

Cultural Renewal

2 Corinthians 5:16-20 | Ryan Pfeiffer | Jan 26, 2025

INTRO. Last wk looked at Levi intro'ing his friends to Jesus... social renewal

There was another level of renewal happening... Read Luke 5:29-30.

For Levi it's a moment of stepping into social renewal... those close to us.

For the Pharisees it was a call to cultural renewal... those far from us.

By far I mean ... those who feel really different from us... based on:

- Unknown to us
- Life experience
- Life style
- Culture
- Religion

For Pharisees... its these tax collectors... sinners... lifestyle gap

Keep in mind Pharisees weren't all bad... some were sincere, earnest...

But they don't understand Jesus' vision for cultural renewal.

What is Jesus' vision for renewal?

1. We know it begins with us... moves to those close to us... but do we understand it must reach to those far from us?

This brings us to cultural renewal... What is it? How far does this renewal go?

Look at this vision through eyes of a Pharisee turned Jesus follower... Paul.

READ 2 Cor 5:16-20.

FOCUS. Cultural renewal means seeing ourselves as Christ's Ambassadors sent with a message and a ministry of reconciliation.

MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION. V19b And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

The message of Jesus is that we need reconciliation— used 6X/ 5vss...

Reconciliation in Greek (n) katallagē (v) katallassō... meaning:

- To restore harmony 2. Resolve hostility 3. Re-establish relationship.

We need to be reconciled to God... v20 be reconciled to God... (thru Jesus)

We need to be reconciled to one another. 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.16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view.

Cultural Renewal

2 Corinthians 5:16-20 | Ryan Pfeiffer | Jan 26, 2025

The message is that because Jesus died for all... ALL CAN BE RENEWED.

The way we see those far from us must be renewed...

WHO are those far from us?? Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

- Gentiles are far from Jews... racial distance.
- Slaves are far from free... class distance... rich/ poor, popular/ lame
- 3. Females are far from males... gender distance...
- 4. Old and young... generational gap...

In Eph 2:14 Paul calls this distance the dividing wall of hostility...

1. Shallow assumptions
2. Prejudice.
3. Lack of faith
4. Apathy.

1 Sam 16:7 People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

The gospel message is good news Jesus has broken thru that wall... So we may become ONE IN CHRIST.

MLK JR... all people are created equal comes from the Bible... Gen/ Gal.
Billy Graham... segregated Crusades... 1950 ... Chattanooga... removed rope...

MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION. V18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation... 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

How did Jesus make his appeal? By going into Levi's home + bridging the gap

It means being an ambassador to those outside our comfort zones with God's message

Jesus welcomed Tax Collectors... but he didn't waver on his message.

Larry Hurtado, Destroyer of Gods... The early church was a force for renewal not by trying to fit into culture but being willing to stand out... distinctive

An ambassador doesn't go and become a citizen of the other culture.

- Multiracial and Multiethnic... versus tribal (Jew/ gentile had to reconcile)
- Resisted infanticide and abortion... yet cared for mothers, children, families
- Resolute in its vision of marriage and sexuality (man/ woman for life)
- It was non-violent on both political and personal level. (Resisted/ but not violent)
- Generous and compassionate toward vulnerable and needy.

Cultural renewal happens when we welcome all people while not wavering on God's unchanging message.

We accept all people while not affirming all lifestyles...

Cultural Renewal

2 Corinthians 5:16-20 | Ryan Pfeiffer | Jan 26, 2025

Pursuit of relevance can never supersede the call to be reconciled to God...

But it does mean have to be willing to sacrifice our traditions and comforts...

ILLUS. Jesus Movement... Hippies... dirty carpets and new music. Guitars!!?

TRANSITION TO RENEWAL SLIDES.