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This third and final study of "Our Ancestors in Faith" centers on one of the founders of Methodism, John Wesley. In this three part study, we have taken a look at a middle ages Italian Catholic cleric, Francis of Assisi; the Lutheran founder of the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther; and one of the founders of [English Methodism](#), [John Wesley](#). Each of the studies of these Christian leaders has been linked to a scripture text that captures an important aspect of their ministry contribution to Christianity.

John Wesley and his younger brother Charles lived and ministered both in England and the United States in the eighteenth century during the [colonial period](#) of North America. John became active in ministry in the 1720s and continued so until his death on March 2, 1791. At his death, he left behind appx. 135,000 followers and some 541 itinerant preachers under the name "Methodist." His movement became the fountain head of several denominational groups in our day. The best known is the [United Methodist Church](#), but also came the [Holiness Movement](#) in which [Pentecostalism](#) is rooted. Additionally, the [Christian and Missionary Alliance](#) group have roots in Wesley's teachings. Yet, Wesley himself never left official membership in the Church of England. He viewed his movement primarily as a renewal of the Anglican Church, even church leaders did not look upon him positively for the most part. This ambiguity between Methodists and the Episcopal Church continues in varying degrees to this day, although the Pentecostal side of his movements is not so characterized.



I. [Context](#)

Much of the background material is drawn from a previous study of [2 Cor. 5:16-21](#). New material will be added only a relevant to our passage.

In ancient letters, establishing the context for a passage often is of greater importance than with other types of scripture texts. This, mostly because a letter is comparable to listening to one side of a phone conversation (i.e., the letter writer). The more one knows about who's on the other end of the phone conversation (i.e., the letter recipient(s)) the easier it is to understand what the conversation is about, since the letter writer assumes many things are already understandable to those he originally was writing to. Second Corinthians makes many of these assumptions and thus presents some real challenges to clear understanding of Paul's words.



a. Historical

External History. The issue of Paul's second letter to the church at Corinth raises both many aspects that are well understood, and a few that are less certain, based on the available information from both the letter itself, the Pauline letters in the NT, the book of Acts, and early church traditions.

Paul's [relationship with the Christian community at Corinth](#) began on the [second missionary journey](#) in the early 50s of the beginning Christian century, when his preaching of the gospel there led to the establishment of a number of house churches in this thriving town of several thousand people. Described in Acts 18:1-17; 1 Thess. 3:6-13; 1 Cor. 2:1-5; 1:13-17; 2 Thess. 3:1-5; 1 Cor. 3:5-10; 11:2, 23, 15:1; 2 Cor. 11:7-9, the church had its beginnings in the home of two Christians, Aquila and Priscilla, who probably had initiated a Christian witness prior to Paul's arrival. Sometime afterward Paul wrote a letter to the Christians there, which precedes the letter in the NT known as First Corinthians. 1 Cor. 5:9 contains an allusion to it (NRSV): "I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral persons." Exactly when and from where this letter was written

is unknown. The next segment of contact [[#s 3-7 in chart](#)] by Paul with Corinth came on the [third missionary journey](#) in the middle 50s of the first century. When Paul came to Ephesus on this trip, he spent a lengthy period of time there in ministry. During that time several contacts with the Corinthians took place. When information reached him about the situation among the Corinthian believers from members of the household of Chloe and from a group from the church, the letter that we know as 1 Corinthians was written about 55 AD and sent to [Corinth](#) dealing with a variety of issues present in the church. Not long afterward Paul made a trip from Ephesus to Corinth that is not recorded by Luke in Acts to deal personally with some of the problems in the church, but he was unsuccessful in resolving the issues. 2 Cor. 2:1; 12:14; 13:1,2 allude to this visit. When he arrived back at Ephesus he penned a third letter to the Corinthians (see 2 Cor. 2:4; 7:8 for allusions to this letter), a part of which may possibly be contained in 2 Cor. 10-13 but most likely is lost. Titus was sent with this letter along with instructions to meet Paul somewhere in Macedonia to let him know whether the issues were resolved or not. After Paul left Ephesus, he went

to Philippi etc. in Macedonia where he met Titus who had a positive report about the situation in Corinth. This provided the main reason for the writing of what we call 2 Corinthians. Titus then took the letter to Corinth ahead of Paul's arrival there on a third visit to the church described briefly in Acts 20:1-3. This would be the final time that Paul would see the Corinthians. About 50 years later the Corinthians surface again as the recipients of another letter. This time it came from the spiritual leader of Christians at Rome and attempted to resolve a fist full of problems plaguing the Corinthians community still. The letter is [1 Clement](#) and was written about 96 A.D.

The congregation reflected the enormous diversity that characterized the ancient city of Corinth, and that meant a lot of the problems that were present in this diverse cultural, ethnic, and moral background. As a military retirement center as well as a busy commercial city with commerce from both sea and land, the city had segments of people from virtually all over the Roman Empire living there. This played a role in the Christian community struggling with many severe problems that covered the full range of ethical to doctrinal issues. Not the least of which was a significant difficulty of at least a segment of the Christian community in getting along with the apostle Paul. Some of the most direct, bluntest expressions ever penned by Paul are found in his Corinthian correspondence, especially in 2 Corinthians 10-13. We have more of what Paul said to this group of believ-



ers than we have to any other other community of faith that he served. This in part, because the Corinthian church had so many problems and issues needing attention.

Internal History. Time and place markers inside 5:11-21 are limited to two basic reference points: 1) Paul's conversion, and 2) his understanding of ministry at the time of the writing of this material. With his conversion coming appx. 33 AD and this letter being written in the mid-50s of the first century, almost two decades of ministry have transpired. Thus, Paul reflects a mature view of God's calling on his life. He has traveled over most of the northeastern Mediterranean world preaching the gospel and establishing churches. By this point, near the turning around juncture of the third missionary journey, persecution and suffering have frequently dogged his trail. He has experienced the ups and downs in relationships with many of the churches that have been established on these journeys. In fact, he was in the midst of a vacillating relationship with the Corinthians believers at the time of writing these words in 5:11-21. He was headed to Corinth at this point in time to seek reconciliation of relationship with the church in the face of opponents having succeeded in driving a wedge between the Corinthian Christians and the apostle.

Thus his reaching out to the Corinthians in 5:11-21 has deeper tones than just the words by themselves might suggest.

b. Literary

Genre. 2 Cor. 5:11-21 comes as a part of the Body section of this letter to the Corinthians. Paul followed patterns of ancient letter writing in the core elements, but also used a great deal of creativity in adding his own personal touch to each of his letters.

[Ancient letters](#) were comprised of four basic elements:

Praescriptio

Proem

Body

Conclusio

The *Praescriptio* identified who the letter was from (*Superscriptio*), who it was to (*Adscriptio*) and a bridge building greeting between the two (*Salutatio*). The *Proem* was a prayer of praise to God for the recipients and sometimes also an intercessory prayer for God's blessings on them. The **body** of the

letter focused on the particular set of circumstances prompting the writing of the letter in the first place. The *Conclusio* finished the letter and could contain a variety of elements ranging for Author Verification, Greetings, Doxology, and Benedictio and others. Second Corinthians contains [all these elements](#).

One important note is that the more formal letters like this one were actually written by a writing secretary, rather than by the designated sender in the *Superscriptio* section. We know the name of the writer of Romans, [Tertius](#), but not the name of the individual who did the writing of 2 Corinthians. One is inclined to wonder if it may have been Silas (Latin, Silvanus), since he is identified in [1 Peter 5:12](#) as the one who did the writing of that letter from Peter. But the *Conclusio* of 2 Corinthians ([13:11-13](#)) makes no mention of the writing secretary.

Literary Context. The literary setting for 2 Cor. 5:16-21 is fairly simple to determine. 2 Corinthians falls into the [middle period of Paul's writing ministry](#) along with 1 Corinthians and Romans. These documents were written during the third missionary journey during the mid 50s of the first Christian century. Our passage is a part of the Body proper of 2 Corinthians which divides itself roughly into three segments: chaps. 1-7, 8-9, and 10-13. This first segment, chaps 1-7, focus largely on a celebration of ministry with Paul recounting several previous episodes of ministry with the Corinthians.

J. Paul Sampley, in "2 Corinthians" in the *New Interpreter's Bible* (v. 9, iPreach), has a helpful summation:

Although interpreters of this extended section understandably often mine it for its profound and rich theological claims, every portion of it is aimed by Paul not only at enhancing the Corinthians' understanding of his ministry among and for them, but also especially at binding them more closely to himself as their apostle. Given his recent experiences with them and their umbrage over his changed plans, a direct request for increased affection from the Corinthians would be far too risky a rhetorical move at this point. Rather

than hazard further alienation of the Corinthians, Paul avails himself of the rhetorical option called insinuation, which features a subtle approach and seeks to lay the ground for an affirmative response to himself that will be sought explicitly and directly only later in the letter (6:12-13; 7:2-4).

The opening section (2:14-17) is rich with imagery that points to one end: Paul is the agent of God's powerful and triumphant gospel; Paul is part of a victory processional across the Mediterranean world that would make the Romans proud; and Paul is part of a vast sacrifice whose fragrance, though it is being offered up to God, is manifest to everyone around.

Then, in what amounts to a series of three complementary depictions that together make up the heart of this letter fragment, we see (1) Paul's as a ministry of a new covenant (3:1—4:6), (2) Paul's as a ministry sustained through affliction and mortality (4:7—5:10), and (3) Paul's as a ministry of reconciliation (5:11-21). The entire section closes with a primary appeal for the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain (6:1-2) and, once more, a defense of Paul's apostolic probity and an insistence, yet once again, that Paul is worthy of exemplification and honor (6:3-10). The integrity and rectitude of Paul's ministry is the issue that laces together everything from 2:14 to 6:10.

II. Message

As has been the case with the two previous studies connected to Francis of Assisi and Martin Luther, this section will be divided into two sections. The first will focus attention to the Christian leader, John Wesley, and then the second on the scripture passage that has close ties to the Christian leader.

a. John Wesley:

The overview of Wesley's life will follow a somewhat similar pattern to the two previous studies. As was true for Francis and for Luther, most events in their early life helped pave the way for a crisis turning point. This then shaped the direction of their Christian pilgrimage and ministry for the remainder of their life. For Francis, it was primarily a sermon based on Matthew 10. For Luther, it was a promise made to God in a thunder storm. For Wesley, no single event but rather a series of events come together to shape him as a Christian and as a minister. The most famous of these was the so-called Aldersgate experience in a Moravian Brethren worship ser-



vice on Aldersgate Street in London May 24, 1738 of which he wrote, "I felt my heart strangely warmed." Out of the events during this period of his life, a ministry began taking shape that would change the religious face of England.

Sources for Further Study:

Just as is the case for the two previous leaders, literally mountains of publications have been produced over the years examining every aspect of Wesley's life and ministry.

Some of the internet sources that I have found helpful include: "John Wesley," [Wikipedia](#). This URL appears to be well written from a fairly objective viewpoint.

Especially helpful are a ton of hyperlinks to other sources both parallel to and focusing on more detailed aspects of Wesley.

“John Wesley,” [Christian Classics Ethereal Library](#). This site provides access to many of Wesley’s writings and thus is helpful for probing the primary sources in studying Wesley.

[John Wesley: Holiness of Heart and Life](#). This is the main URL maintained by the United Methodist Church on John Wesley. Its focus is not primarily on the biography of Wesley, but rather on aspects of Wesley’s teachings and their relevance to today. Particularly helpful to some readers is the Spanish translation of the material that is available through this web site.

A good mixture of primary and secondary sources of material on Wesley can be found. Thus the interested student can glean a fair amount of information on this Christian leader from the internet.

Life up to Aldersgate.

“John Wesley, the son of the rector of Epworth, Lincolnshire, was born in 1703. After being educated at Christ Church College, Oxford, Wesley was ordained in 1725. After finishing his studies Wesley remained Oxford where he taught Greek.” (“John Wesley,” [Spartacus Schools](#)) This quick summation greatly compresses the first two decades plus of Wesley’s life. The [Wikipedia site](#) fleshes out some of the details:

John Wesley was born in Epworth, 23 miles (37 km) northwest of Lincoln, the son of Samuel Wesley, a graduate of Oxford, and a minister of the Church of England. In 1689 Samuel married Susanna Annesley, twenty-fourth child of Dr. Samuel Annesley. Both Samuel and Susanna had been raised in Dissenting homes before becoming members of the Established Church early in adulthood. Susanna herself became a mother of nineteen children. In 1696 Samuel Wesley was appointed rector of Epworth, where John, the fifteenth child, was born.

At the age of five, John was rescued from the burning rectory. This escape made a deep impression on his mind; and he regarded himself as providentially set apart, as a “brand plucked from the burning.”[1]

The Wesley children’s early education was given by their parents in the Epworth rectory. Each child, in-

cluding the girls, was taught to read as soon as they could walk, and talk. In 1713 John was admitted to the Charterhouse School, London, where he lived the studious, methodical, and (for a while) religious life in which he had been trained at home.

During his early years, John Wesley had enjoyed a deep religious experience. His biographer, Tyerman, says that he went to Charterhouse a saint; but he became negligent of his religious duties, and left a sinner....

In June 1720, Wesley entered Christ Church, Oxford, with an annual allowance of £40 as a Charterhouse scholar. His health was poor and he found it hard to keep out of debt. A scheme of study which he drew up for 1722 with a time-table for each day of the week is still to be seen in his earliest diary. This first diary (of many) runs from April 5, 1725, to February 19, 1727. A friend describes Wesley at this time as “a young fellow of the finest classical taste, and the most liberal and manly sentiments.” He was “gay and sprightly, with a turn for wit and humour.” [2]

He was ordained as a deacon in 1725 and elected fellow of at Lincoln College in the following year. He received his Master of Arts in 1727. He was his father’s curate for two years, and then he returned to Oxford to fulfill his functions as fellow.[3]

Leading Wesley scholars point to 1725 as the date of Wesley’s conversion. In the year of his ordination he read and began to seek the religious truths which underlay the great revival of the 18th century. The reading of William Law’s Christian Perfection and Serious Call gave him, he said, a more sublime view of the law of God; and he resolved to keep it, inwardly and outwardly, as sacredly as possible. He pursued a rigidly methodical and abstemious life, studied the Scriptures, and performed his religious duties diligently, depriving himself so that he would have alms to give. It was during his Oxford days that Wesley began to discover the true practice of the Christian faith, an understanding, like so many others in his life, that would continue to develop both while he was in Georgia and after his subsequent return to England in 1738.

The year of his return to Oxford (1729) marks the beginning of the rise of Methodism. The famous “holy club” was formed by John’s younger brother, Charles Wesley, and some fellow students, derisively called “Methodists” because of their methodical habits.

After the death of Wesley’s father in 1735, John went to Georgia in the colonies to preach the gospel to the native Americans. But this experience was not suc-



cessful. He returned to London in 1738 broken and under charges from Anglican Church officials of deviating from office church doctrine and practice. A failed love experience in Georgia also contributed to his disappointment.

Again the [Wikipedia article](#) fills in some detail:

It was at this point that he turned to the Moravians. Wesley had encountered the Moravians three years earlier on his voyage to Georgia. At one point in the voyage a storm came up and broke the mast off the ship. While the English aboard all panicked the Moravians calmly sang hymns and prayed. This experience led Wesley to believe that the Moravians possessed an inner strength which he lacked. [1] His Aldersgate experience of May 24, 1738, at a Moravian meeting in Aldersgate Street, London, in which he heard a reading of Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans, and penned the now famous lines "I felt my heart strangely warmed", is but one of many experiences in Wesley's journey of faith. A few weeks later he preached a remarkable sermon on the doctrine of present personal salvation by faith, which was followed by another, on God's grace "free in all, and free for all."

This proved to be a major turning point for Wesley in ministry and personal devotion to God.

Ministry.

Out of his "Aldersgate experience" would come a renewed devotion and blessing from God on his ministry. The beginnings of the evangelical awakening in England are found here. A life long friendship with the evangelist [George Whitefield](#) was established out of the Holy Club at Oxford. The two preachers, when banned from preaching in the Anglican churches, turned to preaching in the fields in an open air setting that drew huge crowds. At first, Wesley was hesitant to venture outside the bounds of acceptable Anglican Church practice, but once he experienced the powerful blessing of God in large numbers of people coming to Christ through such preaching he regularly used this fields as a pulpit for the gospel.



Over time Wesley began developing small groups for Bible study and preaching the gospel. Both ordained preachers and lay people were encouraged to preach. As the movement grew, organizational structure developed that helped to move the groups into full

fledged churches. Although Wesley never intended to begin a competing denomination to the Church of England, and his brother Charles was especially opposed, growing tension between Wesley's groups and local Anglican bishops steadily pushed the groups, called 'societies,' in that direction. This especially became the trend from the 1740s onward. The continuing influence of the Moravians on Wesley is particularly evident with these groups. Once Wesley crossed the difficult bridge of these societies ordaining ministers by 1784 the path of no-return was set.

Legacy.

Wesley's ongoing influence is seen in the denomination movements that have sprung from his teachings. One of the central tenants of that teaching is his concept of "perfectionism," the conviction that the love of God can be perfected in the life of the believer and thus lifting the converted sinner to a life largely above the destructiveness of sinfulness. He took his theological stand in [Arminianism](#) over against the Calvinistic leanings of his friend Whitefield.

Wesley lived out his convictions in both practice and writings, as the [Wikipedia article](#) documents:

Wesley travelled constantly, generally on horseback, preaching twice or thrice a day. He formed societies, opened chapels, examined and commissioned preachers, administered aid charities, prescribed for the sick, helped to pioneer the use of electric shock for the treatment of illness, superintended schools and orphanages, received at least £20,000 for his publications, but used little of it for himself. His charities were limited only by his means. He died poor. He rose at four in the morning, lived simply and methodically, and was never idle if he could help it....

Wesley was a logical thinker, and expressed himself clearly, concisely and forcefully in writing. His written sermons are characterized by spiritual earnestness and simplicity. They are doctrinal but not dog-



matic. His Notes on the New Testament (1755) are enlightening. Both the Sermons (about 140) and the Notes are doctrinal standards. Wesley was a fluent, powerful and effective preacher. He usually preached spontaneously and briefly, though occasionally at great length.

As an organizer, a religious leader and a statesman, he was eminent. He knew how to lead and control men to achieve his purposes. He used his power, not to provoke rebellion, but to inspire love. His mission was to spread "Scriptural holiness"; his means and plans were such as Providence indicated. The course thus mapped out for him he pursued with a determination from which nothing could distract him.

Wesley's prose Works were first collected by himself (32 vols., Bristol, 1771–74, frequently reprinted in editions varying greatly in the number of volumes). His chief prose works are a standard publication in seven octavo volumes of the Methodist Book Concern, New York. The Poetical Works of John and Charles, ed. G. Osborn, appeared in 13 vols., London, 1868–72.

Besides his Sermons and Notes already referred to, are his Journals (originally published in 20 parts, London, 1740-89; new ed. by N. Curnock containing



notes from unpublished diaries, 6 vols., vols. i-ii., London and New York, 1909-11); The Doctrine of Original Sin (Bristol, 1757; in reply to Dr. John Taylor of Norwich); "An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion (originally published in three parts; 2d ed., Bristol, 1743), an elaborate defence of Methodism, describing the evils of the times in society and the church; a Plain Account of Christian Per-

fection (1766).

Wesley adapted the Book of Common Prayer for use by American Methodists. In his Watch Night service, he made use of a pietist prayer now generally known as the Wesley Covenant Prayer, perhaps his most famous contribution to Christian liturgy.

The passage from 2 Cor. 5:11-21 certainly focuses on a major theme of Wesley's ministry of preaching the gospel to sinners. The two brothers, John and Charles, along with their dear friend, George Whitefield, left a permanent stamp on Protestant Christianity.

b. 2 Cor 5:11-21

Literary Structure: The literary structure of vv. 11-21 is relatively easy to determine. Paul followed a pattern of "chaining" together individual units, pericopes, with a variety of coordinate conjunctions along with some additional connecting links. In our passage, vv. 11-15 is an implication (οὖν) made explicit from vv. 1-10. Verses 16-19 then stand as the logical consequence (ὥστε) of vv. 11-15. Verses 20-21 become an implication (οὖν) of vv. 16-19 made explicit. Thus vv. 11-21 divide naturally into three sections. See the [Block Diagram](#), [Semantic Diagram](#), and [Exegetical Outline](#) for illustrations of the details. This will be the organizing structure of the study. The last two units will incorporate the materials of the [previous study](#) of 5:16-21.

1) Devotion to God and others, vv. 11-15

Greek NT

5:11 Εἰδότες οὖν τὸν φόβον τοῦ κυρίου ἀνθρώπους πείθομεν, θεῷ δὲ πεφανερώμεθα· ἐλπίζω δὲ καὶ ἐν ταῖς συνειδήσεσιν ὑμῶν πεφανερῶσθαι. 5:12 οὐ πάλιν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστάνομεν ὑμῖν ἀλλὰ ἀφορμὴν διδόντες ὑμῖν καυχήματος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ἵνα ἔχητε πρὸς τοὺς ἐν

NASB

11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. 12 We are not again commending ourselves to you but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have

NRSV

11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. 12 We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that

NLT

11 It is because we know this solemn fear of the Lord that we work so hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. 12 Are we trying to pat ourselves on the back again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who

προσώπῳ καυχωμένους
καὶ μὴ ἐν καρδίᾳ. 5:13
εἴτε γὰρ ἐξέστημεν, θεῶ·
εἴτε σωφρονοῦμεν, ὑμῖν.
5:14 ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη τοῦ
Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς,
κρίναντας τοῦτο, ὅτι εἰς
ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν,
ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον·
5:15 καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων
ἀπέθανεν, ἵνα οἱ ζῶντες
μηκέτι ἑαυτοῖς ζῶσιν
ἀλλὰ τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν
ἀποθανόντι καὶ
ἐγερθέντι.

an answer for those who
take pride in appearance
and not in heart. 13 For if
we are beside ourselves,
it is for God; if we are of
sound mind, it is for you.
14 For the love of Christ
controls us, having con-
cluded this, that one died
for all, therefore all died;
15 and He died for all, so
that they who live might
no longer live for them-
selves, but for Him who
died and rose again on
their behalf.

you may be able to an-
swer those who boast in
outward appearance and
not in the heart. 13 For if
we are beside ourselves,
it is for God; if we are in
our right mind, it is for
you. 14 For the love of
Christ urges us on, be-
cause we are convinced
that one has died for all;
therefore all have died. 15
And he died for all, so that
those who live might live
no longer for themselves,
but for him who died and
was raised for them.

brag about having a
spectacular ministry
rather than having a sin-
cere heart before God.
13 If it seems that we are
crazy, it is to bring glory
to God. And if we are in
our right minds, it is for
your benefit. 14 What-
ever we do, it is because
Christ's love controls us.
3 Since we believe that
Christ died for everyone,
we also believe that we
have all died to the old life
we used to live. 15 He
died for everyone so that
those who receive his
new life will no longer live
to please themselves.
Instead, they will live to
please Christ, who died
and was raised for them.

Notes.

Two connecting links of vv. 11-15 to vv. 1-10 in-
troduce these verses: 1) the inferential conjunction
οὖν (*therefore*) and 2) the causal participle phrase
Εἰδότες τὸν φόβον τοῦ κυρίου (*knowing the fear of the
Lord*). The first ten verses, especially vv. 6-10, have
focused on the anticipated of divine judgment over
the Christian's live of devotion at the close of the
age (*NRSV*):

1 For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is
destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not
made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this
tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly
dwelling, 3 if indeed, when we have taken it off we will
not be found naked. 4 For while we are still in this tent,
we groan under our burden, because we wish not to
be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is
mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 He who has
prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given
us the Spirit as a guarantee.

6 So we are always confident; even though we
know that while we are at home in the body we are
away from the Lord? 7 for we walk by faith, not by
sight. 8 Yes, we do have confidence, and we would
rather be away from the body and at home with the
Lord. 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make
it our aim to please him. 10 For all of us must appear
before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may
receive recompense for what has been done in the
body, whether good or evil.

Having written, in the mid 1970s, a 300 plus page
doctoral dissertation on these ten verses, I have dis-
covered a profound richness of thought expressed
by Paul here. Paul faced death and the divine judg-
ment to follow with calm and confidence knowing
that his life had been completely devoted to Christ.

Thus, the apostle's passionate efforts to lead

others. He knew the
sense of accountability
that every believer faces
in final judgment. The
'fear of the Lord' con-
notes a healthy respect
for the demands of God, which will be imposed in
final judgment.

Ministry for Paul is defined here in two words:
ἀνθρώπους πείθομεν (*men we are persuading*). The
richness of these two words is brought out by Ralph
P. Martin (*Word Biblical Commentary*, Logos Sys-
tems):

ἀνθρώπους πείθομεν, "we attempt to persuade
men." The knowledge of the fear of the Lord leads
Paul to attempt to persuade men and women. But the
question before us is what lies behind Paul's
understanding of persuasion πείθειν.

One idea that Paul probably meant to convey with
his use of πείθομεν, "we persuade," is that he seeks
to convince the Jews and Greeks alike to accept God's
salvation (but contra Bachmann, Godet, Plummer,
Hughes, 186). The missionary idea in the verb is also
remarked on by other writers (Windisch, Prümm). From
5:9–10, it would be hard not to see Paul as motivated
to take the Gospel to the world (see Acts 18:4; 19:8,
26; 26:28; 28:23). This makes even more sense in
light of Paul's thesis of reconciliation (5:18–20) in that
he believes himself to be an instrument of
reconciliation. In light of judgment day, Paul presses
on to evangelize (Schlatter, *Paulus*, 556, 557; cf.
Tasker, 83).

But also in view of Paul's defense of his motives
(5:11b–13), it appears that he has in mind to persuade
the Corinthians of the genuineness of his ministry and
motives. Paul's authority as an apostle is under attack

(3:1–3; 10:1–18). He has had to persuade certain members of the church of his personal integrity (1:12–14; 4:1, 2; 6:3–10; 7:2–4). In fact, much of 2 Corinthians is a defense of his personal character, so much so that Hughes writes, “This whole epistle may be described as a vindication of his genuineness” (186, 187).

Thus Paul’s use of *πείθομεν* has a double flavor; he tries to persuade men and women that Christ is the means of salvation, and he attempts to persuade them of his purity of motive. As Denney says, “The first [nuance] is suggested by the general tenor of the passage, and the second seems to be demanded by what follows” (187).

Paul affirmed confidence for this ministry in terms of his life being absolutely clear to God, and also -- he hopes -- to the Corinthians (vv. 11c-13). One interesting aspect is his allusion to the possibly strange patterns his piety may have taken on. In the larger context of chaps. 10-13 of this letter it becomes clear that many Corinthian believers were unsure of Paul’s trustworthiness and claims to apostleship. Several opponents were vigorously challenging Paul from inside the Christian groups at Corinth.

Paul’s goal in affirming his piety to them was ἵνα ἔχητε πρὸς τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους καὶ μὴ ἐν καρδίᾳ (so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart). Thus, his words here were geared to affirming the genuineness of his devotion to God in order to help those who supported him at Corinth.

Verse 13 challenges us in interpretation: “For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.” This out of mind / in control of mind combination is focused on God / Corinthians. The first line, ‘out of mind in regard to God’ (εἴτε ἐξέστημεν, θεῷ), is the more puzzling aspect. In deep spiritual experience with God, Paul may have appeared to have “lost his mind” to some. Or, at least his opponents at Corinth were claiming this. The exact nature of this deeper spiritual experience is unclear.

Later in 12:6b-7 he will say, “But I refrain from it [=boasting], so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, even considering the exceptional character of the revelations.” The central point is clear, however: all his experiences were focused on God and the Corinthians, not on himself. This was the heart of his integrity and clear conscience.

Verses 14-15 set forth the theological foundation for Paul’s devotion and ministry: the atoning death of Christ and Paul’s spiritual knowledge of Christ. The heart of new life in Christ is to push people to no longer live for themselves but instead for Christ. Christ’s death also affirms the spiritual death of all humanity. The only way for spiritual life to take place is through union with this Christ who died for them.



What do we see in these verses that challenges us in our world? Paul, in reflecting on ministry, urges us to reach beyond the tip of our noses to the needs of others. Ministry to others is inseparably linked to commitment to God. The apostle here reflects the foundation of the Old Testament in the Decalogue where the vertical relationship to God is linked to the horizontal relationship to others. Jesus reaffirmed this in the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:3-10). Paul reflects that same stance here. Genuine

ministry to people must stem from our devotion to God.

What is the heart of that ministry? For Paul it was persuading others to come to Christ. So must it be for us as well. Ministry must always point people to Christ for salvation, or else it isn’t ministry. Closely linked to this is genuineness of character and conscience. Paul went to great lengths to help the Corinthians see his genuineness, even in the midst of charges against him as not being genuine. As for Paul, so also for us. Our words must be backed up by character and authenticity as a Christian, if our words are to have persuasion.

Finally, the very foundation for ministry is the life giving death of Jesus on the cross. Humanity is dead

spiritually, and only Christ can bring them back to life again. There must be transformation of the individual that empties him of self-centeredness and refocuses his life on Christ. This resurrection life

comes through union with the resurrected Christ. This must be our theology which undergirds ministry.

2) Knowing Christ spiritually, vv. 16-19

The Greek NT

5:16 Ὡστε ἡμεῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν οὐδένα οἶδαμεν κατὰ σάρκα· εἰ καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν κατὰ σάρκα Χριστόν, ἀλλὰ νῦν οὐκέτι γινώσκομεν. 5:17 ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινά· 5:18 τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ καταλλάξαντος ἡμᾶς ἐαυτῷ διὰ Χριστοῦ καὶ δόντος ἡμῖν τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς, 5:19 ὥς ὅτι θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἐαυτῷ, μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν καὶ θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς.

NASB

16 Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. 17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

NRSV

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. 17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 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.

NLT

16 So we have stopped evaluating others by what the world thinks about them. Once I mistakenly thought of Christ that way, as though he were merely a human being. How differently I think about him now! 17 What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun! 18 All this newness of life is from God, who brought us back to himself through what Christ did. And God has given us the task of reconciling people to him. 19 For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others.

Notes.

The connection link at the beginning of verse sixteen “therefore” [Ὡστε] links verses 16-21 to verses 11-15 as an expression of the consequence of what was said in vv. 11-15.

Paul attempted to communicate to the Corinthians that they can take pride in him and his apostolic ministry. Evidently a group had come to Corinth claiming a superior witness and calling to that of Paul. Some in the Corinthian congregation had come under their influence. Paul’s plan to come to Corinth had been altered and he instead wrote the so-called painful letter (cf. 1:23-2:11). This had been taken as a sign of weakness by some at Corinth and thus further diminished Paul’s leadership in their eyes. Thus a lot of what he does is to assert both his genuine interest in the Corinthians as well as the basics of his gospel preaching. We can clearly see that pattern in 5:11-13 and 14-15. Paul both commended

himself to the Corinthians, and asserted his concern grew out of the love of Christ that had changed his life.

In light of this, verses 16-19 contrast two ways of relating to people, and also to Christ. One can see people from a ‘human point of view’ and thus relate to them on that basis. Before the Damascus road encounter with the risen Christ, this was the way Paul viewed even Christ. But in Christ believers must relate to others, and to Christ, differently. That is, on a spiritual level.

Again, Earnest Best in the *Interpretation Commentary* has a helpful summation:

The old way in which he saw people was “a human way.” Paul uses this phrase (in Greek *kata sarka*) frequently, but in other places it is regularly rendered “according to the flesh” (e.g., Rom. 8:4,5,12,13). In our verse it indicates, then, not just an inadequate or limited way of looking at others, as though if we knew them better we would understand them better. Human judgments are not merely inadequate. They are also tinged with prejudice and bias. We make them with our own interests in mind. Since Paul’s conversion and in the light of his conviction that Christ died for him, he thinks in a different kind of way, once “according to the flesh” but now “according to the Spirit.” His judgments are now controlled by God’s Spirit. We might hesitate to make such claims for ourselves, for prejudice and self-interest govern us too much. Probably Paul is not claiming that all his judgments are free of self but acknowledging that this is what they ought to be and in fact have been becoming increasingly since his conversion. Insofar as he takes seriously that he lives no longer for himself but for Christ (v. 15), a new spirit pervades all his judgments.

This new perspective is all encompassing as verse 17 asserts (NRSV): “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” With Christian conversion we begin looking at other people in a completely new light. For Paul the ramification of this was a calling, as verses 18 and 19 affirm (NRSV): “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 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.” At the heart of the experiencing of Christ’s love has been reconciliation with Almighty God. Growing out of that came then the responsibility of seeking to help others be reconciled to God. Thus the new perspective of Paul is to see everyone from their spiritual need of reconciliation with God.

How does this connect to us? The implications of these verses are substantial. They challenge us first of all at the point of how we see other human beings. Do we just notice the exterior of another person? Maybe how well dressed he/she is? How attractive they may be physically? How well off they might possibly be from their appearance? These ways of looking at other people reflect the “human angle” the *κατὰ σάρκα* that Paul mentions in verses 16 and 17. These are normal and natural ways of human beings viewing one another. But Paul’s point is that once we’ve experienced the transforming love of Christ in our life, we can no longer content our-



selves with viewing people merely this way. A deeper spiritual concern must always be a part of our looking at others.

This is the challenging aspect. Every human being stands in need of reconciliation with God. Every person is a sinner by nature and under God’s wrath. This is a major implication of the reconciliation picture. Our task is to communicate to them the message of reconciliation through Christ. In the context, this ascertain by Paul stands as a part of why he traveled to Corinth out of Palestine to preach the gospel to them. He, a strict Jew, otherwise would have felt nothing but contempt for the Corinthians and would not have been willing to expend an ounce of energy trying to bring them to God. In fact, he would have taken pride in their destruction as a sign of the superiority of the covenant Jews over the rest of humanity. But Christ changed all that for Paul. He as a Christian had devoted his life to preaching this gospel message to everyone who would listen, both Jew and Gentile. This was the basis of his relationship with the Corinthians.

And Christ changes all that for us as his followers today. We must see the spiritual aspect and need of every human being we come in contact with, if we claim to walk in obedience to Christ our Lord. But realizing their spiritual need and acting upon it are two different things. As Paul said in verse 15 (NRSV), “And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.” We now live for Christ. The implication of

this is a willingness to do whatever we can to help others find this reconciliation with the Living God

before it's too late.

3. Being Christ's ambassadors, vv. 20-21

Greek NT

5:20 ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ οὖν πρεσβεύομεν ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι' ἡμῶν· δεόμεθα ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ. 5:21 τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ

NASB

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

NRSV

20 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. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

NLT

20 We are Christ's ambassadors, and God is using us to speak to you. We urge you, as though Christ himself were here pleading with you, "Be reconciled to God!" 21 For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

Notes.

The connecting link in verse twenty "So" [οὖν] underscores these two verses as an implication of the preceding statements in verses 16 - 19. What is the clear implication of this new way of seeing people: it is to serve God as an ambassador with a message to be delivered. The image of ambassador sets up a vivid picture of ministry. The ambassador doesn't determine the content of the message; the one he represents does. The ambassador is a messenger who carries the message to its designated recipients. For Paul the essence of that message authorized by God was clear: "be reconciled to God." This message must be delivered.

But how can sinful humanity be reconciled to a perfectly righteous and holy God? The second part of Paul's message of reconciliation in verse 21 makes that clear (NRSV): "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Restoration of relationship with Almighty God is only possible through the redeeming work of Christ who became sin so that we might become righteous. No human logic

can explain how this works adequately. Christ in his death took on the guilt of our sinfulness and paid the penalty for it. Somehow in the mystery of God that sacrifice of the pure Son of God satisfied the demands of God's holiness for judgment upon human sinfulness. But the issue is much more than losing our guiltiness before God. It is also a becoming righteous before God. Literally, the Greek text declares that we become God's righteousness in Christ: ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ. There

is something so profound in this dying of Christ in which he became sin for us. So profound, that the impact of it is to produce God's righteousness in the life of the believer.

Rom. 5:6-11 sheds some additional light on Paul's thought here (NRSV):

6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. 8 But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. 9 Much more surely then, now that



we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. 11 But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation



God's grace in transforming ways. Both in our own life, and in the lives of those who respond to the message of reconciliation that we have brought to them.

And as the further context of [2 Cor. 6:1-13](#) makes clear, 5:11-21 has implications for interpersonal relations among believers (NRSV):

Try as we might, our limited understanding can never fully comprehend the spiritual depths of what Christ did on Calvary for sinful humanity. We can celebrate it, however, and rejoice that something profoundly wonderful happened that day outside Jerusalem. And as Paul earlier had declared to the Galatian Christians in 2:19-20 (NRSV):

"19 For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; 20 and it is no longer I who live, but it is 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."

When in our conversion we climbed on that cross outside Jerusalem with Jesus, we also died. Our old sinful self was crucified. But out of the ashes of death came new life -- a life lived through faith in Jesus as God's Son. At the heart of that new life is a righteousness before God that is nothing less than God's own character taking root in our life and becoming the foundation of our living both now and in eternity.

This new spiritual way of seeing others opens up limitless possibilities of seeing and experiencing

1 As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. 2 For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! 3 We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, 4 but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; 6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, 7 truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; 8 in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; 9 as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything. 11 We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. 12 There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. 13 In return—I speak as to children—open wide your hearts also."

When we see others spiritually we naturally seek to build bridges of positive relationships with them. We are in this ministry of reconciliation together as partners, each working with one another to carry this message to everyone who will listen.



Greek NT

5:11 Εἰδότες οὖν τὸν φόβον τοῦ κυρίου ἀνθρώπους πείθομεν, θεῷ δὲ πεφανερώμεθα· ἐλπίζω δὲ καὶ ἐν ταῖς συνειδήσεσιν ὑμῶν πεφανερῶσθαι. 5:12 οὐ πάλιν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστάνομεν ὑμῖν ἀλλὰ ἀφορμὴν διδόντες ὑμῖν καυχήματος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ἵνα ἔχητε πρὸς τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους καὶ μὴ ἐν καρδίᾳ. 5:13 εἴτε γὰρ ἐξέστημεν, θεῷ· εἴτε σωφρονοῦμεν, ὑμῖν. 5:14 ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς, κρίναντας τοῦτο, ὅτι εἷς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν, ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον· 5:15 καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν, ἵνα οἱ ζῶντες μηκέτι ἑαυτοῖς ζῶσιν ἀλλὰ τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀποθανόντι καὶ ἐγερθέντι.

5:16 Ὡστε ἡμεῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν οὐδένα οἶδαμεν κατὰ σάρκα· εἰ καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν κατὰ σάρκα Χριστόν, ἀλλὰ νῦν οὐκέτι γινώσκουμεν. 5:17 ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινά· 5:18 τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ καταλλάξαντος ἡμᾶς ἑαυτῷ διὰ Χριστοῦ καὶ δόντος ἡμῖν τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς, 5:19 ὥς ὅτι θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ, μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν καὶ θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς

NASB

11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. 12 We are not again commending ourselves to you but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have an answer for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart. 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

16 Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. 17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Him-

NRSV

11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. 12 We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. 15 And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. 17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was rec-

NLT

11 It is because we know this solemn fear of the Lord that we work so hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. 12 Are we trying to pat ourselves on the back again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart before God. 13 If it seems that we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit. 14 Whatever we do, it is because Christ's love controls us. 3 Since we believe that Christ died for everyone, we also believe that we have all died to the old life we used to live. 15 He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live to please themselves. Instead, they will live to please Christ, who died and was raised for them.

16 So we have stopped evaluating others by what the world thinks about them. Once I mistakenly thought of Christ that way, as though he were merely a human being. How differently I think about him now! 17 What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life

καταλλαγῆς. 5:20 ὑπὲρ
Χριστοῦ οὖν
πρεσβεύομεν ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ
παρακαλοῦντος δι' ἡμῶν·
δεόμεθα ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ,
καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ.
5:21 τὸν μὴ γνόντα
ἀμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν
ἀμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα
ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα
δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ
.

self, not counting their
trespasses against
them, and He has com-
mitted to us the word of
reconciliation. 20 There-
fore, we are ambassa-
dors for Christ, as though
God were making an ap-
peal through us; we beg
you on behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God. 21
He made Him who knew
no sin to be sin on our
behalf, so that we might
become the righteous-
ness of God in Him.

onciling the world to him-
self, not counting their
trespasses against
them, and entrusting the
message of reconcilia-
tion to us. 20 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. 21 For our sake he
made him to be sin who
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ness of life is from God,
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onciling people to him. 19
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reconciling the world to
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ing people's sins against
them. This is the wonder-
ful message he has given
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are Christ's ambassa-
dors, and God is using us
to speak to you. We urge
you, as though Christ
himself were here plead-
ing with you, "Be recon-
ciled to God!" 21 For God
made Christ, who never
sinned, to be the offering
for our sin, so that we
could be made right with
God through Christ.

Greek NT Diagram

11

οὖν

Εἰδότες τὸν φόβον τοῦ κυρίου

1 **ἀνθρώπους πείθομεν,**

δὲ

2 **θεῷ πεφανερῶμεθα·**

δὲ

3 **ἐλπίζω**

καὶ

ἐν ταῖς συνειδήσεσιν ὑμῶν

πεφανερῶσθαι.

4 ¹² **οὐ πάλιν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστάνομεν ὑμῖν**

ἀλλὰ

5 **(ἐσμέν) ἀφορμὴν διδόντες ὑμῖν**

καυχήματος

ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν,

ἵνα ἔχητε

πρὸς τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους

καὶ

(ἔχητε) μὴ ἐν καρδίᾳ.

13

γὰρ

εἴτε ἐξέστημεν,

6 **(ἐστὶν) θεῷ·**

εἴτε σωφρονοῦμεν,

7 **(ἐστὶν) ὑμῖν.**

14

γὰρ

8 **ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς,**

κρίναντας τοῦτο,

ὑπὲρ πάντων

ὅτι εἷς...ἀπέθανεν

ἄρα

οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον·

15

καὶ

ὑπὲρ πάντων

9 **ἀπέθανεν,**

ἵνα οἱ ζῶντες μηκέτι ἑαυτοῖς ζῶσιν·

ἀλλὰ

(οἱ ζῶντες...ζῶσιν) τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀποθανόντι καὶ ἐγερθέντι.

16

ὥστε

ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν

10 **ἡμεῖς...οὐδένα οἶδαμεν**

κατὰ σάρκα·

κατὰ σάρκα
εἰ καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν...Χριστόν,
ἀλλὰ
νῦν
οὐκέτι
11 **γινώσκομεν.**

17 **ὥστε**
εἴ τις (ἐστὶν)
ἐν Χριστῷ,
12 **(ἐστὶν) καινὴ κτίσις·**
13 **τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν,**
ἰδοὺ
14 **γέγονεν καινά·**

18 δὲ
15 **τὰ πάντα (ἐστὶν)**
ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ
τοῦ καταλλάξαντος ἡμᾶς ἑαυτῷ
διὰ Χριστοῦ
καὶ
δόντος ἡμῖν τὴν διακονίαν
τῆς καταλλαγῆς,
19 ὥς ὅτι θεὸς ἦν
ἐν Χριστῷ
κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ,
μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα
αὐτῶν
καὶ
θέμενος...τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς.
ἐν ἡμῖν

20 οὖν
ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ
16 **πρεσβεύομεν**
ὥς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος
δι' ἡμῶν·
17 **δεόμεθα**
ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ,
18 **καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ.**

ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν
19 21 **τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν...ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν,**
/-----|
ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ
ἐν αὐτῷ.

Semantic Diagram

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">A</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 40%;"> <div style="text-align: center;">1</div> <div style="text-align: center;">2</div> <div style="text-align: center;">3</div> <div style="text-align: center;">4</div> <div style="text-align: center;">5</div> <div style="text-align: center;">6</div> <div style="text-align: center;">7</div> <div style="text-align: center;">8</div> <div style="text-align: center;">9</div> </div> <div style="width: 40%;"> <div style="text-align: center;">a</div> <div style="text-align: center;">b</div> <div style="text-align: center;">c</div> <div style="text-align: center;">i</div> <div style="text-align: center;">ii</div> <div style="text-align: center;">i</div> <div style="text-align: center;">ii</div> <div style="text-align: center;">1</div> <div style="text-align: center;">2</div> </div> </div> </div>		1	ὄν	Pres	Act	Ind	1	P	(ἡμεῖς)
		2	δε	Perf	Pass	Ind	1	P	(ἡμεῖς)
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		4	---	Pres	Act	Ind	1	P	(ἡμεῖς)
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		6	γὰρ	(Pres	---	Ind	3	S	αὐτὸ)
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		8	γὰρ	Pres	Act	Ind	3	S	ἀγάπη
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		10	ὥστε	Perf	Act	Ind	1	P	ἡμεῖς
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		12	ὥστε	(Pres	---	Ind	3	S	αὐτὸς)
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		14	ἰδοὺ	Perf	Act	Ind	3	S	καινά
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		16	ὄν	Pres	Act	Ind	1	P	(ἡμεῖς)
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		18	---	1 Aor	Pass	Imp	2	P	(ἡμεῖς)
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Exegetical Outline

- I. (1-9) Recognizing the coming judgement, Paul served God and the Corinthians out of a new life devotion.
 - A. (1-7) Paul's ministry to the Corinthians reflected his well known devotion to God and to the Corinthians.
 - 1. (1-3) Paul declared that his ministry grew out of being well known to God and others.
 - a) (1) Paul affirmed that he sought to persuade people out of his respect of God
 - b) (2) Paul affirmed that he was well known to God
 - c) (3) Paul expressed confidence that he was well known to the Corinthians
 - 2. (4-7) Paul's sometimes strange and sometimes sane actions reflected devotion to God and the Corinthians.
 - a) (4-5) Paul's efforts were intended to help prepare the Corinthians against his opponents.
 - i) (4) Paul did not feel that he had to commend himself again to the Corinthians
 - ii) (5) Rather he wanted to give them an opportunity for boasting in him
 - b) (6-7) Paul's ministry to the Corinthians was based on devotion to God and to them.
 - i) (6) If Paul seemed strange it was devotion to God
 - ii) (7) If Paul seemed sane it was devotion to the Corinthians
 - B. (8-9) The foundation of Paul's ministry was the sacrificial love of Christ.
 - 1. (8) Christ's love pulled Paul into ministry because of Christ's sacrificial death.
 - 2. (9) Christ died for all in order to bring alive those who would live for others rather than themselves.
- II. (10-15) The consequence of Christ's sacrificial love is spiritual transformation into new life.
 - A. (10-11) Being made new gave Paul a new way to regard people, even Christ himself.
 - 1. (10) Out of his conversion he looked at people with a spiritual eye rather than a human one.
 - 2. (11) This new spiritual perspective included Christ as well
 - B. (12-15) The consequence of this new perspective is recognition of spiritual union with Christ.
 - 1. (12-13) To be in union with Christ moves one from an old life to a new life spiritually.
 - a) (12) Whoever is in spiritual union has become a new creation.
 - b) (13) The things of the old life have passed away.
 - 2. (14-15) The new life has its origin in a reconciling God who seeks to reconcile to Himself all through Christ.
 - a) (14) Indeed spiritual union makes all things new.
 - b) (15) These new things have their origin in a reconciling God through Christ.
- III. (16-19) The implication of this ministry of reconciliation was for Paul to become God's ambassador.
 - A. (16) Paul considered himself an ambassador for Christ
 - B. (17-18) His work as an ambassador was to plea to others to be reconciled to God through Christ.
 - 1. (17) As an ambassador he pleaded to others in behalf of Christ.
 - 2. (18) His plea was that they be reconciled to God.
 - C. (19) God had made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us so that we could become God's righteousness in Christ.