



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Sunday, June 19-25 (B) – 2 Corinthians 6:1-13

Focus: *The Calling to Reconciliation is Now!*

word of life

“See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!” 2 Corinthians 6:2b (NRSV)

Read 2 Corinthians 6:1-13

The verses assigned for today’s reading begin with what is actually the concluding statement of the previous section in the letter to the church in Corinth. It is helpful to look at the verses preceding the reading for today in 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 to understand the ministry of reconciliation to which Paul has been called. It is not Paul who reconciles people to God; rather, it is God’s very own action in Christ which brings forth reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

1. *Define reconciliation.*
2. *Name some of the challenges for someone called into the ministry of reconciliation.*

The faithful are called to be “ambassadors” for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20) – a term used in the Roman Empire for the official envoy who represented the emperor and carried out the emperor’s will. As ambassadors, we are, on behalf of Jesus, to speak and live the message of reconciliation.

3. *What does it mean to be an ambassador for Christ?*
4. *What is the connection between being an ambassador for Christ and reconciliation?*

When are we to begin this ministry of reconciliation? When will we know the gift of being made right with God for ourselves? Paul answers these questions in the opening verses of the assigned reading for today: “See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!” (2 Corinthians 6:2b NRSV) Accept the gift now! Live the gift now! Claim your calling as ambassadors now!

5. *How do we speak and live the message of reconciliation - today?*
6. *What causes us to hesitate claiming our calling to reconciliation?*

Paul wants nothing to get in the way of this calling and ministry: “We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry....” (2 Corinthians 6:3 NRSV) Paul especially did not want himself to be an obstacle, and he validates the authenticity of his calling as an ambassador with a recalling of his life as an apostle. He has experienced the difficult life and has been tested by afflictions, hardship, and calamities. (vs. 4) He has endured political persecution – beatings, imprisonments, and riots. (vs. 5a) He has known the daily challenges of a self-supported ministry – labors, sleepless nights, and hunger. (vs. 5b) All this he has done with purity and genuine love. (vs. 6)

Some in Paul’s day thought of Paul as an imposter, as someone unknown, dying, sorrowful, and poor. But by God’s grace, Paul declares his message to be true, known, living, joyful, and rich beyond measure. (vss. 8b-10)

7. *Why do you think Paul included this list of experiences and characteristics?*
8. *What would you name as credentials for an ambassador of Christ and reconciliation?*

The message Paul writes is personal and revealing. Paul bears his soul to the Corinthians. His “heart is wide open.” (vs. 11) In the same way, he urges the church in Corinth to open their hearts to the needs of others and to live the ministry of reconciliation they have received.

word among us

Throughout the world, there have been individuals who have, by their lives and words, exemplified being an ambassador for Christ and a minister of reconciliation. One such person was that of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. His life work was grounded in a vision for reconciliation between races and peoples.

As we hear the apostle Paul listing his experiences as a follower of Christ, the same list could be made to describe Dr. King. Like Paul, King experienced afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonment, riots, sleepless nights, and hunger. Like Paul, some saw him as an imposter, someone unknown; but the truth of his message dispelled doubt.

And like Paul, Dr. King recognized the urgency of the moment. Just as Paul proclaimed, “Now is the acceptable time,” King realized the urgent need for reconciliation. (The title of one of his books is *Why We Can’t Wait*.)

1. *What do you know about Martin Luther King, Jr.?*
2. *Have someone read aloud 2 Corinthians 6:4-10 with the image of Dr. King in mind.*
3. *Do you think the words from 2 Corinthians aptly describe Dr. King? Why or why not?*
4. *Name other world leaders whom you feel fit the characteristic of an ambassador of Christ and a minister of reconciliation.*

The verses from 2 Corinthians – and the example of Martin Luther King, Jr – remind us that it is not easy to live life as an ambassador for Christ and a minister of reconciliation. Both St. Paul and Dr. King had struggles; both had their challenges and faults. But both of them expressed a sure confidence, an unwavering faith, and a deep inner peace. Both can serve as examples of faithful followers who did not hesitate to speak the truth in love for the purpose of reconciliation.

May their lives serve as a witness to the calling that is ours as followers of Christ to be ambassadors of God’s love in Christ and active ministers of reconciliation.

5. *Name someone in your life who embodies the characteristics of an ambassador for Christ and a minister of reconciliation.*

faith practice in daily life

Strive for justice and peace in all the earth

In our baptism, we are called to let our lights shine before others that they might see our good works and give glory to our Father in heaven. We are to be “little Christs” in the world – ambassadors and ministers of reconciliation. The calling is echoed daily as we live out our Christian vocation and strive for justice and peace for all. The challenges are before us. Now is the acceptable time! Now is the day of salvation!

Prayer

Grant us courage, O God, to be your ambassadors and your ministers of reconciliation in our world and in our daily lives. Amen

last word

Look for ways to bring reconciliation this week.