



## “The Restoration”

**Idea:** In Christ, God restores you to His Person and purpose.

**Intro:** *12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. – Philippians 2:12-13*

It is vital to fitness companies who want to sell you their supplements, equipment, and routines to show you before and after images. They want you to see that use of their product will transform your bodies and restore you to your former size and health. To do this they use pictures and videos to document the journey whether it is thirty days, six months, or one year. They show that regular use of the product combined with a healthy diet and exercise work together to produce the desired results. They also illustrate that you have to put the work in in order to achieve the desired results.

This is the apostle Paul’s exhortation to us in Philippians 2. He explains how sinners are rescued through the cross of Christ. Their sins have been forgiven, and they have been given new life in Jesus. Salvation has been worked into their lives. Now, in their new life, they are to work that new life out. They are to bring it to the surface in every facet of their lives.

Illust: Everyone has muscles. If we all were to stand up and flex our biceps this morning, we would see that they are all different shapes and sizes. But it would be clear that we all have biceps. This time of the year, a lot of people desire to have washboard abs. I have great news for each of you today. You do have washboard abs. They’re there. They just need to be built up in size and the fat on top needs to be reduced so they will show out.

This concept is what Paul is teaching the Philippian believers. New life in Jesus had been deposited into their lives. Now it was their responsibility to work in tandem with the Holy Spirit to bring the life of Christ to the surface of how they lived, worked, and played. They were to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. Paul was not telling them to work for their salvation. No, he told the Ephesians that no one could earn salvation; it is a gift of grace from God (Eph 2:8-9). On the contrary, it is a gift that the Lord works in our hearts, which we are to work out. We are to put it to work as we cut out our fleshly involvements. When we do so, the life of Christ in us will become more and more visible and show out in our lives. We call this sanctification. It is the restoration of our lives by God to what He originally purposed for us as His special creations.

**Inquiry:** This is part of the story of the Bible. There are four scenes in this story: creation, fall, rescue, and restoration. Over the last three Sundays we have examined the first three scenes. We have learned that in the beginning there was God. He created all there is, and His creation was good. Adam and Eve were the pinnacle of God's creation. He placed them in a beautiful garden in Eden. All was good as the first two humans enjoyed intimacy with God, with one another, and His creation. But then something terrible happened.

Adam and Eve chose to listen to the tempting words of the deceiver and disobeyed God's Word. They rebelled against the Lord and chose their own path. The consequences were devastating. Just as God had warned, the man and woman died. Their sin ushered shame, separation, and brokenness into their lives. The once sinless and innocent creations of God instantly became totally depraved. They fell without any hope in and of themselves. They were pinned down and cut off in and by their sin. They needed rescue. Thankfully, God the Creator was also God the Savior. He was a seeking, suffering, and saving Savior to them. He mounted a rescue operation to save and redeem. God made a promise to Adam and Eve. He kept that promise by putting His own Son to death on the cross as a ransom payment for sin. Today, we can experience life with God the Father because of the substitute of God the Son. Our shame, separation, and brokenness can be healed through faith in Jesus Christ. This deposit of life instantly resurrects our dead hearts to new life in Jesus. As believers and followers of Jesus, we get to experience the restoration of our lives to all that God wants for us. Today, we are looking at the restoration.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

There are two truths about the restoration that we must understand and embrace.

### **1. God makes all things new.**

Adam was the head of the old creation. Jesus Christ ("the last Adam" 1 Cor 15:45) is the Head of the new creation. The old creation was plunged into sin and condemnation because of the disobedience of Adam. The new creation means righteousness and salvation because of the obedience of Jesus (Rom 5:12-21). Because as Christians we are part of the new creation, everything has become new. What is new?

#### A. New life in Christ.

Adam's sin ushered in death, both physical and spiritual. That death has been passed down in every generation. We all sin and fall short of God's glory/standard of holiness (Rom 3:23). The payment for that failure is death (Rom 6:23). Thankfully, in Jesus we find life. Jesus awakens our dead spirits to everlasting life in Him.

*Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

– 1 John 5:12

In Jesus God makes all things new by resurrecting dead sinners to new life in Jesus Christ.

#### B. New home in heaven.

One of the consequences of sin is physical death. We will all experience death in this life. But thankfully Jesus' death has secured for us a new home in heaven, and He is preparing it for us (John 14:2-3). He told the thief on the cross "*Today, you will be with me in paradise*" (Luke 23:43). The Bible teaches that at the moment of death, each person's spirit goes to one of two places. For the lost sinner who rejected Christ, his or her spirit goes to a place of eternal punishment called hell. For the believer who embraced Christ by faith, his or her spirit goes to be with the Lord in heaven (Luke 16:19-31). We all will exist in one of two places, heaven or hell.

In Jesus we are given a new home in heaven. And there's coming a day when God will make a new heaven and a new earth. It will be completely free of sin and selfishness – a place of perfect friendship with God, others, and all creation. Everything will be restored to the way it was meant to be (Rev 21:3-4).

### C. New purpose for living.

While in our sin, we lived for ourselves. We lived for the pleasure of our flesh (Gal 5:16-21). Jesus gives us a new purpose. We live for Jesus as we pursue the fruit of the Spirit in our lives (Gal 5:22-24). He enables us to live out the purpose for our creation (Col 1:16). We now live not for ourselves but for Jesus who loved and gave Himself for us (Gal 2:20).

Appl: The restoration Jesus is working in my life means that I am not:

- Living for the weekend.
- Living for the bottle.
- Living for wealth.
- Living to please others.

He changes our “want to.” In Jesus we have a new and true purpose for living...the glory of God.

### D. New walk with God

Adam used to walk with God in the Garden. That was lost in the fall. In Christ we have access to all that Adam lost. His death tore the curtain that separated man and God. Today, we can experience the relationship with God that we were created to enjoy (Col 1:16).

In Jesus we get to spend eternity walking with God, but we don't have to wait till then. We get to walk with God today in this life. We have the privilege and responsibility of knowing and growing closer to the Lord as we read His Word, pray, serve Him, and fellowship with His church. Rather than hiding from God like Adam and Eve, we now are restored to the intimacy of walking with God in the Garden.

God makes all things new.

## 2. God commissions an all world mission.

What we believe and how we behave must always go together. Paul usually connected duty and doctrine, because what God has done for us must motivate us to do something for God. Phillips Brooks said, “Christianity knows no truth which is not the child of love and the parent of duty.”

One woman told her pastor, “You would have preached a marvelous sermon except for all those ‘therefores’ at the end!” Paul would have agreed with the pastor. The key idea in this passage revolves around reconciliation. He lays out the ministry for each Christ-follower (2 Cor 5:18-21).

In Adam's rebellion, man is the enemy of God and out of fellowship with Him. Through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, He has brought man and God back together again. God has been reconciled and has turned His face of love toward the lost world. The basic meaning of *reconcile* is “to change thoroughly.” It refers to a changed relationship between God and the lost world.

Today, God doesn't have to be reconciled to man because Christ accomplished that on the cross. It is

sinful man who must be reconciled to God. Religion is man's feeble effort to be reconciled to God, efforts that are bound to fail. The Person who reconciles us to God is Jesus Christ, and the place where He reconciles us is His cross.

Another key idea in the passage is *imputation*. This term comes from the world of banking. It simply means "to put to one's account." When you deposit your paycheck, the clerk puts the money to your account. When Jesus died on the cross, all of our sins were imputed to Him – put to His account. God treated him as though He had actually committed those sins.

The result is that all of our sins have been paid for in full. God no longer holds them against us. Instead, He has applied His righteousness to our account (2 Cor 5:21). His righteousness must be received though. Therefore, He commissions all believers to go to the lost of the world with the message of reconciliation.

In the Roman Empire, there were two kinds of provinces: senatorial provinces and imperial provinces. The senatorial provinces were made up of people who were peaceful and not at war with Rome. They had surrendered and submitted. But the imperial provinces were not peaceful; they were dangerous because they would rebel against Rome if they could. It was necessary for Rome to send ambassadors to the imperial provinces to make sure that rebellion did not break out.

Since Christians in this world are the ambassadors of Christ, this means that the world is in rebellion against God. This world is an "imperial province" as far as God is concerned. He has sent His ambassadors into the world to declare peace, not war. *"Be reconciled to God."*

If you know Jesus Christ and have been redeemed by Him, then you are His ambassador. You represent Him where you live, work, and play. As a church we are to represent Christ in our community. We are to seek out rebellious sinners in our state and nation. And we are to go to all nations everywhere with the wonderful good news of Jesus Christ (Matt 28:18-20).

Why is an all world mission part of the restoration? It is because God desires for all people to know Him and to find rescue in His death and resurrection. Jesus died for more people than just you. He now sends you to the others. He makes His appeal to lost sinners through you (2 Cor 5:20).

**Conclusion:** What does your before and after picture look like? If we were to take snap shots from your life before Christ and compared them to snap shots of your life now in Christ, how would they look? Is there demonstrative evidence that a restoration is taking place? Are you more like Jesus today? Are you working in conjunction with the activity of the Holy Spirit, and can you say that God is making all things new?

Are you actively involved in the gospel mission of pointing lost sinners to rescue in Jesus? A growing, faithful follower of Jesus will always be an intentional gospel witness. This week, as we prepare for Easter, whom do you need to talk to about Jesus? Who do you need to invite to church?

Perhaps, for some, the reason there is no growth and no witness is because there is no life. Today, the greatest need is not to try harder; the greatest need is to surrender to Jesus. You need to be saved. What would keep you from being reconciled to God?

Perhaps for others, you are a believer, but maybe you're out of fellowship with God. Again, what would keep you from being reconciled back to Him?

Our gracious God loves you. He has done everything necessary to rescue and restore you to all that He has purposed for your life. Come to Him today!