

Potomac Hills Community Church

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Learning and Serving takes Reconciling

2 CORINTHIANS 5.11-6.2

INTRODUCTION: *Do you really mean what you sing?*¹

I've really been struck lately that sometimes I sing the songs on Sunday morning and I think, "You know, I wish I really felt that way. I wish those words really described me. I wish that today those words were true about me."

But the sad truth is ... the words don't always accurately describe what's in my heart. Sometimes my heart is far from what I sing.

Does that ever happen to you? Or am I the only one?

I know that some of you with younger children are so busy trying to keep the kids occupied that you barely have time to sing, let alone think about the words. But there are times when everyone of us is singing some "psalm, hymn, or spiritual song" ... and we feel like hypocrites because we're singing something that just doesn't describe what's really going on ... on the inside.

Let me give you some examples ...

"All consuming fire, you're my heart's desire, and I love you dearly, dearly, Lord." Is that always true about you. God is your heart's desire ... all the time? You dearly love Him ... all the time? Maybe not.

"Twas Grace that taught my heart to fear, and Grace my fears relieved." Is that always true about you. Has Grace taught your heart to fear God ... all the time? Has Grace relieved your fears in this life ... all the time? Maybe not.

"A Pure Heart, that's what I long for, a heart that hungers hard after You." Is that always true about you. Do you truly long for a pure heart ... all the time? Is your heart hungering after God ... all the time? Maybe not.

"As the deer panteth for the water, so my soul longeth after Thee. You alone are my heart's desire, and I long to worship Thee." Is that always true about you. Does your soul **long** after God ... all the time? Is He really your heart desire ... all the time? Do you **long** to worship God when you come in here every Sunday? Maybe not.

And we haven't even gotten out of the songs that start with the letter 'A' yet!!

¹ Adapted from the message "The Heart of Ministry, part 9" by Dieter Zander, Willow Creek Community Church, August 17, 1994.

Last week we sang, ***“O Lord, You’re beautiful. Your face is all I seek.”*** Is God’s face all you seek? There are a lot of times I’m seeking something other than God’s face. And my guess is that’s probably true of you too.

And when that happens ... when you’re singing these great words, but you’re not feeling it on the inside, or you don’t really mean, or it just doesn’t describe you ... what do you do? **What do you do?**

I try to remember something I heard my mother say a long time ago, “Those who sing, pray twice.” And what she meant was that both the words and the music become prayers. And sometimes I’ll tell you before we sing a particular song, “Make this one a prayer.” And what I’m trying to say is that we just have to **pray** the words of those songs and hymns. We have to take those words of devotion that **don’t** describe us and pray as we sing that they **will** describe us. We have to pray, “Lord, make this true, make this real in my life. Lord, I want these words to describe **my** level of devotion to God.”

That’s an honest prayer. And God is honored by honest prayers.

Because even when the words we sing don’t describe our **devotion** to God, often they can describe the **desire** we have to be devoted to God. I mean, I want to be that devoted ... but too often I get too easily distracted. I find my focus being pulled this way and that way, and often, I feel that just when I’m getting focused on God, my attention gets pulled away to something else. I get distracted ... usually by things that, in and of themselves, are very good ... except in this case the good becomes the enemy of the best because these good things distract me from the devotion that I really desire to have for the Lord.

And the sad thing about all this is ... I really don’t think I’m alone in this. I think this is a pretty common problem for those who claim to be followers of Christ. In fact, this probably isn’t going to be much comfort for anyone, but I think this kind of devotion distraction has been going on for as long as people have sought to follow Christ. I mean, it happened in the time of Christ too. Even those who were around Christ when He was here on earth struggled with this.

And let’s take a look at one of those instances. Turn with me in your Bibles, or look on in the outline, to the story of Mary and Martha ...

Luke 10:38-42, *“As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a village where a woman named Martha welcomed them into her home. [39] Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord’s feet, listening to what He taught.*

[40] But Martha was worrying over the big dinner she was preparing.

NIV – But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made.

NCV – But Martha was busy with all the work to be done.

She came to Jesus and said, “Lord, doesn’t it seem unfair to You that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me.”

[41] But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are so upset over all these details! [42] There is really only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it - and I won't take it away from her."

Who do you relate with most? Martha or Mary?

I think our culture today breeds Martha's.

And it's hard to be in the posture of a Mary.

All kinds of things jump out in this story. But you what jumped out at me the most when I read this story this time? The fact that Martha was showing devotion to Jesus the best she knew how. I mean, she opened her home, she was preparing a meal, she was doing what she thought was a great act of devotion. And it was good. Jesus never said anything to the contrary. He never said it was bad.

And I kind of like the Martha's in the church. In fact, I've been praying that we'd have more Martha's who would be busy with all the work to be done. Most of the time I don't think that we have enough Martha's.

But we have more Martha's than Mary's. I mean there are very few, extremely few, people who are not involved in the work of the church, but who are exercising a serious devotional life ... just doesn't happen.

And so Jesus wasn't putting Martha down or telling her that she wasn't doing something good.

He was just very gently showing Martha that there was something better.

Jesus opened Martha's eyes to the fact that those **good** things she was doing **for** Him ... were actually becoming distractions to the **best** thing she could be doing **with** Him. All this stuff she was doing had become distractions to devotion. And Jesus said, "*Mary has chosen what is better - and I won't take it away from her.*" Jesus is saying, "I'm not going to give her distractions from being devoted. That's not the answer." You see, devotion is something we choose ... it's not something that happens by accident. You don't kind of slip into it accidentally and say, "Oh wow, look at that, I'm devoted."

Devotion is something that takes an intentional decision, again and again and again. And in order to make the choice to be devoted to God, I think it would help if we had a simple definition of what it is. In order to stay away from the distractions or in order to stay focused amidst the distractions, we need to know just what devotion is.

Devotion is simply this:

1. Living my life wholeheartedly for God.
2. Giving my life wholeheartedly to the work of God.

And we're going to see those two things come out in the text we're looking at this morning. You see, this text is about **devotion** in your relationships. First, in your vertical relationship with God. And second, in your horizontal relationships

with people. And the word that the Apostle Paul uses to describe this kind of devotion is found in **2 Corinthians 5:18**, and that word is **‘reconciling.’**

You see, at the heart of this word ‘reconciling’ is this issue of devotion.

Because if you’re not devoted to God, then you’re not going to care a whole lot about being reconciled with God personally, or being an agent of reconciliation and connecting other people to God.

And because the ability to be active in reconciling is dependent upon what devotion is in the life of a follower of Christ. So be careful not to let the simplicity of these statements lull you into thinking, “Been there ... heard that.”

And so the points tonight are simple ... but they’re not easy.

So let’s dig into the text.

Starting with 2 Corinthians 5, verse 11 ...

5.11-15: Reconciling takes DEVOTION to God.

*“It is because we know this solemn fear of the Lord that we work so hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. [12] Are we trying to pat ourselves on the back again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart before God. [13] If it seems that we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit. [14] Whatever we do, it is because Christ’s love controls us [NIV – compels us]. Since we believe that Christ died for everyone, we also believe that we have all died to the old life we used to live. [15] **He died for everyone so that those who receive His new life will no longer live to please themselves. Instead, they will live to please Christ, who died and was raised for them.**”*

Now when I first looked at this paragraph, I had a hard time trying to figure out what held this paragraph together. Because usually Paul is pretty upfront about what’s important. I mean, usually Paul says, “This is what’s important, therefore, live in this manner.” But he doesn’t do that here. Here he says, “Live like this, live like this, live like this ... because of this truth.” And he puts the big truth at the end of the paragraph rather than at the beginning.

The main idea is in the 15th verse, *“He died for everyone so that those who receive His new life will no longer live to please themselves. Instead, they will live to please Christ, who died and was raised for them.”*

Reconciling takes devotion to God. And we said that devotion means living my life wholeheartedly for God.

Going back up to verse 11, Paul says, *“It is because we know this solemn fear of the Lord that we work so hard to persuade others.”* Once again, Paul is referring back to something he’s already said. In this case to verse 10, where it said, *“For we must all stand before Christ to be judged.”* Paul is saying, “In light of eternity, we know what it is to fear the Lord.”

Now the fear of the Lord is not about being terrorized by God, not like Dorothy and the Wizard. It's talking about holding God in **awe and respect**; it's not taking God lightly ... or just saying, "He's my buddy. Me and God are tight. He's my bud." **He's not!** He's God. And if He showed up while you're taking Him lightly, you'll be face down in the dirt begging for mercy. Look at what the various people in the Bible said when confronted with the visible presence of God. Isaiah is the classic example. He said, "Woe is me. I am **undone**. I am **ruined**. I am **destroyed**. Because I am a man of unclean lips and I live amongst a people of unclean lips." He had no doubt that his life was about to end **right at that moment**. But God had mercy and Isaiah lived ... from that moment on ... wholeheartedly for God.

And Paul is telling us that in light of eternity we need to have a sense of deep awe and respect for the wonder and power of God. And because of who God is, and what God has done, and the reality of eternity, and the validity that all this is really true ... we try to persuade others. And you would think that the next thing to follow will be a five step treatment of how to persuade others. But that's not what happens at all. Notice what he says next, "*we work so hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too.*"

Now what's that all about?

I think Paul is trying to tell us that persuading others is not about technique. Now it's good to know how to share what you believe with other people, but it's effectiveness is not about technique. It's about your life! It's about what's happening in you and what's showing through you. Because when we're living our lives wholeheartedly for God, and when we're staying close to Him, and when we're following Him as best as we can ... our lives become tools to help persuade other people that He's real and He's alive and He makes a difference.

That's a fully devoted follower of Christ.

Clarence Jordan, who wrote the Cotton Patch Gospels, great reading, used to call these kind of people, "Wide-Awake Christians." And I love what he says about this. He says, "It is difficult to be indifferent to a wide-awake Christian ... a real live person of God. It is even more difficult to be indifferent to a whole body of Christians like this. You can hate them, you can love them, but one thing is certain: You can't ignore them. There's something about them that won't let you. It's not so much what they say or what they do, the thing that seems to haunt you ... **is what they are**. You can't put them out of your mind anymore than you can shake off your shadow. They confront you with an entirely different way of life, a new way of thinking, a changed set of values, a higher standard for living. In short, they face you with the Kingdom of God."

Wide-awake Christians, fully devoted followers of Christ, people overflowing with Christ ... those are the kinds of lives that God uses to persuade

people ... with a persuasion that goes beyond words. It's a persuasion that comes and flows through our lives. Lives of people who are living wholeheartedly for God.

So how do you know if you're living your life wholeheartedly for God?

Some of you might think, "Well, I thought I was doing that?"

So how do you know?

Well, the text brings to the surface some penetrating questions about that.

The first question is this, "**Am I sincerely surrendered to God?**"

Now what I mean by 'sincerely surrendered' is simply this, "Am I surrendered on the inside as well as the outside?"

Because Paul said in verses 11 and 12, "*God knows we are **sincere**, and I hope you know this, too. Are we trying to pat ourselves on the back again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having **a sincere heart** before God.*" Paul is letting them know that they are sincere, and sincerity is simply a matter of having the inside be consistent with the outside. And He wants them to know that they are wholeheartedly surrendered in both of those arenas ... the inside life as well as the outside life. Because you know it's possible to look surrendered and devoted on the outside, but not be surrendered and devoted on the inside. For some of us, complying with the rules is all that really counts, and so we've been faking the inside stuff. We're here and we're just going through the motions. And friends, that's not Christianity. That's just playing church. And you can fool us, but you can't fool God.

On the flip side of that, I think there are some people who really want to be sincerely surrendered on the inside, but aren't because they're afraid of how it will look on the outside. People might think I'm different, or I'm weird, or they'll look down on me, or make fun of me. And who needs that?

Well, maybe you do. Because that leads us to the second question, which is, "**Am I willing to appear strange to others?**"

How's that for a question?

Here's what Paul says, verse 13, "*If it seems that we are **crazy**, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit.*"

How do you feel about appearing crazy or, as the NIV says, "out of our mind," to your family? to your friends? to your neighbors? to your co-workers? The more we strive to live wholeheartedly for God, the more we're going to appear strange to those who are not following God in a devoted manner.

And I'm not talking about strange like God's going to make you wear clothes from the 70's and stuff. Not that kind of strange, but living according to a different kind of value system, and participating in activities where there is no immediate reward, and some people are just going to think that's strange.

Have you ever had this kind of experience?

At our house, when we sit down to dinner, we hold hands when we say grace. Not so much because it's a real spiritual thing, but to make sure that nobody's grabbing food while our eyes are closed. And sometimes when we go out someplace, we'll go to McDonald's to eat ... and we have to do that because that's the payoff for the little boys for going out, you know ... and anyway, we'll say grace before we eat. And sometimes, not usually, but sometimes, you'll notice it get real quiet right around us. Like people aren't sure how to deal with it, you know, us saying grace. And sometimes they stare. And the boys always notice that, and so they'll ask, "Dad, why are those people looking at us?" But they don't say it quietly. It's more like, "DAD, WHY ARE THOSE PEOPLE LOOKING AT US?" And so more people turn and look. And you're trying to ... sort of ... put this thing to rest. And so you whisper back, "It's because we were praying."

"WHY ARE THEY LOOKING AT US BECAUSE WE'RE PRAYING?"

And you just want to say, "Because they think we're weird, okay?"

But usually, you just say, "Just eat your chicken nuggets, okay? They'll get over it."

Now I'm not saying you've got to pray and hold hands in the restaurant to be devoted. But I am saying that if you're going to follow Christ, you'll be led to do some things and not do other things because they would or would not honor God. And other people aren't going to understand. There will be certain decisions you're going to make that other people will think our absolutely absurd.

For those of you who are single or single again, and you've made the decision not to get involved sexually with someone outside of marriage, and then you share that with someone ... they're going to think you're really strange, that you're out of touch. They won't understand.

Or for those of you who are married, and you've made the decision that you are only going to be involved sexually with your spouse in this life, that's going to be viewed as increasingly strange. People who view affairs as part of life aren't going to understand why they can't have one with you.

You're going to appear strange, the more you follow God, in a world that's not following God. And I wonder if you've made the decision to live out your convictions and values even if it makes you look strange to others. Because if you really want to live sincerely surrendered to God, with the inside being consistent with the outside, it just might mean looking strange once in a while.

There's a third question that flows from this text, and that is, "**Is my devotion probably motivated?**" "Is my devotion probably motivated?"

In verses 14 and 15, Paul says, "*Whatever we do, it is because Christ's love controls us [NIV – **compels us**]. Since we believe that Christ died for everyone, we also believe that we have all died to the old life we used to live. **He died for***

everyone so that those who receive His new life will no longer live to please themselves. Instead, they will live to please Christ, who died and was raised for them.”

Paul says that the thing that motivates his devotion ... was the love of Christ. He says, “*Christ’s love controls us,*” or, as the NIV says, “*Christ’s love compels us.*” What we do we do ... because of the love of Christ. The love of Jesus Christ ... and an understanding of what happened at the Cross ... **freed Paul** to live life for God with the right kind of motivation. And it can do the same thing for us.

However, without a firm grasp on what Christ’s love really means, and being able to grab hold of that and internalize it, and weave it into the fabric of our lives ... let me pause for a moment ... that doesn’t happen right away. And for those of you who are really struggling with this, you want it but can’t seem to get it, and you want to internalize it and really understand what it means to be completely forgiven, deeply loved, and totally accepted by God ... it takes a long time.

I mean, I’ve been a Christian for just over 27 years now, and sometimes I wonder if I really understand it. I mean, I understand it on an intellectual level, but sometimes I don’t think I truly understand it at the heart level. It’s a simple concept that it somehow totally profound.

It’s something that takes repeated exposure and repeated listening and learning, so don’t give up, but press on. Because without this firm grasp of Christ’s love, and the concept of **Grace**, our devotion can be motivated by the fear of punishment from God, or it can be motivated by a constant desire to earn His love, or it can be motivated by the idea that if I do something for God, He’s obligated to do something for me.

And you see, if you’re motivated by any one of those three options, then you’re not going to be free to live for God. You’re actually going to be living for yourself ... and you’re going to try to get something from God. Whether that would be the security of knowing He isn’t going to punish you, or His approval, or His blessings, whatever. But you’re doing it for you, not for Him. And it’s a man-centered life, not a God-centered life.

Again, it’s because Paul said, “*Since we believe that Christ died for everyone, we also believe that we have all died to the old life we used to live.*” What does that mean? Well, it means that one (Jesus Christ) died for all (which includes you and me), that all (you and me) died with Him. It means that since He died for us, and in our place, that now our lives are now folded into His. And we no longer have to live just for ourselves, but now can live for Him. His life is now the focus of our life, and that frees us from living a selfish, man-centered life, and so we can live wholeheartedly for Him. It’s a simple concept to listen to ... but it

is oh so hard to live out. Living for God sounds so easy, but you will spend the rest of your life learning how to do that. And that's devotion.

But there's a second part to this passage.

And that's about giving my life to the work of God.

And that means ...

5.16-6.2: Reconciling takes INVOLVEMENT with People.

“So we have stopped evaluating others by what the world thinks about them. Once I mistakenly thought of Christ that way, as though He were merely a human being. How differently I think about Him now! [17] What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun! [18] All this newness of life is from God, who brought us back to Himself through what Christ did. And God has given us the task of reconciling people to Him. [19] For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. This is the wonderful message He has given us to tell others. [20] We are Christ's ambassadors, and God is using us to speak to you. We urge you, as though Christ Himself were here pleading with you, "be reconciled to God!" [21] For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

[6:1] As God's partners, we beg you not to reject this marvelous message of God's great kindness. [2] For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you." Indeed, God is ready to help you right now. Today is the day of salvation.”

And there's some significant things we learn here too.

First of all, I need to see people the way God sees them. If I really want to be about the work of God, I need to learn what is God's perspective about these people. Paul says in verses 16-17, *“So we have stopped evaluating others by what the world thinks about them. Once I mistakenly thought of Christ that way, as though He were merely a human being. How differently I think about Him now! What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!”*

Paul says we no longer look at people and judge them ... based on their outward appearance, based on their position, based on their net worth, their fashion, the color of their skin ... he said, “I used to think of Christ in that kind of worldly manner.” If you remember, Paul was one of the guys who tried to stamp out Christianity and had considered Jesus to be a mere troublemaker.

If he only knew how much trouble Jesus really was. He turned Paul's life upside down. But now that I know Christ personally, I could never look at Him in a worldly way again. But things have changed now, and things have changed in the way I view other people. I no longer see just the outward appearance, but now

I see what Christ could do **in** them, how faith, hope and love can change them. And I see what the work of Christ can do **through** them. He says, "If anyone is in Christ, anyone, then he or she is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come."

God isn't about just reaching a certain class of people, or a certain kind of people, God doesn't categorize people the way we do. And as we give our lives to the work of God, we need to see people the way God sees them, and we need to treat them according to how God sees them.

I recently got to go on a high school field trip. Rode with a bus full of 10th graders down to D.C. And you know, when you first come up to this swarming group of teenagers ... well, they really looked strange. I don't think they looked stranger than we did when we were teenagers, but now, to my eyes, some of them looked pretty strange. And from an outward appearance standpoint, I thought, "I don't know how close I want to get to these kids."

But once you get a chance to start talking with them, you discover that they have the same dreams and hopes that teenagers have had for hundreds of years. They want people to care ... and they want to care. They want people around they can trust ... and they want to be trusted. And about every 15 minutes on the bus, someone would call out to the teacher ...

"Hey, Mr. Greening, what are we going to do when we get there?"

"Hey, Mr. Greening, what do you think about such and such?"

"Hey, Mr. Greening, notice me. I'm over here surrounded by a bunch of other kids, but I'm all alone. I trust you. Notice me. Please."

And he noticed them. And for some of those kids, that was the high point of their day. You see, whether you realize it or not, once you start looking at people the way God looks at people, they'll never look the same to you again.

The Bible says, "Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart." We need to learn how to look at people's hearts. And that means spending time with them and listening carefully to them. And when you can do that, then you're giving your life to the work of God.

A second thing we can see from this text is that "I need to see myself the way God sees me." Not just seeing other people the way God sees them, but looking at myself the same way. And how does God see me? Well, He sees me as His co-worker, His partner in the work of ministry. Notice these verses, 18 through 20,

"All this newness of life is from God, who brought us back to Himself through what Christ did. And God has given us the task of reconciling people to Him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. This is the wonderful message He has given us to tell others. We are Christ's ambassadors, and God is using us to speak to you. We

urge you, as though Christ Himself were here pleading with you, "be reconciled to God!"

You see, when you and I became reconciled with God. When, through the work of Christ on the Cross, peace was made between us and God. When we became reconciled to the Lord, we also become qualified as messengers of reconciliation to others. You and I have become the embodied message of hope and forgiveness that God wants to communicate to this world. Each one of us are messengers of reconciliation. The passage says, "We are Christ's ambassadors."

Now what's an ambassador do? An ambassador is someone sent by one country to a foreign country when the two countries don't really understand each other. An ambassador's job is to represent his or her country's interests in that foreign country and to bring about an understanding between those two countries in an effective and culturally relevant manner.

You see the analogy Paul is making here?

We have one foot planted in heaven and one foot planted firmly in this life. And we're living our life as resident of heaven ... and foreigners here on this planet. Why are we here? We're here to represent **God's kingdom** to this world. And our role is to communicate to this world the intentions, and the values, and the standards, and the heart of heaven ... in the most effective and culturally relevant manner.

A lot of people today have the perception that God is mad at them, He's going to take away all their fun, and He's going to take real life away from them. And nothing could be further from the truth.

But who's going to communicate anything to the contrary?

God says, "I want to do that through you ... and you ... and you... and you. As you're living your life wholeheartedly for Me. And as you're giving your life wholeheartedly to My work. As you keep Me before you in devotion. I'll work through you. I'll minister through you." That's an awesome promise from an awesome God.

Let's look at the last few verses, 5.21 – 6.2, "***For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. As God's partners, we beg you not to reject this marvelous message of God's great kindness [the message of Grace]. For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you." Indeed, God is ready to help you right now. Today is the day of salvation.***"

These three verses help us to see the devotion that God has to us. And so that becomes a motivation to help us live for Him. Back in verses 14-15, we read that Christ's love compels us. It was because Jesus Christ went to the Cross, and paid the penalty for our sins, that He deserves nothing less than all of us. And now Paul has come back to the cross in verse 21. He says that God was so devoted to

us that He took His only Son and He allowed His sinless Son to bear the guilt of all our sin, so that you and I would have the privilege of being right with God. That we would become the righteousness of God. That through Christ, we would have the privilege of being called God's children, and that we can have fellowship with our Father in Heaven. And I don't know if that is riveting to you, but just to see how motivated God was to demonstrate His love for you and me, He was willing to sacrifice His Son on our behalf.

What love would move anyone to do that?

The love of God.

Which becomes our motivation for being devoted and reconciled to Him.

And in 6.1, Paul says, "Don't reject this marvelous message of Grace. Don't take this Grace in vain." Don't ever take the cross for granted. Don't let what Christ has done for you become commonplace. Don't ever let His grace ever become anything less than amazing.

Friends, it's only because of God's Amazing Grace that I'm striving to live wholeheartedly for God. And it's not that I don't falter, I do, a lot. But Christ's love compels to come back, it compels me to be devoted, it compels me to be a reconciler by being involved with people to such an extent that they can see some measure of devotion to God in my life.

Not because of anything I have done, but only because of what Christ has done ... that He who was no sin, became sin for you and for me ... so that we might become the righteousness of God.

Christ is the hero of the story.

It's His work that changes lives.

It's His love that compels us.

And it's His grace that gives us life.

Because it's all of Grace from beginning to end.

And all God's children said, "Amen."