

# God Was in christ.' 2 Corinthians 5

by John Nelson Darby

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding our calling to God's kingdom and glory, and how Christ's work reconciles us to God through faith.*

**Scripture:** John 3:16, Romans 5:1, Romans 8:1, 2 Corinthians 5:17-19, Galatians 5:5, Ephesians 2:8-9, Colossians 1:21, 1 Thessalonians 2:12, 1 John 1:9

**Topics:** "New Creation", "Reconciliation"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the dual aspects of the gospel in 2 Corinthians 5: our calling to God's kingdom and the reconciliation achieved through Christ's work. He explains that true reconciliation is found in the new creation, where the old is judged and set aside. The presence of God reveals our sinfulness, leading to a conviction that we are lost without Him, yet through Christ, we are justified and called into His glory. Darby urges believers to recognize their identity in Christ and the necessity of being suited for the glory they are called into, highlighting the importance of living in light of this truth. Ultimately, he calls for a deep understanding of our reconciliation with God and the transformative power of Christ's love.

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## Transcript

There are two great aspects of the gospel in this chapter, first, That to which we are called, and for which we are made fit; second, The testimony God has brought out of sin in us, and Christ's work meeting it. It is good to apprehend what the calling of God is, in order to know what is needed to be in it. There is no reconciliation of the old thing as such, but complete reconciliation in the new man. The judgment of man is pronounced, "now is the judgment of this world." God's dealings with man in the flesh are over, the flesh is set aside for ever.

In the new state of things brought in by Christ in resurrection, "all things are of God." As to the body we are not in it yet, therefore it is good to be "absent from the body and present with the Lord." The moment we get hold of our calling "to his kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12), we are brought into the presence of God. He is also enabling the soul to apprehend the glory. It sees that a work entirely of God must be done in order that man may enter glory. Could you put yourself into Christ's glory?

"He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God." The presence of God revealed to the soul, gives true, thorough conviction of sin. It does not mind what man thinks, because it knows what God thinks. Sin is a shameful thing, but the presence of God produces thoughts that are beyond shame. The moment the soul is before God, it hates, judges sin, cannot think of hiding it, would rather be in truth before God -

"there is truth in the inward parts;" shame before man leads to the concealment of sin.

God's true light manifests everything, but when the heart is set right, it takes God's side against sin - there is forgiveness; all is right when looking at what we are in the presence of God. We are called to "God's kingdom and glory" to be conformed to the image of His Son. We have a life - divine glory belongs to that life. It is God that justifies. He says that is right in my eyes, God Himself pronounces. That is what I want, this full, blessed justification connects itself with glory - "Whom he justified them he also glorified."

"We wait for the hope of righteousness." (Gal. 5:5.) This is what God is calling us into in Christ. That which is announced in the gospel is Christ as man is in divine glory. It is "the gospel of the glory of Christ." That has been done which has put man into the glory of God. This new thing is man, the centre of all the glory of God. It will be accomplished of course in Christ by-and-by, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth" - or as it is expressed in Revelation, "the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

It is to this glory of Christ we are called. It shines in upon the soul. Are you fit for this glory? If not, what are you fit for? You cannot stay here on earth for ever. Where are you going? If not into the light it must be into the darkness, that is opposite to it. There is no medium. We have this in the parable of the king's son - Jesus had spoken of seeking fruit before; now He is speaking of grace that seeks nothing, it is a feast prepared. Those bidden are from the highways and hedges, and no matter what they were before, but they must have the wedding garment.

The prodigal must have the best robe to enter the house - he must be suited to the house. Have you, my reader, got that. We see what the calling is, can you say, "I have got what is fit for the glory I am going into?"

You may be getting it, the Lord leading you into it, but without it what are you fit for? You must either be outside or with the wedding garment inside. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Did He not suit Himself to all to win their hearts? He came with the invitation to turn back to God: but no - they would not: for His love He got hatred - terrible witness of man's entire ruin - he is dead; alive indeed for himself and for his fellow men, but there is no movement of his heart toward God. "He came to his own and his own received him not." Yet in Christ there is perfect love - no reproach. Paul saw the terribleness of the judgment and set about to persuade men. The love of Christ is still pressing upon men the truth we are dead: the link between man and God is broken and cannot be formed again. Does the cross say, "Christ had set the world right?" "One died for all," unspeakable love, "then were all dead." Has your soul been brought to the conviction "that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing?"

Could you say you would not have put Christ to death? Could you say, "He would not have died for me, He might have helped me, and purified me"? If not, then you must say, "I am dead, lost, I have no link in heart with God!" The old creation is a judged, condemned thing - you, as children of Adam, belong to it, the question is, whether you get out of it? Man has emancipated himself from God; what infidelity does, is, to justify and proclaim the fact: set up and cultivate man's will.

Cain began this world without God. He went and built a city and called it by his son's name. They had instruments of music and artificers there - all to make the world a pleasant place without God; and that is what man is doing still - he says it is with the faculties God has given - true: But what is the moral state of man's heart? is he not away from God? Jesus came "to seek and to save that which was lost." I do not ask

whether you recognise yourself as wicked, but whether you see yourself to be lost - dead?

By nature we reject Christ, all our thoughts cluster round self. We prefer pleasure - everything in the world, our own will - to Christ. This is the condition of all naturally, was the condition of every one of us, but the One who was not dead, who was acceptable to God, the only One who could be, who was made sin for us. He stood in our place. He, the holy blessed One, was made sin. The quickening power of God shews us sin, but we see the whole thing closed on the cross. I see what flesh is, it crucified Christ - but I am not in it any longer, I belong to the new creation; I am in Christ, who is my righteousness, and gives me the title to enter in.

We find the calling into God's kingdom and glory. We see the veil rent, and Christ is within as man, and in getting there, He has put away all that we were in the flesh. We have to contend with the flesh daily as an enemy, but as to our standing before God it is ended. In Christ we have entered into the new place - "you hath he reconciled" (Col. 1:21); there is not a thing left between me and God. We are brought into the glory of God. We wait for it indeed as to our bodies, and He has given us the earnest of the Spirit.

We have the reconciliation - reconciliation to what? to God. He did it according to what God is, and we must judge sin according to what God is. When do we know it? now by faith; but we cannot receive it, till we have judged darkness to be darkness. God says, "Where is my Son?" The world must plead guilty of His death; it saw no beauty in Christ, and now prefers pleasure, dress, money, science, anything to Him. I may have to learn a great deal, to go through much conflict, but if I belong to Christ, I am reconciled to God.

"The love of Christ constraineth us" - is the ground of all our walk. You may have been living to yourself it may have been very decently, none of what the world calls great sins, but there are plenty of decent enemies of God, and will reputation stand in the judgment? A Christian cannot live to himself in purpose, but are you living to yourself in practice? You may say you are occupied in innocent things, but nothing can be innocent away from God. Have you judged yourself as belonging to a world that has rejected Christ?

We have to leave it in detail - the flesh continually showing itself in unexpected ways. But God has condemned sin in the flesh. He forgives sins, but the state He has condemned, not forgiven. Have you known Him, made sin and yourself the righteousness of God in Him. Can you say, I am reconciled to God, brought back to Him? Can you say, I am glad to know all about my sin, "search me, O Lord, and try my heart?"

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