

Mark 13:14-27

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[0 : 00] We dealt mostly with verses 1-13 last week. I'm going to address it in brief a little bit this morning as well.! We're going to read together all of chapter 13 just to lay out some context and deal in definitive answers and absolutes, loves, resolution, completely right understanding, then you just may not like the sermon this morning.

Because there are some challenges in this text. Now, we of course believe that Scripture can mean only one thing, but there's quite a divergent number of understandings about what Jesus means in all of chapter 13.

And there are certainly some exegetical challenges. We avoid eisegesis. Eisegesis altogether is a problem, reading into the text what we want it to say.

But there are certainly here some exegetical challenges. We try to understand what does this text mean? What did Jesus mean when he said it then? What did Mark intend for us to understand by it when he recorded it?

And how does it apply to our living today? So, we're going to jump into the midst of it all. And I hope, by God's grace, we'll come out the other end of it changed from one degree of glory to another.

[1 : 31] So, follow along with me as I read all of chapter 13 to you. And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, Look, teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings.

And Jesus said to him, Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down. And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us, when will these things be?

And what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished? And Jesus began to say to them, See that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name saying, I am he.

And they will lead many astray. And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place. But the end is not yet.

For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places. There will be famines. These are but the beginnings of the birth pains. But be on your guard, for they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake to bear witness before them.

[2 : 44] And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.

And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. And you will be hated by all for my name's sake, but the one who endures to the end will be saved.

But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be, let the reader understand. And let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let the one who is on the housetop not go down nor enter his house to take anything out.

And let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And the last for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days. Pray that it may not happen in winter. For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be. And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved.

[3 : 50] But for the sake of the elect whom he chose, he shortened the days. And then if anyone says to you, Look, here is the Christ. Or look, there he is. Do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, the elect.

But be on guard. I have told you all things beforehand. But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

From the fig tree learn its lesson. As soon as its branch becomes tender and put out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near at the very gates.

Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

[5 : 03] Be on guard. Keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake.

Therefore stay awake. For you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning, lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.

And what I say to you, I say to all, stay awake. What a text. A couple weeks before Christmas. Let's pray together. Father God, we do praise you this morning for your written word.

We thank you that it has meaning and bearing for us today, and we pray that by your Spirit, you will help us to wrap our minds and our hearts around that meaning, that we might understand it and give it application in our lives to the glory of your name.

We also thank you this morning for the word who is Christ, the embodiment of all that you are, the physical representation of you here on earth, and we thank you that we can behold him in the scriptures.

[6 : 17] And I pray, Father, that as this endeavor is before us, and as we labor to know and to understand, I pray that in all of it, the great end will be the exaltation of Jesus.

And it's in his name that we pray. Amen. Now, I hope that you picked up a little bit as you were following along on the complexity of chapter 13, that maybe even your mind went in one direction, but then something else Jesus said caused your mind to go in the other.

It's certainly a prophecy. He's talking about things that are going to happen. He begins with an interpretation, a prophecy that the temple will be destroyed.

So something that did in fact happen in 70 AD in the Jewish-Roman War. It's an event that really happened. But then he also seems to talk about the end of all things, the end of the age, the end of history itself.

And there's three ways in which general categories that we can understand this text. Firstly, that the entirety of the text is referring to the end of this age, that it is an eschatological text.

[7 : 26] It's all about the end, and quite a few people hold this to be true. Secondly, we can believe that the entirety of the text is referring to this Jewish-Roman War and the things that would happen in that time.

This is the year 70 AD, if this takes place. And many people hold that view as well. So the third option is to understand the text is referring to both things.

And that's the position I'll attempt to argue for today, although I don't know how well I'm going to do that for you. And let me again reiterate to you that I may be totally wrong. I'm going to do my very best to give you the evidence as of why I think this is the case, and then give us an application for this.

But I'm certainly willing to talk about this afterwards. Some of you may already know all the answers to this and can inform me on the matter. I will tell you, I started way too late in this week doing my studying on this.

The reason that I think it refers to both, there are some evidences, and I just want to kind of give you through the chapter, some evidences that it's talking about the end of this age. Like in verse 7, there will be wars and rumors of wars.

[8 : 38] Jesus tells the apostles, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. Seems to be talking about something further out and beyond what will happen in 70 AD.

In verse 8, he says, these are but the beginning of birth pains. The wars themselves are just the beginning of the birth pains. And then in verse 10, he says, and the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations, which is not something that had happened by 70 AD.

In fact, it's still not a thing that has occurred. And so I think we can rightly understand that this chapter, at least in part, is about the end of all things, the end of ages.

I also see some evidence that it is, in fact, about the Jewish-Roman war. The apostles ask a very specific question about when they'll know that the temple is about to be destroyed. And it seems to me that he doesn't just leave them without an answer.

He doesn't say, well, let me talk about something else altogether. You're looking for a sign. Let me give you a sign of something that's beyond what I've already predicted would happen.

[9 : 44] So we see that prediction in the beginning of the chapter. And then in verse 29 and 30, he says, so also when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near at the very gates.

Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Now upon some study, the phrase translated here in ESV and probably in most of your translations as he is near is a single Greek word, and it is a gender-neutral adverb.

It's not a masculine adjective. It's a gender-neutral adverb which forces the pronoun to be drawn from the context. So a translator who rightly thinks that this is about the end of all things thinks that this is referring to Jesus' return when in fact I believe, and many other commentators do believe, that it's referring to the destruction of the temple.

It could be rendered, it is near. And I think verse 30 is the evidence of that. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

Those who believe that the entire chapter is about the end of all things believe that this generation is the generation that sees this begin to happen, sees the abomination of desolation come onto the scene, and then all of this will complete it in that generation's time frame.

[11 : 14] I believe a much simpler reading of it is that he's referring to those he's speaking to. This generation will see this come to pass in 70 AD. So I think it's talking about both.

And then the task before us then is to figure out which is talking about what and how this could be the case. I think that the way he presents this is from a very broad sense at the beginning.

They ask a specific question. He broadens his answer to speak about the end of all things and the experiences that are going to happen in the process of getting to that end. So the suffering that will take place, certainly the destruction of the temple is part of that.

So he broadens it out. And then our text before us today, verses 14 through 27, he narrows it down to talk specifically about the Jewish-Roman War and what will happen in that time before once again broadening back out to talk about long-term end of all things.

Everybody with me? All right. I'm sure you are. So let's start looking in verse 14. We see a very interesting character presented to us when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he, and the pronoun is in the original, where he ought not to be, and then Mark's parenthetical statement, which is in the original text, let the reader understand.

[12 : 44] So Jesus didn't say this. When Mark's writing it down, he adds, let the reader understand. So this is something that people beyond just the apostles were meant to understand.

Now I'll tell you, I quickly scrambled to remember when it was that Mark's gospel was recorded because if it had been recorded after 70 AD, that would be very interesting, would it not?

It seems that he would be giving us some future information out beyond the Jewish-Roman war, but that's not the case. It was pinned somewhere in the mid-50s to 60s, depending on the opinion out there.

Likely the mid-50s is when it was pinned. So those beyond the apostles were meant to see and understand this very thing he's about to tell us. So the abomination of desolation is an individual, a person that's being drawn from the book of Daniel.

9.27, 11.31, and 12.11. These are the mentions of them. Let me just read to you the first two. Daniel 9.27, And then Daniel 11.31, And then Daniel 11.31, And then Daniel 11.31, Now those who think that the entire text is about the end of all things, suggests that the abomination of desolation is what we know as the Antichrist.

[14 : 25] I don't think so. I can't tell you exactly who he is, but here are some suggestions for you. And I think that as Mark says, let the reader understand, I think the implication he's making, again, I think my opinion, is that he's making the implication that these people already knew who the abomination of desolation was.

He adds that parenthetical to go, uh-huh, pay attention reader, we already know who this is. I think, more than likely, it's Antiochus Epiphanes, right, who is the ruler of the Seleucid Empire.

This man, his name, he changed his name, actually means God manifest. And he, in 168 BC, erected an altar to the pagan god Zeus over the altar of burnt offering.

And then to add insult to injury, he sacrificed pigs on it, which was a horrible desecration of what was meant to happen there. You remember back in Daniel 11, 31, forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and the fortress and shall take away the regular burnt offering.

There are some other suggestions, too. It could have been, the Roman emperor Caligula had planned to build a statue of himself on the same altar. It never came to pass, but it was a project in the works before the Jewish-Roman war took place.

[15:49] And two years before the temple was destroyed, Jewish zealots, who was the kind of political group that started the war, committed various atrocities in the temple and actually put in power as the high priest, kind of a joke of a man named Fanny.

The pun is certainly intended in this case. So these things seem to be things that are leading up to the Jewish-Roman war and likely, it's my suggestion, that that's what he's referring to.

He goes on in the rest of verse 14 to give some very real, like very modern, for their day, things to do. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

He's predicting this war that's about to come, this tribulation that's about to happen, a judgment on apostate Israel, and he's saying to them, flee. Those who are in Judea, in this region, flee to the mountains.

Let the one who's on the housetop not go down or enter his house. He's saying, don't take any time to pack stuff up. Let the one who's in the field not turn back his cloak. Alas for women. It's going to be a horrible, horrible thing for women who are pregnant or nursing infants who are slowed down by that process.

[17:03] Pray that it doesn't happen in the winter. It's going to be this atrocious judgment that's going to come. Verse 19, For in those days, there will be such tribulation has not been from the beginning of creation that God created until now and will never be.

Now I believe, as I said, that this tribulation he's referring to is not what many would call the tribulation at the end of all things, but rather a tribulation. Such a horrible tribulation.

And I believe this is brought on at the Jewish-Roman war. The Roman army, under command of the future emperor Titus, killed approximately one million Jews.

They besieged the city for five months. There were hundreds of thousands of crucifixions, spearing, all kinds of killing. Many people died of starvation in the process of this.

It was a difficult, difficult time for the Jews. And Jesus is warning them, flee. Get out of the city. Go to the mountains. Get away from this judgment that is coming.

[18:09] But there's an interesting little phrase there in verse 19, is there not? Even as I'm speaking, if you're an astute listener, the level of tribulation seems to be heightened at first, as Jesus says, and has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now.

That means that there's nothing worse that's ever happened, this tribulation is, and never will be.

This seems to be the great height of trouble for the world. And so most of us, for our upbringing in church, would run quickly to what we call the tribulation at the end of all things.

However, a little bit of study, you can find that this phrase found at the very end and never will be is an Old Testament stock expression of great suffering.

It was a common way people referred to great suffering. Two examples from one book in the Old Testament. You can also find it in Joel 2.2, I believe, if I'm remembering that correctly.

Exodus 10.14, the locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled on the whole country of Egypt. Such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before nor ever will be again.

[19:26] Exodus 11.6, there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been nor ever will be again. So it seems to be just this stock expression to really heighten the suffering.

Suffer, they're going to suffer, they're really, really going to suffer is what he seems to be expressing as he says this. In verse 20, he goes on to say, And if the Lord, speaking of God the Father, had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved.

And upon some word study, this saving is not speaking of the spiritual saving that we're so familiar with as a term in our church today, but of physical salvation.

He's referring in verse 20 directly back to verse 19, this great tribulation that would take place that's cut short so that people are saved, so that people live on.

But in the rest of the verse, he says, But for the sake of the elect, those who God has chosen, whom he chose, he shortened. The days.

[20 : 36] The Jewish-Roman War lasted about five months, as I previously mentioned, and it would seem that God cut short the days of this so that all of Israel wasn't destroyed, so that the gospel itself could be carried outside of this smaller circle, this smaller people group, to all nations.

You remember what verse 10 said, that the gospel must be preached first to all nations. And so, God stayed his judgment over Israel so that not everyone would be destroyed, and so that the gospel could be preached out and beyond.

Are you tracking with me? Let's keep moving. Verse 21 through 23, he gives once again some warning that people are going to come and claim to be him.

And this has happened all throughout history. This is not just a thing that will happen at the end of all things, but this is something that has been happening. people claiming to be Christ.

Antichrist, lowercase a. It's the repeated warning of chapter 13, verse 5 and 6. He says, see that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name saying, I am he, and they will lead many astray.

[21 : 50] All right, we get to verse 24 through 27. Are we ready for it? And all this has real application, I promise I'm getting there. But in those days after the tribulation, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light and the stars will be falling from heaven and the powers in the heaven will be shaken, which has such imagery of the world coming to an end, does it not?

And so, on our first reading of this, that's where my mind immediately goes, but we have to recognize that Jesus was speaking to a Jewish audience. A Jewish audience that would have had a good understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Sadly, we really don't as American Christians, and so, we have to study and we have to go and look and figure out what is he saying here.

This language, again, being borrowed from the Old Testament. Two places, let me show you.

Firstly, in Isaiah 13, verse 10, speaking of the judgment of Babylon, for the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light.

The sun will be dark as it's rising and the moon will not shed its light. Speaking simply and specifically about the judgment of Babylon.

[23 : 09] And then later in Isaiah 34, speaking of the judgment of all nations in verse 4, all the hosts of heaven, the stars in the heaven, shall rot away and the skies roll up like a scroll.

All their hosts shall fall as leaves fall from the vine like leaves falling from the fig tree. So, I believe that in verse 24, what Jesus is trying to communicate is there going to be a great disruption in world power.

We've already talked about wars and rumors of wars. There's going to be a great turning over of world power, which we certainly saw happen with the Jewish-Roman war.

Verse 26. And here's our kicker. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.

Now, Jesus has established that He is the Son of Man repeatedly all throughout the New Testament. In Mark's Gospel account, nine times already it's been recorded. Chapters 2, 8, 9, and 10.

[24 : 10] He has called Himself the Son of Man. And what He's doing is He's connecting all of His listeners' minds to the book of Daniel. So, turn with me, if you will, to Daniel chapter 7. Alright, Daniel chapter 7.

I'm going to set up our text, which is going to be verses 13 and 14 specifically, by reading to you before that, beginning in verse 9. This is Daniel's vision. As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days, which is God the Father, took His seat.

His clothing was white as snow, and the hair on His head like pure wool. His throne was fiery flames, its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out before Him. A thousand thousand served Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.

The court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. So, this picture is God the Father, seated in a heavenly place, reigning over all things, a throng serving Him.

And then verse 13, I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man. And He came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him.

[25 : 26] And to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Now, the thing that's really important for us to see here is that if we take this text as an eschatological text, as an end-of-all-things text, then what that's referring to is Jesus coming back, coming in clouds, coming back to the earth to judge the earth.

But that's not what the text says in Daniel 7, 13, and 14, is it? We see the Ancient of Days seated in heaven, and then we see the Son of Man presented before Him, brought up to Him.

He comes to the Father, not coming from the Father, but going to the Father in Daniel 7, 13, and 14.

And so my suggestion to you is that what Jesus is saying here is that while the world is going to be going through this great tumult, like world power is going to be shifting, things are changing, don't worry because my kingdom is being established forever.

I have come as the Christ, I have ushered in the kingdom of God, and I'm going to go sit at the right hand of the Father, and I'm going to reign over everything that happens. I think that's what Jesus is trying to communicate to us here.

[26 : 58] And what will He do when this happens? Not that He'll judge all things, as we know He'll do when He returns, but rather, verse 27, He will send out the angels and gather His elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heaven.

Now, interestingly, the Greek word used here for angels is translated using its secondary meaning. Its primary meaning in Greek is simply messengers.

Simply messengers. And so I would argue that part of what He's communicating here is that when He goes and ascends and He's with the Father is that He'll send out messengers, which includes the apostles, and now includes us.

To do what? To travel to the ends of the earth to gather the elect, to build the church, to advance the gospel. Now, I wouldn't exclude angels from that number.

In fact, the Greek word is most often translated angels throughout the New Testament, and I believe rightly so. I wouldn't exclude that. In fact, I think that God in many ways, by angels, is still about the work of advancing the kingdom.

[28 : 11] Hebrews 1.14, speaking of angels, are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation. So it seems that angels have this place still as the heralds of God.

He says that He'll send out the angels, His elect from the four winds, the farthest reaches from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven, which would have drawn the apostles' minds to a text like Deuteronomy 30, verse 4.

If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will take you. So it doesn't matter how far you go.

Imagine the furthest place the elect of God could possibly travel to. It doesn't matter. Even to that place, God will gather them. We're about to send, if you don't know, 2030, I think they're saying, possibly, manned mission to Mars.

There's a big test that achieved that. Even there, right, we get men on Mars that are the elect of God. God will gather them to Himself. So, that's why all these things that I've said, I believe He's speaking specifically of this time, and then He'll get here in a moment as we move on in the text, next week, He'll advance it back out again to the end of all things.

[29 : 41] Kyle has the job of doing that next week, and I've already told him he has permission just to get up and say I'm crazy, and I don't know what I'm talking about and set me straight in these regards.

But I think that's the trajectory of this text. If that bothers you, I want you to know it bothers me too. I really, really want all of the scholars and the commentators to agree on what these things mean.

I really want to wrap my mind around it and get it in its completion. I believe the Word of God is incredibly valuable to us. Every single word in it is valuable to us, so it confounds me a little bit when I can't quite understand something like this.

But there are some things we can understand from the text, and here's our application. This is why it's important that we don't just neglect a text like this altogether. Here's our application, and I want

you to take special note of three things from the text this morning.

First of all, note the reign of Christ. When exactly is he referring to here? We're not sure. Maybe some of you are.

[30 : 50] I'm not sure exactly what he's talking about in this case, but something we know to be sure, without a doubt, is that Jesus Christ does in fact reign, and will in fact reign supreme forever.

We looked at verse 24-26 to see that. Some other texts. Hebrews 1-3 says, After making purification for sins, he, being Jesus, sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. He was given the place of honor to reign and to rule at the right hand of God the Father. Colossians 1, verse 13-14. Paul writes, He has delivered us from the domain of darkness or the kingdom of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

It's a kingdom that exists now that if you've placed your faith in Christ, you are part of. And it is a kingdom that He reigns over. Hebrews 12-28.

At least the very first part of it. It says, Therefore, let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken. A permanent kingdom.

[32 : 05] A kingdom that has been established. The kingdoms of the world are being shaken. The kingdoms of the world are being all mixed up. There's lots of tumult. There's lots of turmoil. There's lots of war. But we have received a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

Why? Because Christ reigns supreme. In fact, the writer of Hebrews is likely referring to another text from Daniel. A fulfillment of a prophecy in Daniel 2-44.

And in the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever.

Let's say to you, beloved, that this kingdom has already been established and Jesus Christ reigns supreme over it. So firstly, Christ's reign.

Secondly, notice in our text and previous to our text, the love of God for us. Those who are part of His church, the elect, the ones whom He has chosen.

[33 : 17] Right? In spite of us, not having done anything to deserve His favor, He has called us His own. Look at verse 5. The warning.

See that no one leads you astray. Jesus is prepping us for the challenges that will face us. Verse 9. Be on your guard. Verse 14. Flee to the mountains.

And just as an aside at this point, God has given us common sense. He has said to us that there will be suffering if we desire to live righteous lives, we will be persecuted.

But He hasn't taught us that we should seek it out. We should thumb our noses at those who may persecute us. In fact, in this case, He says, flee to the mountains. It's okay. Get away from such a thing.

Verse 20. For the sake of the elect, He shortened the days. For our sake, for our good. Verse 23. Again, the warning to be on guard.

[34 : 16] In verse 27, He's sending out the angels. And whether you want this just to be heavenly beings or that's us or both combined, He is sending out ones, messengers, heralds, to gather us from the farthest reaches of the earth.

He loves us so incredibly. Even as He's invited us into His kingdom, which brings so much trouble because the world has hated Jesus, He pours out a great deal of compassion on us, gives to us instruction for how we should live.

He's going to tell us in the coming text to be on guard, to be aware, to be awake, to be waiting and watching, prepared for His return. So secondly, the love of God for us.

Thirdly, notice the mission we've been given to. Notice the mission we've been given to. Now, I say that intentionally in that way because I think it's wrong for us to think that we exist as the church and God has granted to us a mission because it's His mission ultimately and He's really given us to the mission.

Right? It's a thing that He'll accomplish. If you've been here long at all, you've heard me say that God doesn't need you. Don't belittle God so much in your mind to think that He needs you to accomplish His will.

[35 : 43] But you're precious to Him and He loves you and because of His great love for you, He's given you to His mission. Right? The things that He cares most about, He's invited you into to work

within, to pray prayers and to share your faith, to minister to the needs of people.

This is the things that God cares about and He wants you to be part of that so that you'll experience Him. Right? So, He's given us to the mission. Note that mission.

Verse 27, as I said again, He'll send out the angels, gather His elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens. Verse 10, and the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.

God has chosen to use His church as the means to that great end. Could He have done it another way? He sure could have. But He's chosen to use us to accomplish that goal.

Why? Why? Do we not join Him? Why do we not make our joy complete in pursuing the things that God cares about? We pursue pithy things compared to the greatness of what we can pursue that God has for us.

[36 : 56] The mission that He's given us to. Turn to 2 Corinthians 5. I'll begin reading in verse 17.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, that is, has placed saving faith in Him, His person and His work, He is a new creation.

The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. This is that picture of us. Our citizenship has changed. We're no longer citizens of the world. We're just sojourners here. Now we're citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

The old, our identity has changed completely. Verse 18, All this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

Reconciliation is the making right of a schismed relationship. A relationship that's been torn apart and it's been torn apart in this case because of sin, because of our rebellion against God, totally separated from Him.

[38 : 10] The ministry of reconciliation has brought us back together because what of Christ has accomplished? Verse 19, That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting the trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation, the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ.

Verse 20, Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

And there, Paul gives us this great gospel message at the very end of verse 20, We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

If you have been reconciled to God in Christ, you should want to share that good news with others. Beloved, what's going on in our hearts that causes us to do the things we do and talk about the things we talk about?

Out of the outflow of your heart, your mouth speaks. Do you love the gospel of Jesus Christ? Have you been reconciled by it?

[39 : 27] Have you understood the schism and the relationship that existed and the way in which Christ has brought that back together? That ought to well up in us a great deal of joy and we ought to share it every opportunity we get.

We can't simply act it out, display it. We have to proclaim it. It's necessary. This message comes by our mouths. Not because God needs us, but because He loves us.

So we've been given to a mission, a wonderful mission, the greatest of missions. Some people call it the Great Commission. In Mark 16, verse 15, we see a very short record of it.

Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Beloved, this is our high calling in Christ. Christ who reigns over all things and loves us immensely, has given to us this task, made us ambassadors, given us the ministry of reconciliation.

Let's pray together.