

2 Corinthians 5:14-21, Ministry of Reconciliation

(NIV) ¹⁴ 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. 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. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ 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 people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 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. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Notes:

- Reconciliation in modern english usage refers to repairing of relationships between friends or family members. The definition of the greek word here for "reconciliation" is about making peace between two parties who were enemies (cf. Rom. 5:1-10).
- This is the second week on this passage. The first week the sermon focuses on God reconciling with us. The second week the sermon focuses on us reconciling with each other.

Questions

1. Relationships are often messy. Do you struggle with forgiveness? Why or why not?
2. In relational conflict, what tendencies have you had that as worked against reconciliation? What tendencies have worked for it?
3. Knowing God cares more about our relationship to him, than what we have done, how does a priority on maintaining relationship affect relational conflict?
4. What are the limits in of having charitable disagreement with others vs. necessary agreement in order to be unified?
5. One question people have is what to do with someone who continues hurtful behavior even though you have tried to confront them. What should we do so ourselves or another vulnerable person is not harmed further or so that sin does not persist? What does this say about the importance of truth and trust in reconciliation?