

LEADER NOTES – II Corinthians 5, etc. – 3/25/07

For the next three weeks, Pastor John will be teaching a series entitled ***The Bridge***. Based on the passage found in 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).

5:17 – This verse is addressing fundamental newness, not a new look or feel. You can go out and purchase “new car smell” to spray in your car or a new wardrobe to make you look new, but there is no substitute for a full transformation of the heart in the lives of Christ followers. Eph. 2:8-10 addresses these fundamentals, clearly establishing that they are the work of God, not something we could ever accomplish on our own. Indeed, everything good that is produced through our lives from that point on is credited to God’s grace and for His glory.

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.

II Corinthians 5:17 Weekend Message: *The Bridge*

Group Leader Guide

Important preliminary details:

- Update your **roster** and return a copy to 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 – Use the one below (or make up your own) to help people get comfortable with each other and open them up to sharing.

- Describe a time in your life when you felt like you “had to keep up appearances” even though you weren't showing “the real you.”

-OR-

- What was the best costume you ever wore for Halloween or another costume party?

DAY ONE

The message for you this week comes from a the New Covenant passage of II Corinthians. It could be a great week for doing some self-assessment regarding how what God has done in your life. Whether you are a long-time Christ follower, you have only been a Christian for a short time or even if you are still seeking the truth about life in Christ, ask yourself (and your Life Team) some honest questions about what has changed in your life.

1. Read II Corinthians 2:14 – 5:21 (honestly, it's not that long – only 61 verses)
Pull out several key words and phrases that seem to be significant. If you can, define them or describe their significance for the journey of life. Don't struggle too hard with this. You can come back to it at the end of the week.

2. Read 2:14-16. Close your eyes and dream back to ancient Rome. Imagine a conquering army marching through the streets in triumph. The army (God's) is bring home a host of (willing) captives who have been won by the Love of Christ. The victory fires are burning in honor of the King (Jesus), but not everybody is a follower or a fan of Jesus. To some these fires smell like death, and to others they are "the fragrance of life." When and how did the love of Christ "take you captive?"

3. 3:1-3 – How does this passage illustrate the difference between the work of the Law and the work of the Spirit?

DAY TWO

4. 3:4-6 - The words "competence", "adequacy" or "worthiness" can be used interchangeably here. As you live your life, on what source do you rely for confidence? How is that supposed to work?

5. 3: 7-18 - What was the basis of the old covenant? Who delivered it?

6. What are some of the differences between the old covenant and the new covenant?

DAY THREE

7. What is the difference between Moses' experience of the old covenant and the experience God intends for us (vs. 8, 9-10, 16, 17, 18)?

8. What is the significance of the veil – for Moses (Exodus 34:29-35; II Cor. 3:13) For others (vs. 15) For us (vs. 18)

9. What happens in us and through us when we stop hiding behind the veil of religion? What happens to self-promotion (egotism)? Why? (4:1-6; 3:4-6)

DAY FOUR

10. 4:7-12 - If you had something really valuable to hide, but no safe to lock it in, where would you hide it? In an attractive gold box? Or in the sock drawer? Common clay jars (cracked pots?) were often used to hide valuables. How would the Apostle Paul, or YOU, be compared to these common jars of clay?

11. Some think vs 6-12 refers to the practice of using very thin clay jars as lamps. The burning candle shown through the thin vessel and gave light to the room. How might the Apostle Paul, or YOU, be compared to these common jars of clay?

12. What encouragement (courage!) do you take from vs. 8 – 18?

What is the power that supports that courage? Vs 14

13. Go back to question #1 - have any of these key words or phrases gained new meaning for you?

DAY FIVE

I Cor. 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God...."

- Why would God want you to be "new"...what's wrong with the "old" you? (Hint: check your teaching notes from the weekend service)

_____ in sin

_____ from God...by a GREAT DIVIDE!

- What is the "bridge" that makes "the new me" possible?

How does this change your view of God's purpose for your life?

With whom would you like to share this good news? Would they come to CVC Easter services?