

**Parson to Person**  
**2 Corinthians 5 – Part 8**  
**(Transformed)**

*“Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:16–21).*

As we look toward the conclusion of this chapter we read, *“Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh”* (vs. 16a), indicating that the false teachers and the distractors did look at the externals—and were falsely judging Paul along with his co-laborers. Some of these self-righteous detractors considered Paul’s past a reason to judge his present. Was Paul qualified for leadership? Was Paul teaching the truth? Had he really met the Lord and been instructed by Him? Was he appointed to be an apostle to the Gentiles? Well, the answer to all these questions was yes! However, these evil workers were criticizing Paul and his companions, exalting themselves without credential—and doing so while taking advantage of the Corinthians.

**Taking Advantage of the Church**

Paul wrote, *“For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours you, if one takes from you, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face. To our shame I say that we were too weak for that! But in whatever anyone is bold—I speak foolishly—I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation? If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.”* Moreover, in the next chapter he will command that the Corinthians *“‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.’ ‘I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty’”* (2 Corinthians 6:17–18).

The false apostles were unchanged and abusive. They were to be marked, rebuked, and distanced from the Corinthians—and from the Church.

## **Transformed**

Paul was transformed. Moreover, not only had Paul experienced the saving life of Christ, but so had his co-laborers. *“Therefore,”* he wrote, *“...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new”* (vs. 17). This was a declaration of Paul’s life change, the life change in his traveling companions, the call to recognize the exchanged life the Corinthians had and would experience, the changes you and I have and will experience—in contrast to the lack of change in the false apostles.

## **The Call to Ministry**

Paul declared that *“all [the] things [transformed and now put into the past—having been made new] are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation”* (vs. 18). This reinforced the call and transformation that *“God [had and] was [doing] in Christ [by] reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their [and our] trespasses to them [and us],”* (vs. 19a) *“and has committed to [all of] us the word of reconciliation”* (vs. 19).

## **Ambassadors for Christ**

The transformation and call of the Apostle was support for Paul’s continuing defense, validation of his ministry, reason to persevere amidst difficulties, and enduring confidence in the perseverance of God in him, the co-laborers, and all who have trusted him for salvation. He wrote, *“Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God”* (vs. 20).

We have all been given the call. We have all been commissioned to share the Gospel and represent the Lord to a dying world. Our individual calling(s) may be distinct from Paul’s and others, but

nonetheless, we are *all* called as Christ's ambassadors—amid our sojourn.

We have the message of hope—in Jesus.

## **Propitiation and Expiation**

Paul removed all concern for personal fear of the Bema (Judgment Seat) for the believer, but nonetheless believed that *“we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences”* (vss. 10–11). The believer will benefit from the blessings provided in Jesus—by faith alone, in Christ alone, as declared in the Scriptures alone, for the glory of God alone. This is the *“good”* secured in Jesus. However, the non-believer will have a certain evaluation of all the *“bad”* they have done—by rejecting the gracious and merciful offer God has provided all the sons and daughters of Adam.

Jesus died in the place of every member of the human family as the propitiation (means of satisfying the wrath of God)—*“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us”* (vs. 21a), so that all who put their trust in Jesus may experience the expiation (complete forgiveness and removal) of *all* sin, thereby cleansing us, *“that we might become the righteousness of God in Him”* (vs. 21b).

*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though*

*God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:17–21).*

**Within all of this we must recognize:**

- 1) The Changes in Paul—As Validation of His Apostleship and Encouragement Toward Perseverance
- 2) The Changes Called for in the Corinthians—As a Promise of God's Continuing Work in the Believer
- 3) The Unseen Changes in the False Teachers/False Apostles—As Evidence of their Error and Coming Judgment
- 4) The Changes in You—As an Offer and Promise of Future Blessing
- 5) Our Call as Ambassadors for Christ

I love you all,

Pastor Paul