

Open Your Heart

II Corinthians 6:11-18

2/05/06

Intro

Last week we read Paul's words that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. That is God's main desire, that people would be reconciled to Him.

He went on to say that he has given to us the ministry of reconciliation. God is reconciling the world by using us as His ambassadors. There should be a sense of urgency about this. The world is lost and in need of a Savior. "Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation."

In chapter six, Paul speaks to the importance of the affections of our heart. If we have been reconciled to God, then we need to stay reconciled to God.

These are insights into direction of the affections of our hearts.

I. Open Your Heart to God

A. Which will affect others

- The message of chapter six is that they should open wide their heart to God because they have been reconciled to God through Christ.
- But if we open our heart to God, it will also have an impact on others. Paul said in verse 3, ...

II Corinthians 6:3-4, "giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited, but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God,"

Illus – When I was on homiletics class, the professor embarrassed me, and an offense came between us, but he won me over with his heart.

- When Jesus was in Capernaum, the collectors of the Jewish di-drachma temple tax asked if the Master paid the voluntary tax, Peter answered, "yes." When Peter returned, Jesus responded...

Matthew 17:27, "However, so that we do not offend them, go to the sea and throw in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for you and Me."

B. Love is a two-way street

- Paul was saying in verses 11-12 that he had opened his heart to them, but they were "restrained in the affections." They were not opening their heart to him in return.
- Love is a two way street. Paul calls them to respond to his love.

App – in the same way, God has loved us with a love that is too great to comprehend – and love is a two way street. We should love him with all our heart.

Mark 12:30, "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."

C. But love must be free

- For love to be love it must be given freely, "from the heart," or it is not love.

Illus – A couple of times when one of our kids became very, very angry about some discipline, they said in their anger, “I don’t love you.” “Loving me isn’t required,” I said, “You’ll love me when you’re ready. Obedience, however, is required...”

- Paul said their hearts were restrained in their affections.
- Could this be because they were forming associations with unbelievers? It seems this is the case, when we read the next verses...

II. Don’t Be Unequally Yoked

A. We are to be yoked with Christ

- A yoke was used to link two animals together in order to accomplish the task together.
- Paul says, “Don’t be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” In other words, *don’t be tied together in relationship or partnership with an unbeliever.*
- Why? Because we are yoked to Christ.

Matthew 11:28-30, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Illus – The yoke was made of wood and fit exactly for that animal, or it would chafe and become torturous.

B. What harmony has Christ with Belial?

- The reason we are not to be unequally yoked in relationship or partnership is because there is a great difference in nature.
- God gave such a lesson in the Old Testament as well.

Deuteronomy 22:9-11, “You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, or all the produce of the seed which you have sown and the increase of the vineyard will become defiled. You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. You shall not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together.”

- Most people would see this applied particularly in marriage, and this would be true, but Paul had more in mind than just marriage for the church at Corinth...
- **They were forming alliances with unbelievers and it was corrupting their moral compass as well as their view on who God was.**

I Corinthians 15:33, Do not be deceived, “Bad company corrupts good morals.”

Illus – Jehoshaphat was doing well until he formed an alliance by marrying the daughter of Ahab, the wicked King of Israel. They went to battle together, Ahab was killed and their armies defeated.

C. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit

- This is true individually as well as corporately.
- “What agreement has the temple of God with idols?” Paul asks.

Illus – There is a desire among many in the community to see different religions worship together. I can’t be part of it; our hearts are not in unity.

- “Therefore, come out and be separate,” says the Lord. (verse 17)
- But does that mean that we can’t have any connection at all with unbelievers?
- “Be in the world, but not of the world,” Jesus once said.

Illus – What if you’re married to an unbeliever? Don’t break that union, if he/she wants to stay, let them stay, says the scripture.

I Corinthians 7:15-16, “but God has called us to peace. For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?”

III. Let Him Father You

A. He is a father like no other

- God is calling us to a relationship where God is our Father. That is a relationship of purity, uncluttered by the influences of others.

Illus – Fathers are to be the resource of wisdom and blessing – and speak vision into their children’s lives.

- Notice the *desire* that is in God to be our Father.

Romans 8:15-17, “For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ,”

- He is the healer of all ‘Father wounds.’”

B. “Come out and be separate”

- That is the invitation and a directive. God says that we need to come out from the midst of the world and be separate from them.
- Does that mean that God doesn’t want us to have any fun?

Illus – God does want us to have fun, He just knows what is fun today and is death tomorrow.

- Does that mean that we can’t associate with people of the world at all?

Luke 7:34-35, “The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children.”

Illus – Jesus was called a “friend of sinners,” but when He entered their world, that world was greatly impacted by their presence.

Illus – Be careful, there was a reason Jesus sent His disciples out two by two.

Conclusion

The message is about opening your heart, but God wants us to give Him all our heart; not being double-minded. Give Him back the love He first gave to us.