

## **LEADER NOTES** – II Corinthians 5, etc. – 4/1/07

As we approach Easter weekend, Pastor John will be finishing our series entitled ***The Bridge***. As he wraps up II Corinthians 5: 17-21, God will speak to us regarding the “bridge” that takes us from death to life and makes us new in Christ.

**II Corinthians** – The Corinthian church was a volatile body of believers that struggled against the worldliness of their environment (not always successfully) and against troublemakers in their midst. Paul wrote this letter, in part, to defend his own ministry against those who accused him of greed and of not being trustworthy. He speaks to these issues boldly and yet humbly, standing on the fruit of his ministry.

After introducing the letter (epistle) with an explanation of his hardships, his plans for visiting Corinth, and instruction on the handling of one particularly grievous sinner, Paul addresses the New Covenant. This is very pertinent to what we have been learning in Romans (which we will return to after Easter).

**5:18 – 19** - God took the initiative in our redemption so that we could be reconciled to God and gave us both the privilege and responsibility to reach out to others with His redemptive message.

**20** – Think of yourself as an ambassador in a foreign country. You have a privileged status, but you are a servant. You serve the Ruler who commissioned you and you serve the people to whom He sent you. You have great authority, but it is all derived from the rule and reputation of the One who sent you. You don’t speak for yourself. You speak for the One who sent you and you seek to accomplish His mission...you get the idea.

**21** – The basis for all of this is the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ. Though there was no sin in Him, He chose to become sin so that we could receive God’s righteousness as if it were our own. As Pastor John invites people into NEW LIFE:

1. A transaction in which one exchanges one’s old nature for a new nature in Christ as the sin that separates us from God is placed on Jesus – the perfect, once-for-all sacrifice.
2. A relationship in which the love of Jesus enters in to dwell in one’s heart and He becomes the Master of one’s life.
3. A commitment to follow, grow closer to and obey the One who has become our life and our purpose for living.

**II Corinthians 5:18-19**  
**Weekend Message: *The Bridge – part 2***  
**Group Leader Guide**

Important preliminary details:

- Update your **roster** and return a copy to [Kirsten@cvcwired.com](mailto:Kirsten@cvcwired.com). – make sure everybody in the group has a way to contact you and vice versa, so that you can share leadership and know who is coming or who needs help/prayer.
- Pray for and encourage your group to grow spiritually and numerically (you may have to become two groups – so begin to develop an apprentice leader).
  - KNOW - help people know each other better and more personally, but don't rush this.
  - CHALLENGE - give people permission to raise the bar of commitment for each other, without judgment.
  - ENCOURAGE - Help each other adopt spiritual habits that will strengthen your faith. Be creative, encourage manageable next steps and consistency, not perfectionism.
- **Don't** feel you need to discuss every question for the week in your Life Team gathering. Cover the ones you consider most important, including some of the application questions. Allow questions and be willing to research the questions you can't answer.
- **Pray** – as a group with simplicity, honesty and no pressure to perform.
- Have fun – laugh and be relaxed as well as disciplined. Plan something social as the group needs it.

Pray each day, before you **Dive In** to God's word, that God the Holy Spirit, will be the teacher of your mind and heart. Pray for the **friends** in your Life Team to be faithful to study and receive God's truth for themselves each day.

**ICEBREAKERS – If your group is new, take some time to get acquainted. You could have each person share their favorite \_\_\_\_\_.**

**OR**

**Play "Two Truths and a Lie" where each person has to make three statements about themselves and others have to guess which is the lie.**

**INTRODUCTION**

This week's message raises a challenging question! Will I receive the free gift of Christ and simply sit and soak up this precious gift above all gifts? Or will I hold on to the Hand of Jesus and reach back to those who still need to cross the bridge? In Christ, I am protected and preserved so I really have nothing of substance to fear. Whose life is in jeopardy of never knowing the true purpose for which he/she was created.

If I am in Christ, I am not only reconciled, but I have been called to become a **reconciler** (been given the ministry of reconciliation).

1. Why should we consider this a privilege?
2. Why is this an obligation?
3. What is our general attitude toward obligations? Describe some obligations in life that seem burdensome and some that seem reasonable and fair. Which kind of obligation is the call to be a "reconciler?"
4. Vs. 20 uses the word "implore" (beseech, beg, urge). What might that look like if Paul was doing that in our culture today?
5. What are some of the ways in which you observe boldness being expressed for the sake of other causes, products or purposes in our culture today?
6. In light of #5, what does that make you think and feel about the example of Paul and God's call to us to be ambassadors for the cause of Christ and for the salvation of your friends, neighbors and associates?
7. Consider Luke 19: 1-9 and the story of Zaccheus. What did Jesus do?
8. Consider Luke 18: 18-27 and the rich, young ruler. How did Jesus relate to him?
9. Consider John 4:1-42 and the woman at the well. How did Jesus conduct Himself and what was the ultimate result?
10. Looking at all three passages above. What principles capture your attention with respect to being a "reconciler" or an ambassador for Christ? Who is God calling you to focus on and pray for and reach out to?

Be sure to pray for those who are coming to the weekend services who figuratively (and literally?) need to cross the bridge that spans the great divide between death and life?

Pastor John gave us a great illustration of endurance (from the movie "FACING THE GIANTS") in the teaching this past weekend. Remember that while Easter brings a sense of urgency to some people, God wants us to continue to reach into the "foreign country" of our surrounding culture and be used as ambassadors throughout the year.

**Read Hebrews 12:1-3** - What do you need to be "blindfolded to" so that you will be able to "keep your eyes on Jesus" so that "you will not grow weary and lose heart?"