

Monday, FEBRUARY 22, 2010

Are you still processing the Teen Tunnel of Transition? Did God move deeply in your spirit this weekend as you considered with me the remarkable truths of 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 in view of the powerful statement in 6:1 “*I urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain*”? Ponder that for a moment as you begin your work week. What would it look like if you lived today...this week in a way that demonstrated such little regard for Jesus Christ and all God has accomplished in reaching to you, that it was as though you “received God’s grace in vain”?!

We’ve all experienced it. You spend an exceptional amount of time working on a project...a work project, a school project, even a hobby...and then when completed and given to the person for whom you have prepared it...they set it aside showing you they don’t care about it! Remember the pain? How often does God feel that? When you and I live as though the crucifixion death and resurrection of Jesus Christ really is “no big deal”, is that deeply wounding to Jesus?

Today I invite you to wrestle with one simple phrase: “*Christ’s love compels us...*” All day today, in fact all week, I challenge you to keep that phrase rolling around in your head, and keep asking yourself to explain it...how do you define or describe God’s love for you and our world? Unconditional, unearned, undeserved, unrestrainable, unimaginable, unrealistic, unpredictable...what other words come to your mind? And what Scripture do you use to prove it? How about Romans 8:34-39 or John 3:16-18 or 1 John 4:9,10 or John 13?

Now....take a close look at your life and your world. What are the practical, measurable, tangible evidences of this remarkable, almost indescribable love of God? Can you name some? How about God’s patience with a human race, especially America that seems determined to push Him out of every aspect of our society? Consider what 2 Peter 3:9 says about that.

Or what about God’s patience with those people who claim to be His people...Christians, yet live in ways that must certainly grieve Him? Consider 1 Timothy 1:12-17. Don’t rush, what is God saying to you about how you live life?

Tuesday, FEBRUARY 23, 2010

Our theme this week is “Discovering God is Reaching”. Still have your outline notes from the message this weekend? If so look at that first section again...“God’s reaching pattern over all time”. Did you know that God had you in mind before He created the galaxies? Ephesians 1:4 says so! Did you know before He formed you in your mother’s womb, He had a design in mind for your life, not just your body? Jeremiah 1:5 and Psalm 139:13-16 and Isaiah 45:9-12 say so! Look them up!

Did you know God Himself has sustained every moment of your existence since your conception...and He will for all eternity? Colossians 1:16,17 and Isaiah 46:2,3 and Phil. 1:23 say so! So, here’s the question...at what moment in your personal existence, is God NOT reaching to you in life giving, unconditional love? Read all of Psalm 139, then add Psalm 37. What does God whisper into your spirit as you read this?

Now, let’s wrestle a little more with 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 today. Look closely at verses 15 & 16 and link it with Romans 5:12-21. One man, Adam, the first man sinned by turning away from the perfect relationship he had with God (Gen. 3). Everything changed, including him! His nature as a man changed and a sinful nature took root in him. In conception, that nature was passed to his children, and then grandchildren and all the way to you and me...we are born sinful! We can’t change ourselves...we need to be “re-created”! Only God can do that since He created us to begin with, right? That’s what Jesus’ death and resurrection makes possible, it’s what 2 Cor. 5:14-16 mean. As Jesus died, He paid the full sin atonement price (1 John 4:9,10) so God could pardon our sin (Eph. 1:7) if we repent. In that moment He also “re-creates” us spiritually by awakening a new spiritual nature, we are “born again” (John 3:3-7), and His Holy Spirit takes up residence IN us (John 14:16,17). Ponder that, is it true of you...what is your evidence? How about Gal. 5:22,23 or 1 John.

God then rescues us (redemption) from the condemnation of our sin (Rom. 8:1) and Satan’s stronghold of us (Col. 1:13,14). Give that serious thought...are you really living free...Galatians 5:1, or still in bondage? Is this reality for you?

Wednesday, FEBRUARY 24, 2010

Most of us were born American citizens. Do you know anyone who has immigrated here and gone through the process of “earning” their citizenship? Or do you know anyone who has been adopted? There’s a big difference isn’t there?

The Bible says God’s “reach” to the human race is unique in Christianity. Every other religious system tells sinful humans to work hard to earn God’s favor. Christianity tells us God says we can’t do anything to earn His love nor to make ourselves acceptable to Him. So He pursues us, He reaches to us in His unconditional love. Much more than that, He does all the work to atone for our sinful mess, so we can actually be drawn into relationship with Him, Holy God. That’s called “reconciliation”. Colossians 1:21,22 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 give us a remarkable look into this. As enemies of God, living in rebellion against Him, He sent Jesus to teach truth and die a sinless, sacrificial death (Rom. 5:8) so we could be forgiven of our sin and drawn back to the God Who created us, and brought us into an innocent love relationship with Him! Can you grasp that?

Then, God goes one step further...much further. It would be enough for Him to say we can be slaves in His glorious kingdom, but rather He says we can be ADOPTED as His sons and daughters. That makes us princes, and princesses of the King of kings!! Consider Galatians 4:4-7 or Romans 8:14-17!! Ponder that for a little while...do you really consider yourself a co-heir with Jesus Christ? Can you grasp it?

Now look deeply in 2 Corinthians 5:18,19. God drew you back to Himself. God paid the full, horrible price for your sin. God determined to not count your sin against you (Psalm 103). God has “committed to us the message of reconciliation”. It means, who better to communicate freedom than the person who has been ransomed and set free? That assumes, however, that the freed person UNDERSTANDS and CELEBRATES their freedom! Do you really? How is it evidenced in your life? Now ponder 2 Corinthians 5:20, one of the most powerful statements in the Bible!! You and me...ambassadors of God? Stand in front of the mirror...look closely...ambassador?? Now imagine Jesus standing next to you, nail pierced hands...smiling over you!

Thursday, FEBRUARY 25, 2010

I left you yesterday standing in front of your mirror, with Jesus standing beside you smiling. What might He be smiling about? Consider Hebrews 12:1,2. *“Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame...”* May I suggest, nothing in our universe gives God greater joy than a person who rejects the hold of the dark kingdom, and turns voluntarily to God asking for forgiveness and accepting God’s miraculous life changing work in them as I described yesterday and Tuesday. You might want to read those days’ reflections again. Yes, you and I are great “trophy” of God’s grace (Ephes. 2:1-10).

Now today, consider more of 2 Corinthians 5:14-21, specifically look at 20,21. *“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf, BE RECONCILED to God!”* Do you hear the passionate cry? Yes, it’s Paul writing, but he writes what the Holy Spirit inspires him to write (2 Tim. 3:14-17). So the passion is really God’s passion. It’s God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit who are saying **“WE IMPLORE YOU!”** It’s the desperate cry that says...please don’t let Jesus’ incarnation, perfect life, sacrificial death, victorious resurrection and triumphant return to His Sovereign reign...all go to waste by either ignoring it or minimizing it in your life and world!

Is it possible God is making His appeal to the world through us, those who are rescued and adopted? YES! Is there a “plan B” if we fail? NO! WHY? Because of vs. 21!! It’s the great transaction verse of the Bible. God placed our sin on Jesus Christ as He hung on the cross...that’s what *“God made Him who had no sin to become sin”* means. Jesus Christ took the sin guilt, sin stain, sin condemnation, sin wrath (Eph. 2:3) upon Himself as He paid the full atonement price! Thus, when we repent of our sin and trust Jesus to be our Savior, Redeemer...then God places Jesus’ holiness upon us, not as a coat, but immerses us in His holiness! So when God looks at a person who is truly redeemed by Christ, He sees not sin but the Holiness of Jesus! Can you grasp that? So while you and I are called to be Ambassadors of Christ, we are sent as HOLY Ambassadors called to live HOLY lives! (1 Peter 1:15,16). Are we? Consistently?

Friday, FEBRUARY 26, 2010

Last weekend I introduced you to “the Teen Tunnel of Transition”. I gave you five powerful concepts as I called all of us in the adult generations to INVEST ourselves in the “Next Generation”. Come on now...join me in wrestling with these:

- 1. A self-less re-prioritization of my life...LEGACY*
The truth is, you and I can’t parent effectively and pursue our selfish lifestyles simultaneously. That’s what “latch key kid” is all about, remember...how many of you grew up as one? We may need to set aside some of our personal comforts to spend TIME with our kids and prioritize THEM over our stuff or our fun!!
- 2. A willingness to be wounded by immaturity!*
Teens say and do dumb things...that hurt. You and I did, remember? If we’re going to get close and invest ourselves in them, bring a first aid kit...it will get bloody sometimes, your blood! But we do not have God’s permission to abandon them. If we do, we face the shame of watching them fail, and the judgment of God for not living Psalm 78:1-7 or Deut. 6:1-9!!
- 3. A hope of producing a God honoring next generation!*
God honoring adults and marriages and families and businesses just don’t happen by mistake. It’s a miraculous work of God and our submission to His Lordship in our lives...consistently. Next Generation’s ONLY hope is in learning how to be God honoring people...and that is more ‘caught than taught’! Get it?
- 4. A long term mission of “followership” investment!*
You following Jesus in every aspect of your life, and then inviting your “next generationers” to follow you...as you follow Jesus. Get the picture? You grasping Jesus’ hand and you grasping their hands, FOR THE LONG HAUL JOURNEY! No disconnect!
- 5. A life long commitment to ‘fight the good fight’.*
Consider 2 Tim. 4:6-8!! We NEVER stop parenting, even if you are in your 80’s...it’s a life long commitment to keep mentoring the generations behind you. We fight on their behalf. The dark kingdom is determined to control them. The future of our society depends on this battle. We cannot give up on them!!



Pastor Doug Anderson

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Discovering God is Reaching

