Lownes Free Church Sunday Morning – August 5, 2018

The Apostle Paul’s Second letter to the Corinthians

how the Cross changes everything

Text: 2 Corinthians 5:1-21 It’s about heaven, not here.

The Background: Walk by faith, not by sight.

Paul becomes increasingly less subtle and more direct in this chapter. While he previously had hinted at what the Corinthians had seen in the false teachers, here he begins pleading with them, “Be reconciled to God!” Likewise, chapter six begins, “We appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain.” These surely would not be expected warnings to a church of professing believers! But these warnings show both the direction and the passion of Paul’s argument. What is at stake here is people’s eternal salvation, for to misplace our affections on the world and its values is death.

“Stability”: The Cross reminds us heaven is our home, God, our judge.

Paul’s unshakable stance comes from his faith in God’s promises and his confidence that heaven is real and waiting. The Corinthians seem to have forgotten that the world and its ways are at odds with God, and the purpose of Christ was to conquer the evil of the world, not enable His people to make their home here. There is no stability for one who seeks his fortune in the world, for its treasures, as Jesus warned, are subject to thieves and corrosion. But treasure in heaven, which Paul is pursuing, is guaranteed and impossible to lose. But that attitude is one of faith, not physical senses.

The Narrative: (Reading 2 Corinthians is like hearing one side of a phone conversation. But we don’t really have to guess much, since Paul is both explicit and passionate. That said, we’ll be paraphrasing each section to sort out the argument and the not- so -hidden assumptions the Corinthians were making about Paul and his actions.)

(1) The Holy Spirit himself is the guarantee, a down payment on God’s promises, assuring me that although we groan under the weight of weaknesses and trials today, God’s plan is to clothe us with immortality, a body to match the spirit.

(6) That is why we are of good courage and can rejoice in our sufferings, for death means only that what we see by faith will become our physical reality. In other words, I will be with Christ, who is my judge and yours, not those who try to judge me here. That view of things keeps us on the righteous path.

(11) So, knowing all this is what impels us to warn and win others, God knows, and I hope you do too! I’m saying this only to help you respond to those who think I’m crazy to live the life I do. If to some I am insane, it is only out of devotion to God, but from all you can see, I’m your servant in the love of Christ. His love redeems us that we may live for Him, not self.

(13) That is why we view Jesus glorified, not weak, as men saw Him. If we are in Him, we are New Creatures; all is new. In His death, Jesus reconciled the world to Himself as a sin-payment and forgiver. Now He invites us to invite each of you: Be reconciled to God! Christ became sin, we become righteousness.

The Challenge: Are my home and hope here in the world, or heaven?

***Memory Verse: Colossians 3:1***

1. So many questions come from this passage. Do I walk by faith? Do I choose Christ? Do I live as a New Creature with a view of standing before Him? Does the love of Christ control me?

2. Am I growing in my understanding and love of Jesus in light of His unique place in God’s plan of redemption? Colossians 1:15-23