

Let's go, 2 Corinthians 5. While you're turning there, right out of the gate, I want to tell our mothers that we love you. Just to be real honest, I think by far the most difficult weekend of the year for a pastor and a preacher is Mother's Day. And the reason I'm saying that is because there is a lot of joy in motherhood, and there's also a lot of sorrow for those who have...like I can just tell you that here at the Village, we've had hundreds of women miscarry this year. My wife has twice. We have had women who want to be mothers who haven't been able to. We have had women who have lost their mother. And although it sounds like such a simple idea, I'm telling you there is a lot of joy and a lot of sorrow around this idea. In five years here, I've preached on Mother's Day once. It was last year, out of Genesis 3:20, where Eve was called the mother of all living things before she ever had a baby. And the message is that God wired you as women to be mothers, to mother the body. And that's the only time I've ever really taught on Mother's Day. I tend to just say your position and what God's called you unto is a high office, a difficult office, and you are valued here. And then I just want to tell you we love you. So we've never handed out a carnation, which never made sense to me. It's the cheapest of all flowers. "Thank you. Here's your carnation." That never really made sense to me. Or we've never really done things like that here at the Village, but I don't want you to feel unvalued here. We have taught at length on the role of women and things like that. Here's what I can tell you. We'll have lower attendance this weekend than any other weekend of the year outside of the Super Bowl. That will tell you how much hurt is in this idea. And so we always want to be compassionate there. We want to love and say thank you so much, mothers, for what you do, for what you bring to the family. We could not be and do what we were meant to be and do without you. And so thank you. Please feel honored in this place. And that's what I would tell you right out of the gate.

Let me tell you what I'm going to try to do tonight. For those of you who are believers in Christ, I want to challenge the framework by which you see all of your life. Not just church and not just religious things, but I want to challenge the framework by which you see everything. And then for those of you who aren't believers, I just want to try to explain to you what's happened to us that at times it makes us so goofy. So that's my goal. On the first Monday of every month, the staff, all 90 of us do something called "Restore." And that's where we shut down everything, we pray and fast on Monday for each other and for you. And that's that we do the first Monday of every month. This past Monday, we were in here and Bleecker said, "I don't know if you guys are watching the news, but this happened in Burma. They're saying over 100,000 people are dead. My heart's just aching for them. Let's pray." And even before we got to praying, another guy in the group goes, "Hey, I've got connections in Burma." We're like, "You have connections in Burma? Who are you, Jason Bourne? Who has connections in Burma? It's a closed country, which means you can't get a visa in. It is a country where the government has systematically slaughtered their own people for decades. Who do you know in Burma?" And he's like, "That's not important," which made it cooler. Because if he was just like, "Here's who I know," then alright, but since he was like, "I can't tell you," it was way cooler. So we prayed through it and we went and called his contact. And he goes, if you can send a small, light team immediately, I can get you in country. Now, if you haven't been watching the news, nobody's getting in country. No international aid is getting in. So we sent out an e-mail Monday night at 6:00 saying, "Hey, anybody want to go to Burma? For two weeks, it will cost \$4,000 and we're leaving Thursday." By 10:00PM, we had 73 men and women who had e-mailed back and said, "I'll go." There were 19 who e-mailed in and said, "I'll pay the way for anyone who can go." On Thursday, five of our men and women hopped a plane to Burma, lost their luggage, had some of their stuff stolen and are the only five that we know of that were given temporary visas and are in country, cleaning water so they have water to drink. Isn't that crazy? How cool is it that we have 73 people that will stand up and say, "I'll go to one of the most dangerous places on earth?" And then what kind of jobs do the people here have? Have you thought about that? What kind of job can you just call in and say, "I'm not coming in for two weeks. I'm going to Burma?" But how cool is that that right now as

you and I are in here, we've got people, we've got Villiage-ites on the other side of the world in one of the most horrible catastrophes the world has ever seen, in one of the most dangerous places on earth, cleaning water for some of the most poor, oppressed people on the planet? How cool is that?

And then there's this family here, the Bush family, and their family owns this steel building manufacturing company. Just a little over a year ago, they started going, "What if our work, what if our job that takes so much time, what if it was our ministry? What if we didn't have work right here and ministry over here? What if work was our ministry? What if we did it that way?" And so what they did was they took the profits of their company and they started what they called the "Hundred Times Program." And what they do is take their steel worker, and their engineers and all those people over to foreign countries where they build orphanages, where they redo roofs, where they do birthday parties for orphanages for kids who have never had a birthday party for them, where they build houses. And then listen to what the company does. Whether the employees are Christians or not, the company pays the workers their normal salary while they're gone, don't count vacation against them and foot all the bill for them to get in country and do the work. How cool is that? And then if you go and ask those steel workers...and they're not like guys like me. I read and journal. They could like rip out your spine and smack you with it twice before you died. I mean, they're just men, just steel working men. Ask them. Ask them if they enjoyed building. They'll say yeah. Ask them about the Hundred Times Project. Watch their eyes fill with tears. What causes a guy to take all his profits and give his workers two weeks in Peru, in Guatemala, in Africa helping the oppressed and the poor? Do you know that in Texas alone there are 40,000 children that have been removed from abusive homes and are awaiting placement? 40,000 little boys and little girls who are in such dark circumstances that the State came in and removed them waiting for a place to go. Do you know there are dozens of families here who through our FAM ministry here have opened up their homes and who house these foster kids? Some of them have adopted these kids. They've given them this place where they can be loved on, be encouraged. Do you know there's nearly 300 people at the Village who go into school districts that, for a variety of reasons, have become run down, have major issues in terms of graduation rates? They go in there and begin to love on and walk with students, encourage them, pour their lives into them, just give them their time.

So what happens in the human heart that you'd do such a thing? And I know some of you already are like, "Look, I ain't going to Burma. Say whatever you want to say. I don't care you good you are tonight; I'm not going to Burma." And that's alright. And some of you are like, "I don't have \$4,000. I have \$4.00. I need that to take my mom out. Don't take that from me. If you're doing an offering, I'm not in tonight." That's not what I want to do, but I want to explain to you what happens in our hearts that would make us do such things. Because it's not just a social justice initiative and it's not just helping the oppressed out. There is something that happened to us that drives some of this. And this is what I want you to see. Look at 2 Corinthians 5. There are a lot of coffee cup verses in this text, a lot of verses that Evangelicals have historically really rallied behind. The first one there is right in verse 17. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."* Is there anybody who grew up in church who doesn't know that? No, we know that one. Look at verse 18, *"All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself..."* I love that verse. Let's chat about it. I was listening to some sermon tapes this week. They weren't tapes. I don't think people make tapes anymore. They were mp3 files. I was listening to one from a very well known Evangelical leader, and he did a talk on missionally engaging the culture. I have no idea why they asked him to do the talk. He is not known for that. He is a hyper-fundamentalist without the F-U-N. He's more of a "build walls and don't get around sinners because you'll catch the sins" type of guy. That's honestly why I wanted to listen to it, because I was like, "I've got to hear this. What's he asking us to do?" So in it, during the Q&A time, somebody asked him, "When you're

sharing the gospel with somebody, when you're talking to them about Jesus, where do you begin? Where do you start?" Here was his answer, "Hell. I start with hell. If they get the fires of hell, then they'll feel the weight of it." And I'm just like, "Uh, no." Now don't take what I'm saying somewhere it shouldn't go. Hell stands as a monument to the seriousness of sin before a holy God. So don't hear me belittling that concept. But the Bible doesn't start with hell. Paul never started with hell. Jesus never started with hell. Rarely in Christian history does anybody start with hell. So why in the world is the way to missionally engage the culture right now to go, "Hey, I'm here to tell you about hell?" Does that seem a little off to anyone else? So here we are reconciled to God. There's a really beautiful piece in this word "reconciled." It means that at one time the soul was where it was supposed to be. Because if you're reconciling, you're bringing it back. So at one moment the soul was where it was supposed to be. And so I don't want to start with hell, I want to start with Genesis 1 and 2. That's where I want to start. Because there was a time where there was food, but there wasn't gluttony. There was wine, but there weren't any fundamentalists...I mean there wasn't any alcoholism. There was sex, but there was no lust. That sounds like a pretty good day, doesn't it? You've got all the beauty of the creative order and none of the sin that comes when you exalt it beyond its place. That's a great day. When the soul is set free to walk in what it was created to walk in, when what is eternal is placed at a premium and everything that is temporary serves to honor the eternal, what a beautiful moment. It doesn't last long, but what a beautiful moment.

And here's the thing. The soul, your soul and my soul, at the deepest level remembers. And the way you can see this is what I refer to as the treadmill. And what I mean by that is we run and we run and we run and we try to gather, we try to gather, we try to gather but we're never satisfied. So you run and run and run and you never go anywhere. Like when you graduate from college, you want to get this, get this, get this. So you get those things and it doesn't satisfy, so you want more of those things that didn't satisfy you to begin with. It's the treadmill. The soul remembers. No matter how wealthy you get, no matter how happy your marriage is, no matter how good your kids are, there's always going to be this kind of deep, dull ache because nothing temporary can satisfy the eternal that God sealed in you when He designed you. That's Ecclesiastes 3:11, that God has placed eternity into the hearts of man. So no matter what you get, what you gain, whatever is "heaven" to you, whenever you get to that heaven, you're going to be disappointed in that heaven. And so the soul remembers. This is why I always want to begin with Genesis 1 & 2, because everybody remembers at the deepest level. It's why you have a self-help book somewhere. You might have just got it in the Christian section, but it's a self-help book. And so we grab those things because something's off. "I go here, I've got this, I've done this, I do this, but something's still off in me." And what this just said is that Jesus reconciled us to Himself. He reconciled the order of things, He's put to death the temporary and once again exalted the eternal. And so life in Christ reconciles us back to Genesis 1. It puts us on the road back to Genesis 1, where now there's purpose, now there's fulfillment, now this thing that aches at us goes away and it's replaced by an aching to know more and more and more of Jesus. So we've been reconciled to God. But watch what happens at reconciliation. Here's the thing I would tell you about sin, because sin is anytime you take anything other than God and make it ultimate. People view sin in two ways. Some people view sin as things like racism, genocide. They view sin in these big, sweeping terms. And they're right, but they're also wrong. And then some of it, it's simply individual. And there you're right and you're wrong. Sin can be sweepingly huge; it's also very individual. And you need to understand that you've individually made a mockery of God, and then when individuals clump together, then you've got your bigger ones. And so Christ reconciles us to God in our sin by becoming sin Himself. Let's finish reading the text. "*All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself...*" Now, the rest of the text that we're going to read has to do with us being reconciled, how that occurred and then what happens in us once reconciliation has occurred. So look at this. "*All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that*

is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.” So we don’t begin in engaging culture by going, “You’re going to hell.” That’s not where it begins. The message of reconciliation is that thing that you long for, that place where you’re short circuiting, that longing deep inside of you, Christ has a way. You’ve been separated from what’s eternal and He’s come to reconcile that. That’s the beginning. And whom did He entrust this message to? Us. But we’ll talk more about that at length.

Let’s keep reading. *“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.”* Usually if you hear a sermon on that text, they’ll talk about how ambassadors are always well put together and they speak the language well...and so don’t be a bum. I think you can be a bum in certain sectors of society and be very effective. *“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”* He’s not saying that to the Corinthians, he’s saying that’s what they say. *“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”* That’s a profound verse to say that we are the righteousness of God, that all the righteousness and holiness of God has been given to us in the wrath absorbing death of Jesus Christ. Now I want to stop there, and I want to chat. No matter what your skill set is, your ministry is reconciliation. Like some of you have the gift of giving. The people who e-mailed in and said, “I’ve got \$4,000 I can give you.” That’s the ministry of reconciliation. Some of you will go, “No, that’s the gift of generosity.” Yeah, but the gift of generosity fits beneath the ministry of reconciliation, because everything is about reconciliation. Some can go, “Hey, I can go to Burma right now...Hey, I can sponsor a kid.” Okay, all those are great gifts, but they all sit under the ministry of reconciliation. If you have been reconciled to God, then God has made your life about imploring others that there’s a way. Now, I’ll give you our philosophy here at the Village just so you know what you’re getting into...if you ever plan on coming back. There are churches that try to program this, and they’re going, “Here’s how you do it.” Let me tell you why we have a problem with that. The more you professionalize ministries of reconciliation, the more you rob it of its power. Here’s why. Although there is a ministry of reconciliation that the church is called to, you as an individual have been called. The reason why you can’t program this is because it happens in your space, your neighborhood, your workplace, the areas you play in. So you can’t program it because we’re all in different places, aren’t we? We all have different time, don’t we? We all have a different level of money, don’t we? Like some of you are going to be ministers of reconciliation because you have a fat, fat, fat checkbook. Like you can’t put it in your pocket, it Costanza’s you and throws off your back. So that’s how you’re going to work in the ministry of reconciliation. Some of you are going to lead neighborhood Bible studies. But some of you don’t need to lead neighborhood Bible studies. Let’s just be honest. Some of you are going to be able to get up and go to Burma, some of you can’t. That’s what makes this thing so big and beautiful. We just need to play our part well. And the reason you can’t program it is because your neighborhood is not like my neighborhood, and how you work is different than how work. Like the Bushes, they can make their business their ministry of reconciliation. Others of you, you can’t do that, but you’ve got to work out what this looks like, because this is what you’ve been called to.

And I’ve said this since the day I got here. I’m 33. I’m a young man. I get that. But I’m not too young. I remember that you made popcorn by putting some oil in the bottom of a pan and throwing seeds in there. There wasn’t a “Jetsons” popcorn button. I remember when the only way for you to play video games was to go to an arcade. Yeah, you didn’t play that stuff at the house. Only your rich friends had like one game in their house. I remember that. I remember when the remote control still had a cable on it attached to the television. Time’s flown, hasn’t it? And here’s the thing that’s been crazy for me. There is more to do right now than there’s ever been in the history of the world. When I was a kid, sports had seasons. There wasn’t any outdoor soccer/indoor soccer. There wasn’t year

round sports for kids. They had a season. And it definitely wasn't this crazy thing that we've made it now where everybody thinks their kid is the next great one, putting him on creatine when he's six years old or you're screaming at your seven year old when he doesn't get under the pop-up. I mean, you just look like a moron. I'm just telling you. To sane people, you look like a fool. You just take it to this level that's just insane. Even in our area, you've got new movie theaters going up, you've got new shops going up, you've got a thousand different places you could spend your time, energy and money. But here's the thing that's just so disturbing to me. With all this stuff to do, why are we so bored? Can I tell you what's killing us? The majority of us have compartmentalized our faith. And what I mean by that is church and Jesus and goodness and God exist when I'm around church and church things, but it has not bled over into my marriage, it has not bled over into my wallet, it has not bled over into my job, it has not bled over into my life, it has not bled over into how I see my neighborhood, it has not bled over into how I spend my coin, it has not bled over into how I treat my children, it has not bled over into how I see athletics, it has not bled over into what I spend my time doing. Most of us are unmoved by our faith because we've compartmentalized it into this little section and said, "I'll be a good person," and we'll determine that by watching the news and go, "Oh, I haven't mass killed anybody...Hey, I haven't raped...I haven't done that..." So we'll compare against the darkness and go, "I'm not that bad of a person...I don't cuss too much...I don't watch inappropriate movies..." And so we'll live in that really weird, boring, unchanging, unadventurous place where we're neat Christian people going to a neat Christian church where none of the rest of our life is affected. And so that's it, that's Evangelicalism. And I know I'm going to get in trouble for saying that. I know how many people podcast us. I know I'm going to get a lot of hate mail this week. But that's Evangelicalism. "Jesus is great. He's great...(on Sunday)." He's not great because we love our money more than we love Him and His kingdom. And He's not great because we love our kids' chances of becoming professional athletes more than we love Him. So He's great, but He's great as long as He's in where we want Him to be in. And that's what makes us so powerless. Because few of us have been freed up to the slavery of trinkets and toys. I mean, we just play the same games as everybody else and just put Jesus' name on the back end of it. If you're a believer in here, be honest. Do you see your finances, do you see your wallet though the kingdom lens? Ask yourself, "How am I a minister of reconciliation? How do I use my money for reconciliation?" Because here's the other thing that's occurred with the technological upgrade of the last 30 years. You can go home tonight and Google "Compassion International," and for \$32 a month you can clothe, feed and educate someone in a third world country, with all integrity. Now I don't know about all the rest of charities, but I know we work very closely with Compassion. Do you play in the front yard knowing that you've been given the ministry of reconciliation so that you need to meet your neighbors and know your neighbors and be a presence in the neighborhood? Or do you hide out in the back, because who knows what's around you, what kind of dark things lurk in your neighborhood? And I'm not telling you to be shady. It's not like you're inviting neighbors over to dinner and when they open up the napkin it's like the plan of salvation. You're like, "Alright, this is you, this is the cross. You come across to this side. Flip it over please. Fold it together. Heaven." I'm not telling you to do that. By the way, if one of you wants to make that, I guarantee you people would eat that up. It will go crazy. I'm not telling you to be shady in how you engage.

Like this morning we did a deal on the emergent church and some of those things about: Are we there? Are with them? Are we not? And we just kind of explained historically what's occurred. And a person raised their hand and said, "How do we engage culture then?" Can I tell you how you engage culture? Quit seeing people as there to serve your existence, but rather see them as souls that God has created, loves and has invited in to the reconciliation. So this bleeds into everything we do. Do you know why you can't get coffee here? Because I'd much rather you just pick it up on your way in where you know your barista's name. Do you know why we don't have a gym here for you? Because

there's three of them within a 12 mile radius. Go there. Do you know why we don't have intramural sports here? Because I'd much rather you be right in the middle of a pagan world being a light of Christ. "Well Chandler, if you go to the gym and try to play on a basketball team, there's a lot of potty mouths out there." Yeah, I've been there. I know there are. I think you'll be alright. I think you won't catch that. "Well, I want to play ball in a godly environment." Okay, be an agent of reconciliation. Be an ambassador of Christ and see what happens. We've been reconciled so we become agents of reconciliation. And that's why I think so many of us are bored. There's thrill that comes by being used by God. Don't try to see this through the lenses of religion. Don't go, "Oh, I had better do this or God gets angry." No, you've been set free to do this. And once again, I always want to push freedom with you. Do you know how free it is to see your money not as yours, your house not as yours, your stuff not as yours, to be able to live in such a way that you're open handed like that, to live in such a way that you see everything that you've been given as given to you not just for your own joy but for the mission and the kingdom of God in terms of reconciliation? Which means people had \$4000 to give to the kingdom. Right now, how do you think those people feel? How free do you think they feel? How free do you think those people are that said, "Yeah, I'll risk my life. I'll go in?" There's a freedom to be able to live open handed. There's a freedom to be able to see the whole world, everything that we see, through the lenses of the kingdom of God and the ministry of reconciliation. You see your neighborhood differently, you see your family differently, you see your children differently. Do you know what I'm doing with my children right now? Imparting the glory of God to them. That's what I'm trying to do. That's my role. That's my goal. Whether or not she's top of her class, whether he runs a 4.5 40, whether the other kid can relate well to the other kids because they're all playing soccer and he's not going to play soccer until later on, all that crazy stuff that you get into your head, if you see through the lenses of reconciliation, then you're going to be balanced. I want my kid to play soccer, and I want him to play soccer well. By playing soccer, I get to engage with people who might not know the love and hope of Jesus and I might be able to reflect that. Yeah, I'll get in there. And then when it goes crazy, I'll be able to go, "Come on guys. That's a little crazy, isn't it? \$7,000 so my six year old can travel and play soccer? That's crazy. Game at my house, Thursday. Let's play at my house." And so you just start seeing better. Or you can just stay a slave to really silly things. So my challenge is really to Christians, Christians who still have these areas of their lives that's just theirs. "Jesus doesn't get to touch that, He doesn't get to touch that, He doesn't get this, He doesn't get this, He doesn't get that...He gets this." Which usually is behavioral. "I won't talk like this...I won't go here...I won't do this..." But in terms of lordship over our lives where we see everything through lenses of His ownership, that's just a rare cat. But it's the gospel. It's what the gospel does, it sets us free into the joy of obedience. It sets us free in loosening up of our hands. Can you imagine? I mean, can you imagine this? This is what made Acts 2:42-48 so crazy when they were of one accord, sharing all things, giving to those who are in need. It's what made it so crazy. They had the ministry of reconciliation and they were working it.

So I think I've been around enough to know most of you are going to stay bored. You'll do another fourteen Bible studies this year and join another three accountability groups, hoping to turn the corner. But it's finally in opening up those hands that freedom's found. Because that's when He's really God. Until then, whatever you've got your hands around is your god. And you're just trying to be good so you don't anger this one. That's religion, that's not the gospel. It's very different. So I'm dreaming for us. I'm yelling for us, trying to model for us. There's a slew of other people who are too. The Bush family is. 300 people mentoring are. As you walk out today there's going to be a table with information about Transform on it. It's our way of engaging some of the poorest schools in the D/FW area. You can sign up, it's family friendly. There's everything from painting to building. I mean, you name it and we'll be doing it in those schools. It's a place for you to sign up and go, "Hey, I'm in. This is what I'll do with my Saturday. This is what my family's going to do." Men, what better way to

lead your family, to lead your children than to go to that Transform table and go, “Here’s what we’re going to do...” I’m going to take my little seven year old out there and get a little paint and go to work. I’m going to take my family, lead my family in this. We’re going to work at the ministry of reconciliation. If God could open the hands here, it would be profound.

Let’s pray. “Father, we love You. Thank You for our time together. Thank You for the word. Thank You for the ministry of reconciliation. I pray that You would destroy the boredom that plagues most of us. I pray that You would help us engage. I thank You for the five men and women who are in Burma right now, and I thank You for the four or five people who funded it. I thank You that there will be very oppressed people drinking clean water tonight. We love You. It’s for Your beautiful name. Amen.”