost world and a Savior who is seeking them.

2 Corinthians (6) Persuading Others to Be Reconciled (5:11–21)

God continues to act through those who have been reconciled. They have the privilege and responsibility to share in this great divine enterprise and are to call others to be reconciled to God

2 Corinthians (6) Persuading Others to Be Reconciled (5:11–21)

The ministry of reconciliation therefore involves more than simply explaining to others what God has done in Christ. It requires that one become an active reconciler oneself. **Like Christ, a minister of reconciliation plunges into the midst of human tumult to bring harmony out of chaos, reconciliation out of estrangement, and love in the place of hate**

That is a high calling. And one we have to take seriously. And treat accordingly. **It is our why!**

2 Corinthians (6) Persuading Others to Be Reconciled (5:11–21)

Reconciliation assumes ruptured relationships, alienation, and disaffection. The problem, however, is not with God, as if God were some cruel taskmaster from whom humans rebelled. Human sinfulness created the problem, and this sinful condition had to be dealt with before there could be any reconciliation. Sin incurs God's holy wrath, so it could not be treated lightly or swept under the rug. God can never be reconciled to sin, but **God does not turn away from sinners in disgust and leave them to their just desserts. Instead, while humans were still in open revolt, God acted in love (Rom 5:8) to bring the hostility to an end and to bring about peace** (see Rom 5:1; see Isa 32:17). This peace is not simply a cessation of hostilities or an uneasy truce. It refers to the mending of the broken relationship that results from God justifying us (making us right) through faith and changing us from enemies to friends

So we have a title...and a job...and a goal (v20-21)

2 Corinthians (6) Persuading Others to Be Reconciled (5:11–21)

He is Christ's spokesman. **He does not act on his own authority but under the commission of a greater power and authority who sent him.** Paul therefore understands himself to be divinely authorized to announce to the world God's terms for peace

What is an ambassador?

Someone who represents another nation to one they are in. That's perfect. We are citizens of another Kingdom...and the King has sent us with a message- He loves you and wants you to join His Kingdom.

In Paul's time, ambassadors would go and wait for the king or emperor to summon them. God does the reverse, the all powerful King sends His emissaries out into the world.

2 Corinthians (6) Persuading Others to Be Reconciled (5:11–21)

we can see a notable contrast between God and the emperor Augustus. An all-powerful God does not wait for humanity to make their appeals to him but sends out ambassadors to make appeals to humanity

And He wants you so much He died to save you.

He took your place.

And that is a message worth sharing.

2 Corinthians (6) Persuading Others to Be Reconciled (5:11–21)

Paul is not interested in the abstract doctrine of reconciliation but in the concrete task of reconciliation. The church not only is to preserve sound doctrine but is called by God to be, as apostles were, a reconciling force. **That means it must adopt the status of a servant and must be active in a ministry of helping and healing**

Jesus came and took our place- Great Exchange- and gave us a chance to be made new, whole, righteous...and that is the message that we take out- not that we are so great, but that God is so great and He makes us into something we could never make ourselves into. And that the Good News is good for everyone who would trust Jesus.