

Journey Through the New Testament

2 Corinthians 1 – 5

Series: Body Language
“Living Beside Yourself”
8-4-19

Introduction

Paul wrote many hard truths to the Corinthian churches in his first letter, then found himself defending his ministry and mission in the second letter. The Corinthian church had attacked Paul’s leadership and begrudged his authority over them. Paul stood firm in his response and in his ministry despite many hardships. His words of truth and wisdom guided the ancient church and now guide us. Leadership and relationships in the church can be difficult. Paul’s letters remind us that being the people of God is not easy. We are only able to shine the light of Christ by relying upon the Spirit’s transforming work within us.

Opening Prayer

O God, we confess that we like to be self-sufficient and successful. Help us to recognize that it is only through your Spirit that we can become who you have made us to be. Give us strength and power to live a life that reflects your love that we may be empowered to carry out your mission. In Christ we pray. Amen.

Bible Study 2 Corinthians 3:17-4:7 (CEV)

What?

1. Paul says that, “We are being transformed into the same image (of Christ) ... This comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (v. 18)
What qualities will we have as we become more like Christ? (Refer to Galatians 5:22-26)
2. What are the challenges of becoming more like Christ?
3. What choices will we need to make in order to cooperate with the Spirit’s power at work in our lives?
4. In what way is spiritual transformation a process?

2 Corinthians 5:15-21

1. What (or who) guides our actions and activities when we commit our lives to being a disciple of Christ? (v. 15)
2. How does our individual spiritual lives impact the body of Christ?

3. How does our life in Christ change the way we regard others? (16-17)
4. What is the “good news” of what God did through Christ?

So What?

1. So, what are we to do in response to our new life and relationship with God? (v. 19-20)
2. Discuss the profound meaning of verse 21. Consider, Christ gave his life for us, now we give ours for him.

Lesson Notes: By identifying with our life, death, and even sinfulness, God in Christ has transformed the whole human situation. Jesus’ resurrection initiated the “new creation.” The good news of Christ’s love for all is the source of the Christian mission—really God’s mission. (Commentary, *Wesley Study Bible*)

Now What?

1. Now, as we focus on committing our lives to the way of Christ, what spiritual practices can we focus on to help keep us in tune with the Spirit?
2. What has helped you grow spiritually?
3. How is the image of Christ seen in us, even with our faults and flaws?
4. Consider your life when “no one is looking.” What does this tell us about the on going need for transformation in our lives?
5. What can you be focusing on now that will impact your maturity as a Christian in the years to come?
6. How does being part of the body of Christ encourage us in our spiritual journey?

Reflection

John Wesley wrote that, “Only the power that makes a world can make a Christian (Commentary, *Wesley Study Bible*)

“God uses frail and flawed people because that’s the only kind there are.”

C. M. Streeter