Questions on 2 Corinthians 5v9- 6v2

**Getting started**

*Two people from the world of ‘Showbiz’have been in the news this week- The singer Bono, fired by his passion to help make a difference in the world, and Jerry Lee Lewis with his qualities mired by destructive passions.*

1. What are the risks/potential of people driven by fierce passions?
2. Can you think of people known personally to you whose ‘drive’ you admire or are wary of?

*Today, Paul opens his heart to us so that we see what passions led him to open his mouth frequently, confidently and enthusiastically to speak about Jesus.*

*Pray for one another that his passion might inspire you to speak more of Jesus….*

**Into the text**

1. What reality about **the future** has gripped Paul’s heart? (see 5v10) What does it lead him to do (v11)? Has the fate of unbelievers before a Holy God made you want to tell them about how they can escape judgment and receive a not guilty verdict?
2. Do you long for Jesus to be able to look on the way you’ve lived for him, and pointed others to him, and be pleased with you? (If time permits, you could see that this had been a concern for Paul with the Corinthians in 1 Cor 4vv10-15).
3. It’s not just the future that motivates Paul, look at what also compels him, drives him forward in 2 Cor 5v14? What is the love of Christ primarily shown in, and what should this result in (v15?)
4. What does a person who turns to Jesus become (v17)? How can this motivate us to tell others about Jesus? Has it done so for you yet?
5. What is the role that Christ grants to his people? (v20). Have you ever thought of yourself in this way? How can this help us to overcome our natural shyness and reserve in telling others about Jesus?
6. What is the heart of our message? (v20 and v21)

*Reconciliation with God may not be what people feel is their greatest need, but it is- given v10- and so we have the privilege of bringing them good news.*

1. There’s an immediacy and urgency about Paul’s message (6vv1 and 2). What can we learn from him?

**Applying it to ourselves**

There’s always a risk we can say that *‘Ok Paul was driven to share the gospel, but he was an apostle, and so of limited relevance to us’*

1. Is that a fair reaction? Will all face the judgment of Christ? Did Christ die for all? Are all Christians included in the ‘we’ and ‘us’ of vv18-21?

**Prayer for ourselves**

* That we might see ourselves as being accountable to Christ, grateful to Christ, commissioned by Christ
* And that this might increasingly make us prepared to speak to others about Christ…

**Sermon notes:**

All age slot

Boys and girls, I’d like your help this morning as we play a game together

The game is that I am going to show you 5 pictures and I want you to tell me

How much is this worth?

 Big bar of chocolate (£2 for Dairy Milk Marvellous Creation)

 Box of fireworks (£140)

 Labrador puppy (£1200)

 New Rolls Royce electric car (£300000 for Spectre)

 (not a thing, but a person!) Jack Grealish bought by Man City from Aston Villa (£100 m)

How much are you worth to God?

Does he view you as being worth a bar of chocolate or a puppy or a premiership footballer

The surprise, and the good news is that God thinks you’re more valuable to him than a JG

How do we know that? Well because of what he was willing to give for you, to bring you to himself

….

‘God made Jesus who had no sin

to be sin for us,

So that in him, we might become

The righteousness of God’

(Then, illustration using T shirts as props to explain the swap that happened on the Cross  - keep

verse on the screen please)

Prayer- ‘thank you’ one!

Sermon

~ I wonder whether you like to watch interviews to find out what makes people ‘tick’ - what

motivates their lives and their goals….

Perhaps I’m just nosey (!) but I do, and I ‘hoover up’ books and articles and interviews about people

In the hands of a skilled interviewer, people tend to reveal things they would normally keep to

themselves.

The other day for example, the presenter Louis Theroux - interviewed the rapper - Stormzy, and it

was quite fascinating, even if that music really isn’t your thing!

Well today, we are going to delve the passions that drove an even more important person than

Stormy to behave as he did.

His name was Paul (Image of Paul), and he was responsible for the spread of the Christian faith

throughout the known world. He took every opportunity to tell people about the Jesus who had

lived, died, risen and then commissioned Paul as one of his apostles. ‘Turn to Jesus’ were words

constantly on Paul’s lips….

He’s a very significant figure, an inspiring figure in the history of the Church, but he may well be

someone you find it hard to identify with! Since most of us are much more shy with our faith,

reluctant to share it with others, partly out of personal timidity, partly out of a fear of causing

offence….

Well today, Paul opens his heart to us in this very personal letter, explaining what drove him

constantly to be talking about Jesus, and he does so to encourage us to become more active in

sharing our faith with others…..

Today’s sermon then is a very important one for followers of Christ

But it’s also got something very important, indeed life-changing to say to those enquiring into the

faith- so listen carefully if that’s you.

So let’s come to our passage 2 Corinthians 5v9 (p1161) and see the 3 things that made Paul tick, and

led him to open his lips constantly and enthusiastically about Jesus….

The first thing was (1) The verdict of the Judge

If you look down at v10 , Paul describes a scene that he knows will happen in the future, a scene of

great solemnity. There will come a day, Paul knows, when Jesus takes his seat on the Judge’s bench

in Heaven bringing a true judgment on each human being who has ever lived [Image of the Heavenly

court room]

Paul knows that this judgment will not only fall on the people everyone knows are evil – the Hitlers,

the Putins, that lady in the news this week who killed and beheaded a friend for her money.

They will be there in Jesus’ courtroom, of course, but so will all of humanity

‘We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ’ says Paul, and that includes everyone, you

and me included and all the people we know…..

On that day, everything will be laid bare, and the Lord Jesus Christ will judge us justly.

~ Friends of mine who work as judges tell me how hard it is sometimes to deliver a just outcome.

They try their best, but often the evidence is hidden or incomplete and people can sometimes lie –

quite convincingly.

Well Jesus will have X ray eyes that can see everything, and he will pronounce a guilty verdict on all

who’ve rejected God in their lives, and a ‘not guilty’ verdict on all those who have received his

forgiveness and lived for him..

One of the things that barristers have to do is to prepare their clients for their big day, their

appearance in Court, and Paul – similarly – wants all people to be ready before Jesus’ throne. So, he

seeks to persuade them (v11) of the folly of living for themselves, and the wisdom of throwing

themselves now on the mercy of Jesus.

Paul also wants to be ready for his own appearance before Jesus on that awesome day. He’s not

anxious that he will receive a guilty verdict, for – as we saw last week – he is looking forward to the

eternal home in Heaven Jesus promises to all who turn and trust in him.

No, I think his fear is a slightly different one. Might Jesus look at him with sadness and say ‘Oh Paul,

why didn’t you spend your life telling others about their need to turn from sin, and turn to me? What

did you do with all those opportunities I gave to you?’

Paul says :-

‘Since then we know what it is to fear the Lord,

We try to persuade others’

I wonder sometimes whether I – whether God’s people – need to develop a greater fear of the Lord.

Fear doesn’t mean cringing terror, but a holy reverence for him who will certainly one day judge all

of humanity.

Many people today live in ignorance of that day, and they will only find out about it if we are

prepared to talk to them about Jesus.

 How we should long for them to be safe on that day.

 How we should long for Jesus to say to us ‘Well done my good and faithful servant. Come

and enter your Master’s rest.

~ These longings fired Paul’s ministry, and should fire ours too……

The 2 nd conviction that opened Paul’s mouth to speak about Jesus was (2) The love of the Saviour

And the key verse is v14. Have a look at it with me…

‘For Christ’s love compels us,

Because we are convinced that one died for all,

and therefore all died…

Paul is not just driven by the fear of the Lord, but also by a conviction that he, indeed all of us are

loved by Jesus

The love of Jesus is shown by more than just affectionate words from his lips!

It was shown in its fullest when Jesus died for us.

He died so that our old life, one marked by indifference and disobedience to God, might end and a

new God-centred life might begin…..

‘Just think how much Jesus must love us, to be willing to die for us’ is Paul’s argument. A love like

that - a love for me and all people compels me, drives me forward to live differently. I can’t behold a

love like that of Jesus, who was prepared to sacrifice his own life - blood for me , and shrug my

shoulders and say ‘Whatever’ �� ��

~ There’s a true story about 2 soldiers that I think makes this point very well. [Image of 2 soldiers

from WW2]. These guys were travelling on a train in the 1950s, and one of them started having a fit.

The other soldier helped him to recover, and when the rest of the compartment congratulated him

for his quick thinking and skill and compassion. He said ‘Well that guy ran over a battlefield to rescue

me from the Germans when I’d been wounded. If he hadn’t done that, I’d be dead. So after the war,

when I found he had started having fits, I gave up my job, sold my house and came to live with him.

His love for me deserves no less than I spend the rest of my life caring for him.’

It&#39;s the same with the Apostle Paul and Jesus. Look at how he puts it in in v15

‘And Jesus died for all, that those who live

Should no longer live for themselves,

But for him who died for them

And was raised again’

Paul’s old way of life – in which he hated Jesus - is now dead and buried, and in place of that hatred

is now a love for Jesus, and a desire to tell others how they might receive new life from Jesus

themselves…

For the change that Jesus has brought to Paul, and offers to others is no small thing.

It’s not joining a new club, turning over a new leaf, trying harder to live a bit better….

No if we turn so decisively to Jesus that we can be said to be ‘in him’, then we are a new creation,

indeed [Image of Paul with words next to him, we have ‘Become part of God’s new creation’]

What matters to Paul is not people’s age or colour or social background or job. These things are not

the real deal. What matters most is whether people have heard about Jesus and turned to him, and

so become new creations, part of God’s great plan to recreate humanity, Paul is compelled – like a

sailing boat is compelled to go in the direction of the wind- to tell them about Jesus, the one who

loves them and gave himself for them.

It&#39;s the same for us – a sure sign that the gospel has captured our hearts – that we really now have

experienced the love of Jesus is that we feel compelled to share that love with others….

The 3 rd driver for Paul was (3) The commission of the King

This starts in v18 and continues until v21. Paul says

‘All this is from God

who reconciled us to himself through Christ

and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.’

Reconciliation is clearly a key word in this section, since it comes no fewer than 5 times in 4 verses.

It’s probably a familiar word to us since we know of the need for reconciliation between warring

spouses, in industrial relations and between countries that are at loggerheads.

But the primary sort of reconciliation that Paul is talking about here is between humanity and God.

The human race has turned its back on its creator, and this has caused a state of war between us and

God, and God can’t just forget our behaviour which has caused his heart to be full of grief

But – God has reconciled us to himself through Christ , and has committed to us the message of

reconciliation. We have become his ambassadors to a world that is still largely at war with God.

I’m sur that you have heard the word ‘Ambassador’. Here’s one of the top UK Ambassadors [Image

of Dame Karen Pierce] who is our Ambassador to the United States. Her job is to represent Britain’s

position to the States and to be the advocate for our Government. A big job!

Well , listen to how Paul describes his role, the role of all his followers:-

‘We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors,

As though God were making his appeal through us

We implore you on Christ’s behalf:

Be reconciled to God’

And what a message we have to share with the world, v21

‘God made Jesus who had no sin

to be sin for us,

So that in him, we might become

The righteousness of God’

I tried to bring our some of the drama of this message with the children earlier on, and I hoped that

helped a bit. But of course no drama can fully convey the enormity of what Jesus was willing to do

for us..

He - the perfect , spotless son of God - was willing to die on the Cross to take from us and deal once

for all with all the guilt our sin produces. He took it so that we might not have to bear it ourselves

and this we might be covered with Jesus’ perfection, now at peace with God, and looking forward to

an eternity with him…..

Isn’t it beautifully summed up in this famous hymn:

‘How good is the God we adore

Our faithful unchangeable friend

His love is as great as his power,

And knows neither measure nor end.’

Well our time has passed, let me just give 2 final words.

The first is An urgent word to Christians

Will you be prepared to Embrace our new strapline

 In the light of our accountability before God, the judge;

 Our gratitude to him as our loving Saviour;

 &amp; in obedience to his royal commission, let’s give ourselves to

‘Sharing God’s love’

 Sharing it with one another to encourage one another

 Sharing it with a needy world that can only respond to Christ if we tell them about him

Let’s grasp this responsibility this month as we deliver cards around the village, and as we open our

mouths to those we meet regularly

The very best thing we can do for others is to show them God’s love in the way we live, and sharing

his love with them..

But there’s also An urgent word to Enquirers

Perhaps you’ve been sitting here thinking that the main concern of the Apostle has been for

Christians, and very little to say to you

Well - see how Paul finishes

God wants to speak to you, and assure you that this is of enormous relevance to you

Listen to what he says to you:-

‘Be reconciled to God..

NOW is the day of salvation.’

Don’t bat this off to another day!

Today can be the day of salvation for you, the day you become part of God’s new creation.

Receive this good gift- for there’s nothing better than it.

[Prayers]