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Sermon Notes

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A Treasure Box of Motives for a Lifetime of Evangelism

2 Corinthians 5

The Book of Hebrews begins with these unforgettable words:

Hebrews 1:1-2 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son

The awesome truth of the Bible is that there is a living God, creator of the universe... infinite in His being, incomprehensible, eternal, perfect, holy... possessing life in Himself, possessing wisdom in Himself, possessing power in Himself... this one, true, living God SPEAKS and the universe comes into existence... He SPEAKS, and people come into existence... He SPEAKS, and salvation comes...

This God has spoken in the past through the prophets at many times and in various ways

He spoke to Noah, commanding him to build an ark

He spoke to Abraham, commanding him to sacrifice his only son

He spoke to Jacob from the top of a ladder ascending from earth to heaven

He spoke to Moses from the flames of a burning bush

He spoke to Israel the words of the ten commandments... a terrifying message from fire and darkness, while the ground shook beneath their feet

He spoke to David and moved him to write Psalms

He spoke to Elijah in a still small voice and in a whirlwind of fire

He spoke to Isaiah ... to Jeremiah... to Ezekiel...

He sent an angel to Daniel, a radiant, gigantic, terrifying angel

God spoke in the past through the prophets at many times and in various ways

In these last days, He speaks now through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Jesus is GOD'S FINAL WORD to the human race... a word of hope and salvation to people desperate in their sins, terrified of death

Now, that Jesus has ascended to heaven, Jesus speaks THROUGH US... His messengers

2 Corinthians 5:20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

God wants to use each of us, to FILL each of us with the Spirit of Christ, to speak His words of reconciliation to our generation

God has called each Christian to an exciting EXTERNAL JOURNEY of witnessing

There is a WORLD of LOST PEOPLE around us every day... desperate souls who need someone to love them enough to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with them

This is the final sermon we will have on evangelism in this series...

I desire to go through one of the greatest chapters in the Bible on MOTIVATIONS for evangelism

I. A Rich Treasure Chest of Healthy Motives

2 Corinthians 5 may be the greatest chapter in the Bible on this topic... healthy motivations for the external journey... healthy reasons why we should be involved in evangelism and missions

Illustration: DVD 1 hour tour of Acadia National Park in Maine... taking through the most beautiful spots quickly... a drive along the beautiful, rocky coastline; a stop at Thunder Hole and Seal Beach; a drive up Cadillac Mountain, where you can see for miles that coastline and harbor; a climb up the exciting and dangerous Precipice trail, the closest to rock climbing an amateur can get; Eagle Lake, Bar Harbor, etc. All the best spots covered in 1 hour...

So it is with a quick flyover of 2 Corinthians 5

A. The Resurrection Body is a Certainty (vs. 1-5)

2 Corinthians 5:1 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

2 Corinthians 5:4-5 *For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose*

Basic Idea: Because we will someday be in a resurrection body, enjoying the fullness of our salvation, we need fear nothing in this world... our HOPE in a glorious future is a powerful motivation to serve Christ fully now.

Paul argues the same way in 1 Corinthians 15, the great resurrection chapter:

1 Corinthians 15:54-58 *"Death has been swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ ¶ Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain*

The same is true of those we lead to Christ!!!! They also will spend eternity in resurrection bodies

B. The Indwelling Holy Spirit is a Deposit (vs. 5)

2 Corinthians 5:5 *Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

The Spirit is given as a constant proof of our future glory, our future inheritance. He constantly reminds us that our present earthly circumstances are not worth comparing with our future glory. He constantly encourages us and strengthens us and testifies to our hearts that we are children of God.

C. Walking by Faith, Not by Sight (vs. 6-8)

2 Corinthians 5:6-8 *Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. ⁷ We live by faith, not by sight. ⁸ We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.*

Walking by faith not by sight we see everything in a new way (as we'll talk about in a minute). Walking by faith not by sight, we are confident and know the power of God is at work both in us and around us all the time. Walking by faith, not by sight, we see the present and the future clearly—we know what is going on now and what will happen on Judgment Day and beyond. And this is a powerful

D. Pleasing the Lord (vs. 9)

2 Corinthians 5:9 *So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.*

This is among the most powerful motivators for all we do in life... including evangelism: we YEARN TO PLEASE THE LORD... we want Jesus to be happy with us, to be pleased with how we live. We know that He has given us many commands, and we want to obey them because we yearn to please Him. It very much pleases the Lord when we are willing to be courageous and lay down our lives for others.

The Greek word here “make it our goal” or “make it our aim” relates to a love of honor—relates to a drive or ambition... like an Olympic athlete seeking a gold medal, or a soldier seeking a Congressional Medal of Honor... it is an AMBITION... Paul says, “the overriding goal of my life is to PLEASE JESUS!”

E. Judgment Day Assessment—the Negative Side (vs. 10)

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

1. The fact: WE WILL ALL APPEAR before the Judgment Seat of Christ
 - a. Every one of us will give to Christ an assessment of his/her life... down to the detail
 - b. This is consistently taught
 - c. The fact that ***“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...” (Romans 8:1)*** does not mean there is now no ACCOUNTABILITY
2. The focus: what was done in the body... everything... whether good or bad
3. The negative side
 - a. We have to give an account for what we did that we wish we hadn’t done...
 - b. We have to give an account for what we DIDN’T DO that we wish we had
4. The positive side
 - a. All the works we did for the glory of God and by faith and out of love for others will shine at that time
 - b. God will reward those good works at that time
5. The parallel passage

1 Corinthians 3:12-15 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³ his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴ If what he has built survives, he will receive his

reward. ¹⁵ If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

6. The reward: PRAISE FROM GOD

1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

Matthew 25:21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

7. The lifestyle:

Matthew 6:20-21 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Summary: simply put, we should evangelize now because God will reward our loving service on Judgment Day AND BEYOND!!! All the treasure we store up in heaven by loving acts of faith-filled service to Christ, we will enjoy forever and ever!!

F. Fear of the Lord (vs. 11)

ESV 2 Corinthians 5:11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others.

We know by faith the fear of the Lord... we know that Judgment Day is coming... we know that people are facing eternity in either heaven or hell

Luke 12:4-5 "I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. ⁵ But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.

We PERSUADE OTHERS... we plead with others, as we will say at the end BE RECONCILED TO GOD!!!!

G. The Love of Christ Compels Us (vs. 14)

2 Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ controls us,

The word is strong: the Love of Christ **COMPELS, CONTROLS, CONSTRAINS**... us

To do what? To EVANGELIZE!! To persuade others to be reconciled to God!!!

But the phrase “the Love of Christ” is unclear... is it “the love that Christ has for us” or is it “the love that we have for Christ”

1. Because He Loved Us ...

- a. Because Jesus showed us what love was by living for us and dying for us
- b. Because Jesus has given us a perfect example of love...
- c. The love that Jesus displayed on the cross CONSTRAINS US...
CONTROLS US... COMPELS US... to live for others and to evangelize them

2. Because We Love Him

- a. Because we now love Jesus, we want to obey Him
- b. Because the Holy Spirit has poured out His love into our hearts and we yearn to please Him
- c. OUR LOVE FOR JESUS... CONSTRAINS US... CONTROLS US...
COMPELS US... to live for others and to evangelize them

H. Christ's Death Puts Compels Us to Live for Others (vs. 15)

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

We are all SO SELFISH... living for ourselves...

Jesus' saving work in our lives has SET US FREE from selfishness to live for others...

We SHOULD NO LONGER LIVE FOR OURSELVES... but for the lost, for suffering sinners who are harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd

We SHOULD NO LONGER LIVE FOR OURSELVES...but for Him who died for us and was raised again

We SHOULD NO LONGER LIVE FOR OURSELVES... but to evangelize the lost that live around us every day

I. Seeing People from an Eternal Perspective (vs. 16)

2 Corinthians 5:16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.

We are trained by all of these things to see people differently...

The very people we live with every day are ETERNAL BEINGS... people who will spend eternity shouting joyful praise to the Lord in heaven or wailing and gnashing their teeth in hell

We must learn to see people not as temporary aids or hindrances to our earthly convenience, but as ETERNALLY SIGNIFICANT CREATIONS... people who need the gospel

J. Because We're New Creations (Like Jesus) (vs. 17)

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

God has transformed us... He has raised us from the dead spiritually. If we are IN CHRIST, we are NEW CREATIONS... transformed by the power of God!

So we should fly above all earthly concerns like a 747 breaking through the low, dismal cloud cover to the radiant, sunlit skies above.

Our souls are NEW CREATIONS... we have a new nature... that is the essence of being BORN AGAIN... we love what God loves and hate what God hates... especially we love the glory of God and the souls of others

We should live like new creations, and part of that is sharing our faith!

K. Because We're Reconciled to God (vs. 18)

2 Corinthians 5:18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ

God is at the center of all the things Paul has been talking about... the world exists because God made all things... but especially the gospel exists because God has given His Son, Jesus Christ

SALVATION IS FROM GOD... and God has already worked reconciliation for us THROUGH CHRIST

God is the one reconciling people to Himself... GOD WORKS RECONCILIATION... not us..

What is "reconciliation"? It has to do with RELATIONSHIP... when two parties are at odds with each other—acting like enemies, in conflict—and then, the relationship is healed and love is restored, that is RECONCILIATION

So it was with us... we were GOD'S ENEMIES because of our sins

Colossians 1:21-22 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. ²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation

Now we are God's children, adopted into His family

God loves us and is at peace with us... He has worked reconciliation

BECAUSE GOD HAS RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF THROUGH CHRIST, we ought to delight in seeing other rebellious sinners also reconciled to Him

And that is marvelous, because of the next idea:

L. Because God Has Given Us the Ministry of Reconciliation (vs. 18-19)

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

This is an incredible idea, and maybe the centerpiece of what I want to share with you!

God GAVE US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION!! God is the one reconciling the WORLD to Himself in Christ... and we have been given the key INSTRUMENT of that reconciliation—the MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION

The world is God's enemy because of its rebellion, because of its sins

But God loved the world and sent His Son, Jesus Christ

Jesus died on the cross in our place, taking the punishment for our sins

God's wrath being poured out, the way is open for sinners around the world to be reconciled to God

This is the MESSAGE of RECONCILIATION...and it has REAL POWER!!

Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

God has committed to us the MINISTRY of RECONCILIATION... calling on us to witness to near neighbors and distant nations

Hence the call to evangelism and to missions... the EXTERNAL JOURNEY

M. Because God Has the Whole World in View (vs. 19)

This work of reconciliation is WORLD-WIDE...

¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ

Hence our love for MISSIONS... our interest in how missionaries are doing in every part of the world

This work has been entrusted to us, the church

So we evangelize because this is a WORLD-WIDE message, a WORLD-WIDE ministry

N. Because Forgiveness of Sins for Others Awaits Our Efforts (vs. 19)

2 Corinthians 5:19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their sins against them.

What an incredible joy it is to proclaim this message of FORGIVENESS OF SINS!! That God is graciously willing to forgive people their idolatries, their adultery, their thefts, their cheating, their lying, their lusts, their anger, their laziness... all the sins they committed in their whole lives... God is willing to COVER THEIR SINS with the blood of Christ... He is willing to hide his eyes from their sins... He is willing to cast their sins in the depths of the sea... to remove their sins as far as the east is from the west

O. Because We Are Christ's Ambassadors (vs. 20)

2 Corinthians 5:20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors

We evangelize because we have an official position in the coming Kingdom of Christ... we are AMBASSADORS... we represent the coming King... we have the right to proclaim a message of forgiveness in His name...

So we evangelize because we are Christ's ambassadors to a rebellious world

That comes with AUTHORITY to command people to repent:

Acts 17:30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.

That comes with AUTHORITY to declare to people whether their sins are forgiven or not:

John 20:23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.

We are Christ's AMBASSADORS... so we evangelize!!

P. Because God is Pleading With People Through Us (vs. 20)

2 Corinthians 5:20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Astonishing idea!!! The infinite God of the universe is IN US, BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, PLEADING WITH PEOPLE... almost BEGGING THEM:

BE RECONCILED TO GOD!!!

We see God's passion for the lost... we feel it inside us... we care about their plight... we yearn for their salvation... we speak words of pleading

Illus. Witnessing on the airplane... spoke with a businessman for an hour... as we were making our final approach, I felt such a yearning inside me that he come to Christ... the man said "Why do you care so much whether I become a Christian?" I said to him, "I have never met you before, and it's not likely that I will ever see you again. But I know that you will spend eternity either in heaven or hell, and I really want you to have the joy of heaven! I want to see you in heaven, celebrating Christ!" He was clearly moved by that. I know it was the fulfillment of this verse: GOD HIMSELF WAS IN ME, MAKING HIS APPEAL!!

Paul gives an example of that PLEADING we do...

"We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God!"

Pleading involved reasoning, and passion... there is a danger coming, Judgment Day approaches... flee to safety while there's time!

God wants us to FEEL WHAT HE FEELS about the lost!

Romans 10:21 But concerning Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."

Romans 15:3 "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."

Exodus 16:7-8 Who are we, that you should grumble against us?"... You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD."

Luke 15:7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

Q. Because of the Perfection of Christ's Atonement (vs. 21)

2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The centerpiece of the gospel message... the exchange... the DOUBLE IMPUTATION: our sins credited to Christ and He died... His righteousness credited to us and we live

This magnificent gospel CALLS US TO PROCLAIM IT!!! Just the perfection of this one verse... because the gospel is so awesome, so powerful, so perfect, WE EVANGELIZE

II. Developing a Culture of Evangelism

A. The Elders Want to BUILD on this month... not that it would just float away

B. Many State the Goal in this Language: a "Culture of Evangelism"

C. What Is That?

1. Evangelism PERMEATES all the members and every aspect of church life
2. Evangelism is a central goal of our ministry and discipleship
3. Evangelism is done as a WAY OF LIFE by the church, not like an occasional foray
 - a. Some churches schedule so-called revivals... evangelistic services in which professional evangelists come in during the week for a series of extended meetings leading to a bunch of altar calls and “decisions for Christ”
 - b. Other churches (like ours) schedule “outreaches” which are very occasional and do not fit into the flow and life of the church... we make a mad dash into enemy territory, do a little door-to-door, and then retreat quickly, glad that’s over for another year or month
 - c. A “culture of evangelism” means that we do it as a matter of daily lifestyle, not as a periodic spasm
4. Evangelism is done by all the church members, not just the trained/gifted ones
5. Evangelism flows from the health of individual members’ walks with Christ
6. Evangelism training regularly happens in BFL and Home Fellowships
7. Church members consistently have evangelistic conversations on a weekly basis with lost people—coworkers, neighbors, parents of sports teams the kids are on, strangers, etc.
8. Home Fellowship prayer times include regular requests for evangelistic opportunities people have... ALSO ACCOUNTABILITY: “Have you had any evangelistic conversations this week?” Gentle encouragement/training/exhortation toward making it happen
9. Culture of evangelism:
 - a. Homeschool moms are talking about other moms they’re meeting in connection with play dates or music lessons their kids have and they’re asking for prayer for this or that person
 - b. Men meet together in their discipleship relationships and share names of coworkers they’re praying for
 - c. People are reading books on evangelism... learning new things from churchplanting networks like Acts 29 and Sovereign Grace

10. It DOES NOT MEAN that most of the sermons will be geared to lost people directly... I will continue to preach the whole counsel of God verse by verse... but I will also continue to make a direct appeal for the gospel every week as I've done for years as a PORTION of every sermon

Dwayne Milioni: churches like ours NEED to be evangelistically fruitful, because, unlike some of those mega-churches that do manipulated outreach/altar call/baptism approaches that lead to false professions and NO DISCIPLESHIP, we will actually DISCIPLE the people we lead to Christ.

PRAY FOR

III. Applications

A. Embrace the Gospel for Yourself: Be Reconciled to God!!

B. Assess Your Life... and Your Heart

1. "Search me, O God... show me my heart"
2. Ask God to open your evangelistic life up to yourself
3. Ask Him to evaluate your fruit in this area
4. Ask Him to show you your heart's tendencies... if you hardly ever (or NEVER) share the gospel with anyone, ask Him to show you why
5. Repent of whatever sinful attitudes you may have
6. Specifically ask the Lord to show you ways the world has a hold on your heart... Jesus said you have to hate your life in this world; ask the Lord to expose ways that you are preferring yourself, weakening your resolve to witness

C. Become a Spiritual Beggar to Become a Better Evangelist

1. Ask the Lord to transform your heart and lifestyle to be obedient to Him
2. Ask Him every day for witnessing opportunities
 - a. God grant me a chance to witness today
 - b. Give me the spiritual discernment to see it
 - c. Give me the courage to take advantage of it
3. Ask the Lord to pour out His Holy Spirit on you to help you grow

4. Begin praying for people to lead to Christ... collect the names of people to pray for
- D. Get Trained: Learn the Gospel Message Well... and Learn How to Carry on a Gospel Conversation
1. Embrace that the gospel message is the power of God for salvation
 2. Learn the God-Man-Christ-Response outline
 3. How to preach the Law to someone to bring them to repentance for sin
 4. Memorize Scriptures that will help you witness effectively
 5. Learn how to turn a conversation to spiritual things
 6. Training opportunities: Home Fellowships, BFL, Wednesday nights
- E. Learn What Ministries are Reaching Out at FBC... and Take Part
1. Urban Ministry (Matthew Hodges): Jobs for Life... Children's Bible Studies
 2. Caring Center
 3. International Student Ministry... ESL Classes
 4. Undergrad Ministry: Kyle Mercer
 5. Prison Ministry: Jack Evans
 6. VBS coming up in June (Susan Fisher)
 7. HOST Ministry (Tony Fisher)
- F. Be Friendly: Make Friends More in Daily Life
- G. Consider How to Change Your Life to Make More Friends for Jesus
- H. Consider How to Meet Your Neighbors
- I. Dream and Ask God to Give You a Vision
1. William Carey: Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God
- J. Let's Expect God to Do Amazing Things Through FBC