Midweek 5/5

I want to accomplish three things tonight:

1. I want to mention our special missions contribution.

2. I want to give a lesson from 2 Corinthians as a follow-up to our series on spiritual transformation.

3. I want to take the time to do a group visioning exercise.

I. Special Missions Contribution:

We do this every year.

The purpose is to support Christian evangelism, both locally and worldwide.

We give to three pieces:

1. We give to the Baltic/Nordic Mission Alliance.

The Nordics include Copenhagen, Oslo, Stockholm and Helsinki.

The Baltics include Vilnius, Lithuania, Riga, Latvia and Tallinn, Estonia.

This year the needs there are to take care of evangelizing in these areas, but also to help the Baltics with taking care of disciple refugees.

2. We give the the Southwest Mission Alliance (the smallest chunk). This supports mission work in the Southwest family of churches. This year, that will include the replanting in Flagstaff and the planting in Merced.

About Merced: We are receiving funds from Fresno, from Sacramento, from the Southwest, from Reno and the North region of San Diego.

But we are NOT asking either Bakersfield or AV. I have specifically asked AV to please NOT give to Merced so that Bakersfield can be taken care of.

But, we give a fairly small amount to SMA.

3. We give for local evangelism. The past 3 years, this went to support Josh and Joelle. It has been money well spent.

But… This year the plan is not clear. Is this going to help bring a couple here or is it going to support interns.

For me, I want to know the plan for my money, but we REALLY need your help. Jan and I will be giving to Bakersfield, even though we will not be members here by that time. PLEASE plan to give 12x if you possibly can.

II. Lesson from 2 Corinthians

2 Cor 4:1-6 We have this ministry of showing the glory of Christ to the world.

Therefore we do not lose heart.

Have you ever “lost heart”? Have you ever felt it was too hard? Have you ever contemplated packing it in, or seriously backing off on your Christian commitment?

Was Paul ever tempted to lose heart? Yes!

So, why did he not lose heart? Because he had this ministry of the gospel from God.

I am making a difference. Eternity is at stake. This is important!

So, what should we do?

 v. 2 Set forth the truth plainly.

 v. 2 Commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience.

Have you commended your life to people’s conscience. I have chosen the gospel. I have given my life to Christ. It is working.

v. 3 Will everyone listen? No. Their minds are still veiled.

What is the content of this truth that we set forth plainly?
1. Jesus as Lord.

2. Ourselves as servants for Jesus’ sake. How do we preach that?

2 Cor 4:7-12

We are mere “jars of clay.” We are mortal humans

v. 10 we “carry around in our body the death of Jesus.”

Our lives—changed by Christ—demonstrates what it means to die with Christ. Paul: “I die daily.”

Our lifestyle of sacrifice for Christ demonstrates the life-giving nature of being a Christian.

v. 12 “Death is at work in us.” People can see this, and so life can be at work in them.

2 Cor 4:13-18

The ultimate result of the transformation done by Christ is this:

 v. 13 We speak.

Have you been speaking? To whom? About what?

If the veil has been lifted, then you ought to speak about Christ.

v. 16 So, we do not lose heart.

We do not lose our motivation and zeal. Have you lost heart?

We do not lose heart because

1. v. 14 We know that God will raise us with Jesus.

 2. v. 15 God’s grace is reaching more and more people.

v. 16 Young people may not recognize this, but trust me, we are wasting away on the outside.

v. 17 Has everyday life gotten you down at all lately? Health concerns, financial issues, things needing to be done…

v. 16 Are you being renewed every day? Many believers are not! It goes back to 2 Cor 3:18 Are you being transformed by contemplating the Lord’s glory?

How do we avoid losing heart?

Fix our eyes on what is unseen.

We fix our eyes on the fact that God will raise us with Christ and present us to himself. (reference Hebrews 11:1 Faith is belief in things unseen)

2 Cor 5:1-10 And thus the title: The Power of Knowing

v. 10 know v. 5 guarantee v. 6 confident v. 7 live by faith. v. 7 confident

Paul says we KNOW we have an eternal house in heaven. This is one of those “unseen” things is 2 Cor 4:18.

How confident are you in your future in heaven? Why do you believe that?

v. 2, 4 Meanwhile we groan. In our physical nature, we groan. We long for something better.

v. 4 We don’t want to be “unclothed.” (being dead but not having a home and an new, immortal, heavenly body)

v. 4 We want to be clothed with our future immortal bodies.

v. 5 We can be confident because the Holy Spirit is a deposit guaranteeing that we will have a new, resurrected body.

v. 7 Can you confidently say that you live by faith, not by sight? Why?

v. 8 Can you confidently say that you are looking forward to your physical death?

v. 9 Because we are confident of our future—because we Know we have a building from God—we make it our goal to please him.

2 Cor 5:11-15

It is odd that Paul talks about knowing, guaranteeing, confidence, but then he talks about fear.

We know that we will be clothed, but we fear, not for ourselves, but for others. We do the fearing that they do not do.

So, what do we do about this?

v. We try to persuade people. We do not just throw it out there. We appeal to their consciences.

v. 13 Paul was so determined to be persuasive that some said he was “out of his mind.”

Have you been so persuasive to people that some think you are out of your mind.

v. 14 Why was Paul “out of his mind?”

Q: What does Christ’s love compel us to do in this context?

1. persuade people (v. 11)

2. speak (4:13)

Q: Are you convinced that Christ died for you? Then you should be compelled to speak and to persuade.

2 Cor 5:16-21

v. 16 What does it mean to “regard someone from a worldly point of view?”

v. 17 If we are in Christ, the new creation has come. What is the nature of this new creation?

v. 18 According to this passage, who is a minister?

Q: What does a “minister” do?

Def: To give aid or service to someone.

Q: (v. 18) What do we minister to people?

We offer reconciliation to those who are not yet reconciled.

v. 19 We offer the opportunity for people to no longer have their sins held against them.

Have you been doing this? To whom?

v. 19 Why did God commit the message of reconciliation to us?

v. 20 Q: What does an ambassador do?

If we are ambassadors for Christ, how will we act?

v. 21 This is one of the most significant scriptures in the Bible. It is deep theology.

What does it mean that “God made him who had no sin to be sin (or a sin offering) for us?

Q: How do you feel that Jesus has done this for you?

Let’s go back to 2 Cor 5:14-15 What will what Jesus did for you compel you to do?

III. Vision Exercise:

What is your vision for what the BCOC can do for God in this community in the next 12 months?
1. Making family.

2. Making disciples.

3. Impacting our community.