

“Jesus Paid the Ultimate Price for Sin”

2 Cor. 5:14-21

Remembrance Day services began one year after the end of WWI when King George V wanted to mark the armistice that stopped the hostilities between Germany and the allied forces announced at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month. So, this is the 100th Remembrance Day observance since then and yet sadly we've had to remember more fallen soldiers in other wars that occurred since then, and there will probably be more wars and more lives lost between now and the return of Jesus Christ. Who, when He comes will put a cease to a world-wide war bent on the destruction of Israel and God's people.

While we remember those who fell to protect our existence and freedom as a country we also recognize that human armistices are temporary and human treaties have been and will be broken in the future. Why? Because people are not willing to recognize or deal with the root issue of hostility – sin.

And even though a treaty (covenant) was made by the ultimate price of Jesus Christ spilling His blood to make possible the end of hostility between God and man; even though a cenotaph (which means empty tomb) exists in Jerusalem and is frequently visited to remember His death and resurrection and even though many people wear a symbol – a cross – to point to that historic event approximately 1986 years ago, the majority of people reject the path to peace with God (Jesus) and remain hostile to Him and live as if the covenant Jesus signed with His blood was never enacted. To refuse to accept Jesus' death for our sins is as ridiculous as a Canadian to reject the Treaties made at the end of WWI and WWII and keep fighting Germans or Russians or Japanese.

Remembrance Day is observed to remember not just the fallen soldiers who paid the ultimate price in the past for our freedom but to remember we are now at peace and to continue to testify to those peace treaties by living peacefully with those with whom we were once in hostility with.

So, the best way for us to show the world that Jesus died for our sins and theirs and wants to be in a peace covenant with them also is if we who accepted Jesus paying the ultimate price for our sins live out the stipulations of our peace agreement with God, laid out for us in the Bible. And while there are many passages we could go to we're going to focus on 2 Cor. 5:14-21.

In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians he has had to write them again because these Christians were not living peaceably with each other in their churches which resulted in a bad witness to the unsaved in their communities. If followers of Jesus do not live according to the Biblical stipulations in our covenant of peace with God, how can the world understand and accept that there is a covenant of peace with God that they too can be part of? So, just as we observe annually a Remembrance Day so that we won't go to war again, the followers of Jesus must remember daily that

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Only One Perfect Sacrifice Can Pay for our Sins **(vv.14-15)**

Paul's passion to bring the church together is seen in v.14. He uses Christ's sacrificial death as a motivator for us to serve together to share the gospel.

¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

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There is an amazing bond that veterans have for one another. They share in suffering for a cause that removes everyone's individual agenda. They set aside their personalities, desires, jobs and families for a greater purpose. The apostle Paul is bringing the churches together to suffer together for Christ whose sacrifice makes forgiveness possible, so that others would have peace with God too. Jesus was the one perfect sacrifice who died for everyone and those who accept Him as Lord and Saviour die to self and live for His purposes, which we'll clearly see in vv.18-21. No one else can give us peace with God. In Rom. 5:1 Paul said,

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

Jesus paid the price for sin. Jesus alone brings an end to the hostility between man and God that was introduced through the sin of Adam and Eve, all have sinned and fall short of the glorious presence of God. But now, through Christ, we have forgiveness of sins. So, Paul says here in 2 Cor. 5, we need to remember His death for all and our death to Him so we know longer live for ourselves but for a greater cause and a better future.

We need to remember as well . . .

That Jesus' Death Changes our Perspective **(vv.16-17)**

When we accepted Christ, the Holy Spirit came to dwell in our hearts. He changed our future destination; eternity with God instead of eternity without God; but He also changed our perspective on life and people.

¹⁶ So from now on [the rest of our future since we've been saved] we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new has come!

Before we were saved, we didn't look at people with spiritual eyes; as those who were lost and in need of Christ. Salvation changed . . .

The way we see people (v.16)

Now, Paul says, we look at people differently. We see them as those needing Jesus. Before salvation we didn't see Jesus properly. We may have thought of Him as a good man or even God's Son but we never understood our need to put our faith in Him; as the most important person to ever walk the face of the earth. As the Only Saviour, the only Way to God. Jesus changed our perspective. We now see people differently as those needing Him as we once did.

Salvation obviously changed

The way we see ourselves (v.17)

We no longer have an exaggerated arrogant opinion of ourselves as one who was fine and didn't need God. Or as one who was totally unworthy of anyone's love or affection. Salvation changes the way we see ourselves; lost sinners but uniquely made by God who was willing to send His Son to pay the ultimate price for our sins; even if we refused Him.

Rom. 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Before we were saved, we didn't think much of Jesus and thought much of ourselves. We thought we were fine and perhaps better than most or at least "good enough" to get into heaven. But now, having understood we are sinners in need of salvation and having accepted Christ as our Saviour we are a new creation. We have a new heart, a new purpose and a new perspective. We even look at ourselves collectively with new eyes. We see God's people as fellow forgiven servants, equally equipped with Spiritual gifts for the common vision of seeing people won to Christ and as fellow building blocks in the church, partners in ministry.

This was important for the Corinthians to be reminded of (see 1 Cor. 12-14) because they were a divided church, selfishly using their gifts to promote themselves and forgetting they were called into a community to serve together and share the gospel. If we forget who we are in Christ we lose focus on what we're to do because we've forgotten how we were saved. Remember,

God Initiates our Need for Reconciliation **(5:18-19a)**

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them.

John 3:16 reminds us that God loves us so much He initiated the salvation process by sending Jesus to die for our sins. There is nothing we can do to save ourselves; God had to take the first step towards peace. "All this is from God". Our new nature, our new perspective, our forgiveness, our purpose and our future home in glory.

But God has a purpose in saving us; now we have been given the message of reconciliation. It is now up to us to initiate the discussion that people need reconciliation with God. The word "gospel" means 'good news. We need to share the 'good news' from God that people's sins can be forgiven if they believe that Jesus died on the cross for their sins and rose from the dead proving He was the sinless Son of God.

Sometimes our problem with sharing the 'good news' is we forget about it when we're at work, at school, in the arena, at the mall or while spending time with friends or family. For some Christians, they have a hard time thinking about God in the every day affairs of life. Most of us define who we are by our job or our responsibility. But is that really who we are?

God has a different idea of who we are if we have accepted Jesus as our Saviour. He now enlists us and gives us a new identity, His ambassadors. So, we need to remember

Who We are and What God Has Called us to Do **(5:19b-21)**

What's an ambassador? An ambassador is the highest-ranking representative of one country to another. He or she is chosen because the leader feels they will represent His values and desires. So then, believers in Jesus are God's highest-ranking people who He entrusts to represent His values and desires to the place where He's placed us to live. If you doubt God is that God is specifically that sovereign then listen to Acts 17:26-27

From one man He made every nation of men that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him, though he is not far from each one of us.

An ambassador is sent to a specific geographical location so that he can act as the king's representative in that location. God says we are His spiritual ambassadors chosen to live in 'exact places' so that the people whom He has placed around us would seek for Him. So then as ambassadors for Christ we are . . .

To be His voice (vv.19b-20)

This is our real job – to represent God and Jesus wherever we are and in whatever we do. When you go to work, you represent God. When you go to the store, you're still representing God. When you go to the rink, the soccer field, the meeting at school, the senior's luncheon – you're there as God's representative.

We sometimes forget this, that when we accepted Christ as our Saviour we entered into a covenant with Jesus that resulted in exchanged lives.

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved and gave Himself for Me." (Gal. 2:20)

"For we know that our old self [the live by my own agenda] was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with that we should no longer be slaves to sin." (Rom. 6:6)

When God saved you He enlisted you. We are now His ambassadors sent to represent Him so that others would know that God loves them and wants to be reconciled with them. We are to be His voice

So people can have hope (v.21)

We who know Christ have understood that living for God gives us joy and peace in life. God made us so that He alone would completely satisfy us. If we're convinced of that for ourselves then that makes being Jesus' ambassadors much easier.

Paul reminds us in Eph. 2:14 that to find reconciliation with God brings peace and joy. *"For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations."*

Many people live unsettled, unhappy lives because they don't realize they are hostile to God's desire for them. They don't realize is Jesus is the answer to their lack of peace in life. *"He who knew no sin became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God."* God wants to make people right with Him. He wants to pour His peace and new life through his Spirit into them so that they can enjoy the best life has to offer in Christ and an eternity in His presence.

Every Remembrance Day is call to look back and be thankful for those who paid the ultimate price paid so we could enjoy peace. It's also a prayer that 'never again' would our sons and daughters have to die in a war. Yet we continue to have wars because people have not found the remedy for hate; forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. Jesus paid the ultimate price for all of our sins and yet so many don't know they are at enmity with God, separated from Him by their sin. Veterans of war have no desire to see others go through what they did. But we who have received forgiveness of sins and have escaped Satan's domain, do we not desire the same for others? To see them free from their sin and enjoying peace with God through faith In Jesus Christ? To see new people stand beside us worshipping and fellowshipping because they have discovered Jesus paid the ultimate price for them? May we renew our commitment to serve our Lord Jesus Christ by being the best ambassadors we can so that others would place their faith in Him and find forgiveness and hope.

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If you have any comments or questions about this message please contact us at olivet@rideau.net