

Week 5: Reimagining the Church

A Community of Reconciliation 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Participant Guide for Week of October 20, 2024

Connecting Does anyone have a “God sighting,” – a story or testimony of how you saw God at work in the last week that you can share?

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 (NRSV)

16 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 know him no longer in that way.

17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 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. 20 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. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Questions

Understanding the Passage

1. Worldly or Human vs. Spiritual Perspective: Verse 16 mentions regarding others "from a worldly (NIV) or human (NRSV) point of view." What does this look like in our daily lives, and how can we shift our perspective to align more with Christ's view?
2. Identity in Christ: In verse 17, Paul speaks of being a new creation. What does it mean to you personally to be a "new creation" in Christ? How does this identity impact your relationships with others?

The Nature of Reconciliation

3. God's Initiative: Verse 18 emphasizes that reconciliation is initiated by God. How does understanding that God actively seeks reconciliation influence your approach to conflicts in your own life?
4. Forgiveness: In verse 19, Paul mentions that God does not count our sins against us. How can we practice this kind of forgiveness in our relationships? What barriers do we face in forgiving others?

The Role of Believers

5. Ambassadors for Christ: Verse 20 refers to us as Christ's ambassadors. What does it mean to represent Christ in our interactions with others, especially in difficult situations?
6. Ministry of Reconciliation: How can we actively participate in the ministry of reconciliation in our church and community? Can you share any practical ways to foster reconciliation among people who are in conflict?

Personal Reflection and Application

7. Personal Experience: Can you share a time when you experienced reconciliation in your life? What steps were involved, and how did it change your relationship with that person?
8. Obstacles to Reconciliation: What are some common obstacles that prevent reconciliation in relationships, both personally and in a broader context? How can we overcome these challenges?

Moving Forward

9. Action Steps: Based on our discussion, what's one specific action you can take this week to promote reconciliation in your relationships, our church or the community?

Pray for Reconciliation: How can we pray for each other? Are there situations that need prayer that we can share in confidentiality and trust?