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# Reconciled to proclaim Reconciliation

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## Overview

God's Gospel is a beautiful message; it is THE most captivating message of all time! Any messenger's concentration, either positive or negative, on his own uniqueness will distract from the message. Far be it from Paul to allow Peter, James or John to distract anyone from the Gospel he proclaimed. On the contrary, they would not distract any from the Gospel; they would continue, with the Apostle Paul, to point others to it.

## Unity, Liberty & Charity

- Concerning the Essentials – Unity
- Concerning the Peripherals – Liberty
- Concerning all things - Charity

## Consider this...

God is the owner of the message He has proclaimed most fully in the person and work of Jesus Christ in real human history. He is capable of more effective communication, superior dynamic proclamation, and greater authoritative announcement than anyone else. Yet, He entrusts this precious message of liberty, hope and salvation to unworthy sinners who have received it.

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Passage: Galatians 2:6-8

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## Application

- Humans are earthen vessels, either containing the precious Gospel or the rubbish of anything else
- The Gospel is owned by God, not by anyone else
- God entrusts the Gospel to sinners – both for their salvation and for their participation as heralds

## 2 Corinthians 5:18, 20

*“All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation... Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us, We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”*

## Galatians 2:6-8

**Intro:** The message of the Judaizers was miserable observance of a worldly system of works-based righteousness. It was so terrestrial; exactly the kind of system that man is inclined to produce for his own self-generated salvation. Paul's message was the opposite. He rejected public prestige, he found royal ambassadors among despicable evildoers, and he claimed the authority to do so from the King Himself. In all of this, the Apostle Paul invites all Christians everywhere to live in light of God's redeeming message and His power to save.

*6 And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality) – those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me.*

- *“seemed to be influential”* – Peter, James, John and (later) Paul held a level of prestige amongst early Christians. There may have even been a title of some sort in this phrase, translated elsewhere *“influential men”* or *“esteemed people.”*
- *“what they were makes no difference to me”* – Paul does not count their positional influence or worldly esteem as anything of genuine value.
- *“God shows no partiality”* – God is not motivated by partiality towards these men or any others; His good pleasure motivates Him to give grace and entrust the Gospel to unworthy vessels.
  - 1 Corinthians 1:25-31 – **“25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”**

- *“those... added nothing to me.”* – They did not add to Paul’s Gospel or his application of it.
  - Gospel – Paul needed nothing added to his Gospel, nor any correction of it, for he was proclaiming the same Gospel as the one these men had received from Christ.
  - Application – In continuation of his argument, Paul points out that the *‘influential men’* did not add any practice or implication, such as circumcision, to his message.

*7 On the contrary... they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised*

- Who are the two individuals that ‘have been entrusted with the Gospel’ in this passage? Paul & Peter
- Who is it that has ‘entrusted’ them with the Gospel? God – He owns the Gospel!
  - Galatians 1:11 – the Gospel has not come down from, it is not according to, nor is it about man.
  - It is God’s Gospel!
    - Mark says, *“Jesus,”* when His earthly ministry first began, *“came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God”* (Mark 1:14).
    - Paul says that he was *“set apart for the gospel of God,”* and that the substance of this God-possessed Gospel is the person and work of His Son – Jesus Christ – who had been the apex subject of the prophets throughout the Holy Scriptures (Romans 1:1-6).
    - Paul says elsewhere that he was made a *“minister of the Gospel of God”* so that pagans from every nation might worship God after having been made holy by the power of God’s Spirit (Romans 15:16).
    - Paul said that the content of his message to the Corinthians was *“God’s gospel”* (2 Corinthians 11:7).
    - Paul also proclaimed that he had been *“entrusted”* with *“the Gospel of God”* to be declared even in the midst of great hardship (1 Thessalonians 2:2-4).
    - Peter says that *“the Gospel of God”* is the message of protection for those who trust in it, and it will be the judgment of God upon *“those who do not obey”* it (1 Peter 4:17).

- While Paul specifically mentions himself and Peter here in Gal. 2:7, it is true that God “*entrusts* the Gospel” to ALL those who receive it.
  - 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 – “16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh... 17 Therefore, if anyone is **in Christ**, he is a **new creation**. The old has passed away; behold, the **new has come**. 18 All this is **from God**, who through Christ **reconciled us to himself** and **gave 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 to us the message of reconciliation**. 20 Therefore, we are **ambassadors for Christ**, God making his appeal through us. **We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.**”
    - “*in Christ... new creation*”
      - First, to be ‘in Christ’ as a ‘new creation’ speaks of the divine recreation that takes place in the life of every true Christian.
        - God Himself commands dead sinners to be alive! This is no less miraculous than the reality that God spoke to the nothing and commanded the universe to come into being. In fact it may rightly be said to be a greater miracle still.
          - In the case of the universe, God took nothing and made something; He spoke to the inert and made it move; He commanded the indifferent and made it obey.
          - In the case of the Christian, God took the dead and decaying and made it living; He spoke to the rebellious and made it obey; he commanded the hostile and made it love.
      - Second, because all Christians are ‘new creations’ by definition, every person who thinks themselves to be a Christian should examine his/her life to find evidence of having been re-created.
        - This is exactly James’s argument in chapter 2, verses 14-26. “14 **What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?** [That is, what good is it if someone says they love Christ with their lips, but their lives do not demonstrate such love?] **Can that faith save him?...** [James’s rhetorical question is obviously to be answered, No.. Only genuine faith, real

faith, faith that is evidenced by a renewed life can save.] 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead... [or it is only false or empty words] 18b I will show you my faith by my works... [in other words, he will provide evidence for his faith or trust in Christ by showing you his renewed life] 26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead [That is, a verbal profession of faith apart from some demonstration of new life is nothing... it cannot save... it is only death with the illusion of life for the one who proclaims it.]

- Albert Barnes - “[The Christian] has new views, new motives, new principles, new objects and plans of life. He seeks new purposes, and he lives for new ends.”<sup>1</sup>
- *“God... reconciled us to himself”*
  - Where once there was a hostile sinner rebelling against God, and a furious God bringing righteous wrath to every sinner, now there is a humble child in the Fatherly embrace of divine love and grace!
- *“God... gave us the ministry of reconciliation... entrusting to us the message of reconciliation”*
  - The same beneficiaries of divine love and grace have become those who are ‘entrusted’ with the saving message that has been the path of their own benefits.
    - Most commentators take for granted that those who have been reconciled will, in turn, be about the ministry of reconciliation. This seems right, and it appears to be Paul’s assumption as well. Paul would be confused indeed to learn that there was ever a Christian who became aware of the reconciling Gospel who did not understand his joyful obligation to herald that same message.
- *“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ”*
  - What marvelous agencies we now enjoy! The Savior of sinners everywhere, the Anointed One of God, the Messiah and supreme longing of every Old Testament prophet, now

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<sup>1</sup> [http://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/2\\_corinthians/5.htm](http://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/2_corinthians/5.htm)

calls you to represent Him!? What a superior employment! And does the diplomat of the King busy himself with the King's business? Does the King's messenger cause any around him to take note of his alien citizenship? What joy and reward must await the ambassador who is faithful and diligent for his King!

- *“We implore... on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God”* –
  - Here Paul offers the posture and message of every ambassador.
    - *“imploping”* – a pressing request and relentless prayer
    - *“on behalf of Christ”* – as His ambassadors and based upon His authority
    - *“be reconciled to God”* – the term here denotes a ‘once and for all’ putting down rebellion and hostility

*8 (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles)...*

- Paul here appeals not only to his own equal footing with Peter, as leaders of Gospel endeavors to distinct people-groups, but Paul appeals to his commission from Christ.<sup>2</sup>
- The principle that we may understand from this passage is as follows:
  - Peter and Paul were diligent leaders of Gospel ministry – imploring others to be reconciled to God.
  - However, God is the authority, power, and divine energy that brought about the results.
    - Such is also true of all ambassadors for Christ.
      - We must implore joyfully, diligently, and tirelessly.
      - And we humbly trust in God to bring about the fruitful results that only He can produce.
        - 1 Corinthians 3:6 – *“Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.”*

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<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that Peter was used by God to convert Gentiles (Acts 10:34-48), and Paul was also able to see many Jewish sinners repent at the proclamation of his Gospel (Acts 9:19-22; Acts 13:42-43). Peter and Paul were specially used by God to minister to these distinct groups as leaders of the missionary endeavor concerning them.

## My Prayers

- 1) May God truly save sinners right here in this congregation!
- 2) May God so infiltrate our lives that we begin to live as ambassadors for Christ, realizing that we too have been entrusted with the Gospel of God.
- 3) May God save sinners in our homes, on our jobs, in our schools, on our baseball teams, living on our street, in our community.

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