

February 7, 2010

Title: An Urgent Call to Christian Mission Key Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5: 17-20

1. Discussion Starters

- a. What do you hope these classes will accomplish in your life? In our church?
- b. What do you think about when you hear the expression, "It's Time"?

2. Background

a. Corinth, the city

- i. Located 50 miles from Athens on isthmus which permitted 2 ports.
- ii. Major commerce center with population of 400,000.
- iii. Diverse, cosmopolitan; considerable immorality with strong pagan background.

b. Corinthian church

- i. Founded on Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey when he spent 18 months there.
- ii. About 150-200 followers; some Jews but mostly Gentiles; met in house churches.
- iii. Characterized by dissention, divisions, rumors, factions, friction.
- iv. Our verses are selected from the 2<sup>nd</sup> letter written by Paul to the troubled Corinthian congregation around 55 AD.



3. The Verses: <sup>17</sup>So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! <sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup>that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. <sup>20</sup>So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

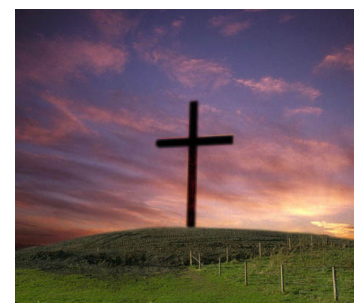
a. Verse 17

- i. What word or expression would best describe the type of change outlined here?
- ii. What does the expression "in Christ" mean to you? What does it mean to for us to be made new in Christ?
- iii. When Paul says "everything old has passed away", to what might he be referring?
- iv. Is this a one-time event or an ongoing process?
- v. To what can newness lead?
- vi. What are some new times you have experienced in your life?
- vii. How did you gain the confidence to enter into these new times?



b. Verse 18-19

- i. What can we discover about God from these verses?
- ii. What does reconciliation mean to you?
- iii. Share your stories of salvation and baptism. How did you recognize your need for God? How did you claim God in your life? What have been the differences? How has this led you to be on mission?



c. Verse 20

- i. What is an ambassador?



- ii. What does it mean for us to be ambassadors for Christ? What qualities do you think we should have to be effective ambassadors for Christ?
- iii. What is the mission of God as revealed in these verses?
- iv. Where can you be Christ's ambassador in areas you already find yourself? (work, community, home, school, etc.)?
- v. What are three things you really enjoy doing? Can you use these three things to be the presence of Christ with others?
- vi. In what ways does Augusta Heights Baptist Church, as a church family, need to respond to **our** community to demonstrate the liberating, redemptive justice of God's kingdom?
- vii. What keeps you from embarking on your mission with God?

#### 4. The Missional Church

##### a. Quotations to ponder

- i. "A missional church empowers its people to use their passions (gifts) on purpose to be the presence of Christ in the world, whether anyone joins the church or not." Bo Prosser
- ii. "It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world: it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church, creating the church as it goes on its way." Jurgen Moltmann
- iii. "The **primary** purpose of the Church's mission cannot simply be the planting of churches or the saving of souls: rather, it has to be service to the mission of God, representing God in and over against the world, pointing to God, holding up the God-child before the eyes of the world in a ceaseless celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany." David Bosch
- iv. "The missional church is a new way of thinking about congregational involvement as we move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century." Bo Prosser

##### b. Leslie Newbiggin defines Christian mission as three-fold:

- i. Proclaiming the kingdom of the Father
- ii. Sharing the life of the Son
- iii. Bearing witness of the Spirit

##### c. Four implications for the how and why of church

- i. We pursue a life of contemplation bolstered by service, and worship invigorated by acts of mercy and a concern for justice.
- ii. We strive to give people a living experience—not only a memory—of Jesus Christ through our bold witness and self-sacrificing compassion.
- iii. We don't exist for ourselves, but for the benefit of the world.
- iv. We participate as individuals, small groups, and a corporate body in God's mission to the least and the lost of our world.

##### d. Explanation of missional logo

- i. In the center is the cross.
- ii. Upper left image reminds us of a cup of cold water shared in the name of Christ.
- iii. Bottom left image shows interwoven rope—God's mission is fluid; God's love flows from person to person.
- iv. Bottom right image shows light—the mission comes from heart of God.
- v. Top right image shows the Word of God.



##### e. Some Closing Thoughts

- i. As you consider these quotations and images, what is the church's purpose?
- ii. What are the implications for yourself, your small group, your church if you claim the newness of God's leadership? How can we encourage one another in God's mission?
- iii. "Now is the time for individual Christians and churches to discern God's mission in the world and discover their participation in it." Preface, Daniel Vestal