



# Now What?

By

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We know from God's Word that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, but **now** what? Some might even ask, **so** what?

Does the fact that God sent His Son to Israel 2,000 years ago have any impact on our world today? If the answer is based on what the majority of people believe, the answer is no. However, the answer is not based on what most people believe. It's based on what's **true**.

The truth is that what Jesus did when He walked on the planet Earth 2,000 years ago is as relevant now as it was then.

Jesus said He came to seek and to save the lost, and He's still doing it today (Luke 19:10).

Jesus came to preach good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for those in prison and recovery of sight for the blind, and to release the oppressed, and He's still doing it today (Luke 4:18).

But, you say, Jesus is in Heaven? He's not walking on Earth anymore. How can He be doing these things now? Good question.

Jesus is walking across our world today through us. We are His hands, His feet, His arms, His legs, His mouth, His lips, His tongue, His heart. Jesus lives His Life and touches the lives of everyone who will listen through us — His children.

“For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. 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 5:14-21

Did you see it? The Love of Jesus Christ for the lost and poor and blind and imprisoned and oppressed of this world “compels us” to tell everyone about His supreme Love and amazing Grace. It is as though “God were pleading through us.” The word “pleading” is the Greek *parakalountos*. It means “to come to the side of another for the purpose of giving aid, help, comfort, to encourage, beseech, exhort, appeal, plead.” It’s the idea of someone pleading with another person to do something that is vital for their lives. The word is used in the New Testament for the ministry of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Apostles, and others who believe in Jesus Christ. God has given

us the same ministry He gave His Son 2,000 years ago — the ministry of reconciliation.

Paul follows that with, “we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.” The word “implore” is *deometha*. It means “to desire, to long for.” It demonstrates a strong desire and longing that leads to beseeching, even begging someone to do something they need to do for their own good. As Christians we come to know and understand God’s love for the world. His love becomes our love for the lost. He pleads through us and we implore others to be reconciled to God. God first reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, then gave us the ministry of reconciliation — “and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

What is this “ministry of reconciliation?” We know that “ministry” (*diakonian*) means “service,” but what do “reconciled” and “reconciliation” mean? The verb and noun are both used here in 2 Corinthians 5. The word “reconciled” comes from the Greek *katallasso* and means “to change, exchange.” The word “reconciling” comes from the Greek *katallage* and also means “an exchange.” Change or exchange what?

Do you know what a lot of people believe about God? They believe God needs to change His Mind about them. Is that the “ministry of reconciliation?” Do we help God understand that people are really not as bad as they seem? That He shouldn’t be so hard on them? That He should let everybody into Heaven no matter how they live their lives? No. That’s not the ministry of reconciliation. Paul explained it well in Romans 5:10:

“For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

A couple of important points here:

- 1 We “were enemies” of God — that means somebody’s going to have to “change” to make a new relationship work well ... something has to happen to bring peace between enemies ... we are the ones who were lost ... we are the ones who were in need of salvation — it’s not a matter of God changing His mind about us — we have to change our mind about Him.
- 2 We “were reconciled to God” — we are the ones who “change,” but God is the One Who changes us — that’s the significance of the passive form of the verb — God made the reconciliation possible through the death of His Son — He did the hard work and we benefitted from it.

Is God going to change His attitude toward sinful humanity? Not at all. His attitude toward sin today is the same as when He saw Adam sin in the Garden of Eden. God told Adam he would die if he disobeyed God. Adam disobeyed and died and so will we. That’s what sin does — it kills. It also makes us an “enemy” of God. But fortunately for all of us who will trust God, He made a way for us to “exchange” our old sinful man for a new man, a new creation: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” That is what it means to be reconciled to God. Old things have

passed away, all things are in the process of becoming new! We were once enemies of God, now we live under His protection and provision. He is now our Heavenly Father. We call this the “exchanged life.”

One of the most wonderful parts of 2 Corinthians 5 is this: “... that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.” The word “imputing” is the Greek *logizomai* and means “to reckon, take into account.” It’s the idea of something being written down as a way of keeping an account of what someone owes. Every person who has ever been born has an account with God. Every human being “owes” God and nothing they can do or say will ever be able to pay the price they owe Him. We don’t have enough money, power, possessions or prestige to pay God back for what sin did to our relationship. The cost of salvation is too much for us to even make the first payment. Only One Person can pay the price, and He already did — on the Cross.

The Bible often talks about our life being written about in books in Heaven. Nothing we’ve thought, said or done is forgotten. It’s all written in the book of our life. The question is, will our name be written in the Lamb’s Book of Life? The result of not being listed in that Book is a terrible thing.

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave

up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:11-15

So, how do we make sure that our names and the names of our family and friends are written in the Book of Life? I call it R&R — Repent and Receive —

Repent of sin and Receive Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. Paul wrote in Philippians 4:3 about fellow Christians whose names were written in the Book of Life: “And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.” These were people, just like you and me, who God had reconciled, “not imputing their trespasses to them.” Our trespasses, our sins, have not been written into our personal spiritual books. Everything that would have been held against us before God in Heaven has been erased in Christ! Not one sentence, not one word, not one vowel or syllable of any sin we’ve every committed will ever be held against us because God in Christ reconciled us to Himself, not imputing our trespasses to us. And if that’s not enough, God wrote our names in the Book of Life. Now,that is amazing Grace!

Who better to be involved in a ministry of reconciliation than people who have been reconciled? We know what it means to be enemies of God. We know what it means to be a lost sinner. We know what it means to be spiritually blind and poor. We also know what it means to be loved and forgiven by God. We know what it means to be reconciled to God. We know what it means to be the children of God. We know what it means to be at peace with God. Who better to be involved in the ministry of reconciliation than people who have experienced reconciliation!

But where does the power come from for this ministry? Directly from God Almighty! "... that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them." God is the One Who is reconciling the world. He does the amazing work of drawing sinners to Himself and convincing them of their sin, of Christ's righteousness, and of the judgment of God. Look at what Jesus promised those who follow Him.

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged." John 16:7-11

God sent the Son, Who paid the penalty for our sins. The Son sent the Holy Spirit, Who convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. What is the sin? "... because they do not believe in Me." This is how vital it is that everyone place their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit of God is present in the world today convicting people of their sin. Our ministry is to tell people of God's Love for them, but also of the coming judgment where He will sentence unbelievers to eternal darkness and torment. It's not a popular message, but it is urgent and important.

Let's pray for each other this week. We have eternal work to do.

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