

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL MARCH 6, 2016

The Rev. Alan Olson '14, Pastor, First United Presbyterian Church, Houston, Pa.

SCRIPTURE

2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. 17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. 20 So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

DEVOTIONAL

Have you ever described someone as “a good person?” What does that even mean? I suppose it means you approve of that other person, but it doesn’t give much information. Perhaps she’s kind. Or maybe he’s helpful. Those are useful adjectives—I can see acts of kindness. A better question might be, “Are you in Christ?” Certainly, as Christians, we believe that we are in Christ.

In this passage, the Apostle Paul tells us that if we are in Christ, then it is our duty to see other people, not in a human way, but as God sees us. The truth is, it’s much easier to see people in flawed, human ways: good or bad, pretty or ugly. The problem with seeing others in human ways is that we are called to the ministry of reconciliation.

Paul instructs us that we are called to be reconciled with one another, just as Christ has reconciled us to God. But our own perceptions get in the way. We hold on to our opinions, our anger, our pain and hurt, and in doing so, we continue to see things in human ways. In this season of self-examination, let us look at all of the human ways that we are holding on to—the things that we must cast off before we can be reconciled to one another.

PRAYER

Gracious God, pour your Holy Spirit upon us, so that we may see all your children as you see us. Help us to reconcile with one another. Equip us for this work; help us to let go of our anger and our hurt, our pride and our selfishness, our fear and our arrogance. Help us to know others as we are known by you and love others as we are loved by you. Make us instruments of your peace and reconciliation. Thanks be to God. Amen!

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