New Creation, New Misson

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Date: 14 June 2026

Preacher: Tyler Neighbors

[0:00] Welcome to Built on God's Word, the preaching and teaching ministry of Highland Park Baptist Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.! Pastor Tyler Nabors preaches on 2 Corinthians 5 verses 11 through 21.

! Listen to way too much news and it's become apparent that our society, that our culture as a whole is in the middle of an identity crisis.
People are trying to find something that they can wrap themselves around and in a way just tell whoever's looking in and tell them this is who I am based on whatever they can wrap around their lives.
Maybe you find your identity in your career and you are somebody that just pours everything that you are into that job. Whether that's forsaking family, friends or other things, your career is what defines you as a person.
Or maybe you find your identity in certain types of hobbies. Maybe you are that person that just craves that adrenaline rush that you get from stepping onto the pickleball courts.
[1:21] We've got a lot of pickleball players in this church. But all that to say, on a serious note, our culture is in the middle of an identity crisis. People wrap themselves around things like their sexual identity and are willing to go to war with anyone that challenges any moral claims that they might have.

Some find their identity in politics, driving them to hatred of anyone on the other side. Some even find their identity in past vices that they have struggled with.
Some find their identity in their identity.
They're really just a symptom of that struggle between those two natures. The only person that we are meant to identify with, the only person that we are meant to wrap our identity around, is the only person in whose image we're already created in.
And that is God alone. Now the church at Corinth was embroiled in this conflict. While they claimed allegiance to Christ, the sins of their old life, they were still alive and well.
[2:49] They still struggled with pagan practices. They still struggled with these old things that they used to identify themselves with. And Paul wants these believers to know that being in Christ, it's more than just words or worship service attendance.

It's even more than changing your lifestyle like we're going to see today. Being in Christ means being a new creation. Being something completely different than you were before.
Being a creation that only God can make you into. And that's what we're going to be learning about today. So with that in mind, let's stand together and read our text this morning.
Verses 11 through 21. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others.
But what we are is known to God. And I hope it is known also to your conscience. We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart.
[4:03] For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God. If we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this, that one has died for all, therefore all have died.

And he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him, who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore we regard no one according to the flesh.
Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.
Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
The old has passed away, and behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

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That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ. [5:12] God making his appeal through us, we implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin, that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

This is the word of the Lord, church. You all may have a seat. That is a blessed hope for anyone to hear. If you are in Christ, you are a new creation.
You are no longer what you once were. You are a new creation. And that new creation comes with a new purpose. And that is the main idea of our text this morning.
A new identity in Christ means sharing the mission of Christ. I can't think of better news for sinful people that rather than judgment, a righteous God offers us newness.
Rather than punishment, he offers us reconciliation. And I can't wait to dive into some of these divine truths with you today as we open up God's word even more.
[6:29] We're going to be looking at four mandates from our text today. And the first mandate that we see in verses 11 through 13 is this, that Christians must have a good reputation in Christ.

Christians must have a good reputation in Christ. Now in the Bible, we have two letters to the church at Corinth. The first letter is really just a letter of rebuke and correction.
The church at Corinth sounds like a nightmare for any pastor to want to go to and shepherd. But this is the church that Paul was investing in. And they were still struggling with their old life.
They had issues with shedding all their old life and practices and living for Christ. And as a result, their kingdom effectiveness had just been completely handicapped. Now, Paul is writing another letter.
In the second letter, it's to undo the damage that has been done by false teachers. As you all know, many times when Paul would leave these churches, people would come in behind him to try and distort the gospel.
[7:34] These were Jewish radicals that were trying to keep people in the old covenant. They didn't believe that sufficiency in Christ was enough to cover sin. So they wanted to keep them in the old covenant where they were abiding by works of the law rather than abiding in Christ.

Now, another reason why Paul is writing this is not just to undo their teaching, but also to defend his character. If people no longer trust the messenger, then they could be easily swayed.
And that's exactly what these false teachers were doing. Not only were they trying to discredit the gospel, but they were trying to slander Paul so that they could get people to not trust the messenger anymore and move them back in to kind of their camp of theology and thinking.
Paul makes various references to this fact that the people of Corinth have been swayed and that their opinion of him has shifted. Chapter 3, verses 1 through 6 in 2 Corinthians.
I just want to read this, and this kind of shows you what Paul is trying to do in this letter. It says, Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need to summedue letters of recommendation to you or from you?
[8:50] You yourselves are our letter of recommendation written on our hearts to be known and read by all. And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God.

Not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts. Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything is coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant.
Not of the letter, but of the spirit. For the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. So Paul knows that there is a real problem going on in Corinth, and that he necessarily isn't the most popular guy there anymore.
So Paul is making his defense. Starts off in our text today, Therefore, knowing the fear of God, we persuade others. He's trying to persuade these people that he is genuine.
That his ministry is not from selfish motivation. It is from Christ. It is in the spirit. He goes on to say, But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known to your conscience.
[10:10] Now, Paul is wanting to defend his character. And I always thought this was kind of peculiar, because he's always made it a point to say that, you know, he's not in this for a popularity contest. He's not in this to try to win favor from people.

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As a matter of fact, 1 Corinthians 4.3 It says, But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court.
In fact, I do not even judge myself, for I am not aware of anything against myself. But I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. So Paul isn't defending his character here because he's seeking the approval of man.
That's the last thing on Paul's mind. Paul is defending his character for the sake of the gospel. Because again, if the messenger is not reliable, the message will not be received well.
Paul's confidence has always been in the anointing that he received from the Lord. But if people don't trust him, then the gospel is in danger of being rejected. And the same is true of our lives.
[11:18] If we do not have a character that just screams genuineness, then our ministry will never have the kingdom effectiveness that we desire it to have. This is not a calling to be people pleasers.

I don't want you to hear me say that. We are not called to be people pleasers. But our lives should show the message that we proclaim. The truth is, there will be people who hate you.
No matter how much your life lines up with the truth of the gospel, there are going to be people that hate you. But if I am trying to proclaim a gospel from the truth of God's word, my life doesn't line up with that, I will be labeled as a hypocrite.
Paul knows this. And also teaches this to his disciple, Timothy. While he was trying to establish the church in Ephesus even more, Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Timothy 3.7.
As far as training elders, he said, Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders so that he may not fall into disgrace and a snare of the devil.
[12:30] Now, I don't consider myself a student of psychology. There's one guy that I like to listen to a lot. He has a podcast. But one of his favorite things to say is this, that behavior is a language.

In other words, the way that we act, it shows what's going on inside. Our behavior speaks to our integrity. It shows what is going on in our hearts.
And Jesus said it even better in Matthew. The Bible says, Out of the overflow of a heart, a man speaks. So a question that I want to leave you with from this first mandate, does your life reflect a devotion to the faith that you proclaim?
If your coworkers or peers or spouse were to hear you give a gospel presentation, would they think, Wow, that explains why he is the way that he is?
Or would they be shocked? Would they be confused by the things that you say because your life doesn't match up? Your life needs to show the new creation that God has made you into.
[13:41] But that cannot happen as long as your sinful nature is still being allowed to control your life. That's why this next mandate is so important. The second one is this, that Christians must die to self to live in Christ.

Christians must die to self to live in Christ. So Paul continues on by saying that it is the love of Christ that controls us. Some of your translations may say compels.
The truth is this, that there is a foundational cause behind Paul's life, behind his ministry. There is a foundational cause behind everything that he does, and it is the love of Christ that has been shown to him.
Now keep in mind here that Paul is still defending his character. He's still trying to convince these Corinthian believers that like I am who I say I am. I'm not a fake. Everything that I do is driven from the love of Christ that has been shown to me and that has become real in my life.
It's not a self-centered motive that's driving his apostolic ministry. And that love has been vastly shown to us through something called the substitutionary atonement.
[14:52] The substitutionary atonement. If you are new here and you are new to that term, even a lot of Christians, nobody uses that word on a daily basis. So I want to make sure that we all have a clear understanding of what that doctrine is.

And this is what the substitutionary atonement is. Jesus Christ suffered and died in place of humanity, bearing the punishment that humans deserve for their sins.
this is something that is a foundation of salvation. Because without it, there is no salvation. One of the great truths of Scripture is this, that God's holiness demands wrath on sin.
And as odd as this may sound, that is good news. Because if God did not demand wrath on sin, he would not be a just God.
But seeing that this was something that we were unable to pay for ourselves, and because God loved us so much, he sacrificed his perfect son in our place so that all who are in Christ could

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receive eternal life.
[16:05] sin required sacrifice. And the God that we owed the debt to is the one that paid the price in full through his son.

And we can receive that life instead of death through faith in his son. It is a love that Paul is just so in awe of. That's why he says it compels him. It controls him.
This is the backing behind everything that he does in this life is the love of Christ that he has come to realize. And it is this love that Paul doesn't want the church at Corinth to miss.
That we shouldn't want anyone to miss. Other places in the Bible teach about the substitutionary atonement. It's all over scripture. But just to give you a few references here, 1 Peter 2.24 says, He himself bore our sins in the body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.
By his wounds you have been healed. John 3.14 and 15 Jesus said this just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness so the son of man must be lifted up that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.
[17:24] It is consistently taught throughout scripture as the foundation for our salvation even in the Old Testament. Not only do you see it just mirrored in all the sacrifices that were meant to atone for the people's sins, you see in Isaiah when he is pointing towards the Messiah.

Isaiah 53 verses 4 and 5 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows yet we esteemed him stricken smitten by God and afflicted but he was pierced for our transgressions he was crushed for our iniquities and upon him was a chastisement that brought us peace and with his wounds we are healed.
So here is the plea that Paul is trying to make. I want to read verses 14 and 15 again. The love of Christ controls us because we have concluded this that one has died for all therefore all have died and he died for all that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.
Listen, Christ died to pay for our sins so that we would no longer live in sin and death that our old nature would no longer have dominion over our lives and that the wages of our sin would no longer be held against us and this can be true if we place our faith in Christ believing that his substitutionary death was enough for us.
This love is what controlled Paul. So has the love of Christ become so real in your life that it compels or it controls you? Is it leading you to permanently put to death the old nature the old self that used to control your life?
[19:32] Galatians 2.20 another church that was struggling with this new identity in Christ Paul wrote this I have been crucified with Christ it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

So I pray for you Christian that the compelling love of Christ would lead to a complete death of your old self so that your new creation your new life in Christ may flourish and those who do not know Christ I truly want you to understand what it is that God has done for you.
The very God that you have lived in rebellion against is the one that is paying in full your debt so that you can become his child so that you can have eternal life with him that is the good news of the substitutionary atonement and if you are not a believer here today I want you to know that truth.
Romans 5 8 says that God shows his love for us and that while we were still sinners Christ died for us you can receive all the benefits of the death and resurrection of Christ if you believe if you place your faith in Jesus as Lord of your life he has paid your debt in full you're not going to come to God with Christ and he's not going to ask you to pay your own debt Jesus has done that for you already and that freedom comes with the new creation that we talked about earlier and for Christians this does not change just how we identify and live for ourselves this also changes how we view other people and this goes into our third mandate that Christians must see others as new creations in Christ Christians must see others as new creations in Christ verses 16 and 17
Paul says this from now on therefore we regard no one according to the flesh even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh we regard him thus no longer Paul was talking about how he used to view Christ as a Pharisee when he was regarding him according to the flesh and he was hostile against him but in 17 he says therefore if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation the old has passed away and behold the new has come so from now on we regard no one according to the flesh this is the new metric that Paul is telling us that we need to measure people by and it's nothing that we dictate it is not a value that we can assign Paul is calling Christians to measure other believers according to the new creation that Christ has made them into realizing that their value is

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not fixed in the things that they do it's not fixed in their financial affluence or what they contribute to our life it is all about who
[22:48] Jesus has made them into and whose image they are bearing that is where their value is fixed when we regard people according to the flesh basically what we are doing is we are trying to pick out the things that we value we're trying to pick out the things that are important to us maybe it's being in a certain social economic class maybe it's having similar interests and similar hobbies maybe it's being on the same level spiritually and you kind of look down on those that are new in their faith whatever it is that you are using to place a value on people there is a term for that in the Bible and it is called partiality I want to give a biblical illustration here today James 2 verses 1 through 9 James says this my brothers show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ the Lord of glory for if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say you sit here in a good place while you say to the poor man stand over there or sit down at my feet have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts listen my beloved brothers has not

God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to those who love him but you have dishonored the poor man are not the rich ones the one who oppress you and the ones who drag you into court are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you are called if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture you shall love your neighbor as yourself you are doing well but if you show partiality you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors when we regard people according to the flesh what happens to the least of these that are among us is they become forgotten the ones that our faith should be having the greatest impact on are the ones that are now victims of our self righteousness maybe it's not financial affluence that you value maybe it's something else maybe you look at their past maybe you look at who they were before
Christ and that's what you use to make distinctions among yourself maybe you see someone's current circumstances that are a result of past decisions you know what that just because we have been forgiven in Christ it doesn't mean that we still don't have earthly consequences for our sins so maybe you see things like that and you're thinking I shouldn't associate with that person maybe you have decided that you yourself don't have much value maybe you look into the mirror and you don't like what you see because you see the guilt of your past maybe you look at others and wonder why you can't measure up my encouragement to you not from myself but from God's word is this if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation the old has passed away and behold the new has come that word anyone it excludes no one if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation and it's time to start living in light of that truth it is time to start loving people in light of that truth and it's time to start seeing the lost as image bearers who have yet to be redeemed because it is only through seeing people as
God intended us that we will truly be able to take up the ministry of reconciliation and this is our fourth mandate that Christians must proclaim the message of reconciliation in Christ Christians must proclaim the message of reconciliation in Christ starting in verse 18 again all this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation that is in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation therefore we are ambassadors for Christ God making his appeal through us we implore you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God for our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin that in him we might become the righteousness of God all this is from God the new creation the conversion the life that we now live in the spirit it all stems from God's sovereign work of salvation the word I wanted to highlight here in this passage was reconciliation that word reconciliation it means to be made right to be made right the problem that exists in every person before Christ the biggest problem is between God's holiness and their sinfulness that is a great divide that nobody can cross on their own that is why we need the substitutionary death of Christ because of our sin we are at odds with God's holiness that is why we need to be reconciled through faith in Romans 5 11 it says more than that we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have now received reconciliation this reconciliation it is only possible through
[28:55] Jesus Christ this isn't something that you as the guilty party can declare on yourself someone that's guilty they can't go before a judge and say you know what I'm good judge I'm fine

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I'm declaring myself innocent thank goodness that is not the way that our laws work and thank goodness on an eternal scale that is not the way that things work with God the reconciliation is only possible through Jesus Christ through something called justification justification it is the instantaneous legal act of God in which he thinks of our sin as forgiven and Christ righteousness as belonging to us and declares us to be righteous in his sight from Wayne Grudem this is something that happens in response to faith in Jesus Christ Romans 5 1 says therefore since we have been justified by faith we have peace with

God through our Lord Jesus Christ Paul is clear that our justification is through faith in Christ God can look at our sins as forgiven because he has paid the price because the wrath that we deserved is now placed on him justification doesn't mean that God isn't wrathful on sin anymore it just means that our wrath has been placed on somebody else and because of that we can now receive the righteousness of Christ he even says that we're justified apart from works of the law so it's not a matter that was Romans 3 8 it's not a matter that our life needs to line up first before we come to God we don't need to look enough like Jesus before God justifies us it's not a matter of looking like Jesus first it's a matter of looking to Jesus first so that we can be made righteous in his sight now here's a common misconception!
when people have this misconception it leads us to take things like justification and forgiveness for granted our wrath did not just go away the wrath that we deserve it didn't just disappear into thin air somebody else had to take that wrath for us and that somebody was Jesus Christ who was perfect who was the son of God who did not deserve that wrath verse 21 this is probably my favorite verse in 2nd Corinthians for our sake!
made him to be sin who knew no sin that in him we might become the righteousness of God that is a divine exchange it doesn't compute in earthly terms normally when we try to make an exchange with somebody it's where both parties are getting something that benefits them but this is the benefit all comes to us Jesus Christ took our punishment so that we could receive his righteousness Christians we have a message of freedom and salvation that has been entrusted to us and because of that we now have a new divine purpose in our life to be ambassadors for Christ as this text has said God has established the terms of salvation and as recipients of that salvation we are commissioned to go and proclaim it to the world the ministry of reconciliation is all about being an ambassador for
Christ it's not about just being a Christian it's not about just being a faithful worship attender being a Christian is about being an ambassador for Christ and proclaiming to the lost world that you can be saved so Christians a couple of applications I just want to leave you with as we're!
[33:15] closing our message today this is not a mission that we compartmentalize we're not a faithful Christian on Sundays and an employee of someone else the next we're not a faithful Christian on Sunday and someone else at school the next day we are called to take this message as ambassadors in every part of our lives so fathers and mothers you are ambassadors to your children the ministry of reconciliation should bear the heaviest way in your homes now church I want to say this I love you all dearly but one of the things I have told my children several times is that they are my most important congregation if I fail at passing on the gospel to them nothing else I do in life is going to matter much their salvation and discipleship is more important to me than anything else I could ever do in 4 says we will not hide them from their children but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the

Lord and his might and the wonders! He has done! You only have so much precious time with your children! How are you going to use it?
With that time you could establish a continuing legacy of faithfulness and love for the Lord giving your kids every tool that they need to have a relationship with the Lord ultimately yes the decision is between them and God but as a parent you have the opportunity to give them every single tool available to flourish in that faith when it becomes their own so how are you going to use that time students you're not off the hook on this either whether you're a college student or a middle!
school student or whatever you are in high school if you are a new creation there's nowhere in the Bible where it says there's a coming of age when you officially are sent out to be ambassadors for Christ if you are a new creation you are there you are an ambassador obedience to this call is your responsibility if you have been born again and made new then God has placed that commission on your life to go to the lost in whatever sphere of influence you might have now maybe you have a burning desire to be this ambassador for Christ you know that you are supposed to be a minister of

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reconciliation sharing the message with the world but maybe you're afraid maybe you're scared maybe you fear failure and rejection and I understand that sharing the truth with somebody that is not living according to the truth it is but success is not in their response success is in the obedience Mark Dever says this we do not fail in our evangelism if we faithfully tell the gospel to someone who is subsequently not converted we fail only if we do not faithfully tell the gospel at all all failure is it's a lack of faithfulness to the call the only concern on your part is to share the gospel to share the truth how the gospel is received that's not up to you that is simply between them and God and whatever sphere you find yourself sharing the gospel the response is completely between that person and God now Romans 10 14 and 15 just to kind of sum up this mandate how then can they call on the one they have not believed in and how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard and how can they hear without someone preaching to them the
[37:19] Lord is sovereign in salvation but he has also ordained his people to be his messengers! of reconciliation so take up that call take up that great commission share the truth in whatever sphere of influence you find yourself now for unbelievers the application of the response for you is to be reconciled to God and receive his righteousness listen the greatest news in all of this is that salvation it doesn't depend on you or your past actions Salvation is not going to depend on your record that you bring to the table it's only going to depend on one thing is Jesus Christ the Lord of your life have you placed your faith in him have you received forgiveness of sins Romans 10 9 and 10 says if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved for with the heart one believes!

and with you believe will you believe is God calling you to confess Jesus Christ as Lord of your life that's the gospel that is how you are saved it's not about being good enough it's not about any shame that you bring to the table and you might be wondering well if God is truly sovereign that means he knows everything that I've done if you go a little farther in Romans chapter 10 you see this verse in verse 13 where the scripture says everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame everyone who believes in him all throughout scripture the verses that pertain to salvation they always use this inclusive language it says that the gospel invitation is meant to be extended to everyone everyone who believes in him will have eternal life everyone that's
John 3 15 and all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved Romans 10 13 but is patient toward you not wishing that any should perish but that all should reach repentance 2 Peter 3 9 whoever believes and is baptized will be saved Mark 16 16 in Christ all will be made alive 1 Corinthians 15 22 I am the gate whoever enters through me will be saved John 10 9 whoever believes in me will not perish but have eternal life John 3 16 I just want you to let that truth just wash over you that the word whoever it is an invitation to all there is no sinner that the cross cannot reconcile to God let's pray father
I thank you for this divine truth that we have talked about today Lord that through Christ substitutionary death on the cross in our place that we can be made right to you and Lord that we can be made right through this wonderful truth of justification where we can be forgiven and receive the righteousness of Christ Lord I pray that today would be the day that you would be calling someone out of darkness Lord I pray for anyone here that is lost that is still struggling with their sin that knows their guilt Lord that they would know that you are a just and forgiving God that they would come to you in repentance and just like Jesus Christ is Lord and that you have raised him from the dead Lord I pray for the Christians that are here today Lord that they would be faithful ministers of reconciliation that they would take that message to the world that is around them that they would not be shy but
Lord that they would take that truth and boldly proclaim it not with the confidence that is in themselves or in their eloquence of speech but that is completely in you and that is grounded in the holy word that you have given us Lord I pray today that you would move to learn more visit us in person or see the website

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