



Community: The Call

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When we are saved, we are saved to be in God' community. You've been studying community this weekend. God saves us so we can join in his community, the redeemed.

Part of being in community is worship. We have a feeling of what worship means. For some it is singing hymns, prayers. Other see screens with words, choruses and praise bands. As teens, you might prefer the worship you have at camp with a contemporary band, lights and lots of young people. Yet, real worship is not about music or singing alone. It is really about showing love to God for what he has done to save us. Part of showing love is obeying his will for our lives. (Romans 12:1-2)

1. We have received a new life in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:14-18 NIVO

¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. ¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

When we came to faith in Jesus as God's Savior, we received a new life. We were made into a new creation. Our old dead soul received life from God. We were transformed from dead to having life with God. God did this because He loved us. It was not because we did something to get saved. This was God's act of love and mercy to us.

When we were saved we were transferred from one condition to another. It is like being moved from a place of danger to a place that is safe.

Illustration: Selfie on the Ice.

The teens in the picture are relatively safe. The ice is frozen and they are in no harm. Yet, the picture could deceive us. The real danger is not the thickness of the ice that keeps them out of the water, but the fires that await them after death if they do not come to salvation.

Jesus came to save us from sin and hell. He came to bring us into his eternal community of the redeemed.

Illustration: Teens on the rock.

The redeemed is standing on the rock. Not an earthly rock, but Christ who is the rock. Jesus has given us eternal life as God's rescue from sin and its final destruction. We can be lured into complacency because our lives do not appear to be in any danger. Life is good. We are having a good time. Yet, Jesus has come to save us from the unseen danger that waits for every person outside God's community.

Now that we are a redeemed people, we are obligated to live for Christ. We owe our lives to Christ.

2. We are called to bring others into the eternal community.

We must not be satisfied that we have reached the safe place. God has called us to influence others so they too can leave the danger of being lost and so they can come into the community.

2 Corinthians 5:19-21 NIVO

¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

We who have been reconciled are called to be ambassadors of Christ to those who are not in Christ' community.

Reconciled is a big theological word. It has the idea of being made right before the judge. It is like having a case against us canceled because someone intervened for us. Yet, it is more. It is the judge declaring us to be not guilty. To be reconciled is to be **Not Guilty**.

In our illustration, those on the rock are not guilty. They are safe. Yet, those on the thin ice are still guilty. The payment has been made, but they have not received the verdict.

Those who are saved, who are made right with God are not saved just so they can freely go to heaven and have a good life. We are saved and called to try and influence those around us who are not saved, so they can receive this life.

Illus. Your group got caught.

What if you were part of a group of teens who tore up some property, and you got caught. Say there are twelve in your group. A fine is imposed plus

the cost to repair the property, or there will be jail time. However, someone comes along and offers to pay for the full repairs if the judge will dismiss the charges. The catch is that each individual must come before the judge and confess their wrong doing before they can receive the pardon. You hear about the offer and go to the judge, and you receive the good news that you are now declared not guilty. Do you just go your way and not tell your friends? They get a guilty verdict but you go free? No. You want your friends to receive the same good news. That is the call. That is what the Scripture is speaking about. We have an obligation to influence others so they can enter eternal life as well.

The one who paid the debt was Jesus.

²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Jesus paid the price to cancel our sins. He did so by dying on the cross. He was innocent of sin. Yet he was willing to die for us so we could become righteous before God. We owe Jesus a great debt. The Christian life is about Jesus. It is not about us.

It cannot be "life about me" in Christianity.

Illustration from my youth group in High School.

When I was a teen, I had an experience with Christ. I began to devote myself to studying God's Word and prayer. It was an early discipleship for me, trying to live focused on Christ as a teen. I purchased a New American Standard New Testament which helped by providing me with a Bible in my language. I often wrote notes and outlines from the Scriptures. However, I was not prepared for the power of a disappointment in life and its influence to lead me away from Christ. My girlfriend broke up with me. She was in the youth group. I drifted and made friends outside the youth group and stopped going to church. I began well. But I was still too focused on me instead of Christ and His call.

It was not until I was in college that I began to redirect my life back to living for Christ.

One day on campus as I was walking to class I was met by one of the girls who was from my high school youth group. She was a popular person in High School. In our youth group, she was like all of us. We would get really devoted during youth camp, say the spiritual phrases, do the worship for a while, then slowly return to our normal life of nominal spirituality.

Here at College she was running for office on student council. She approached me one day with sweetness and charm. She wanted me to vote for her. I told her I was on my way to class and I didn't have time to go vote. Then she turned in anger and said, "What have you ever done for me?"

For my pseudo-friend, she was still living in the "It's about me" mode.

There came a time when I began to be serious about my faith and walk with Christ. I was in a fraternity – not a religious fraternity. I made a new commitment of my life for the Lord the summer after my freshman year. I decided to write a letter to all of my fellow frats explaining my spiritual change and that I would be changing my behavior. I also shared the gospel to them. When I came back to campus I just tried to live a godly life. I did not go about finding fault or criticizing them for their party lifestyle. They needed to see genuine Christianity. At the end of my senior year, the fraternity had many who were involved in regular Bible study and many were saved.

We who are saved have a responsibility to influence others about us for faith.

3. When we influence others for Christ we become ambassadors for Christ.

When we seek to influence others toward faith in Christ, we become ambassadors for Christ.

²⁰ 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.

An ambassador is someone who represents another person of authority. The president appoints ambassadors to represent him to the nations around the world. An ambassador is a high position. However, the ambassador does not speak on his own behalf. He speaks on behalf of the president.

When we seek to bring people into reconciliation with God we are Christ's ambassadors. We represent Jesus to people who need to come to salvation.

When Paul wrote this letter there were people in the Church of Corinth who had risen in opposition to him. He was God's Apostle. Their opposition to the Apostle Paul placed them outside of God's will. Paul wrote as Christ's ambassador pleading with them to be reconciled, not to Paul, but to God.

Seek to be God's ambassador in your relationships with others. Seek to be an influence to lead them to reconciliation with God.

The gospel calls you to have faith in Jesus as your savior.

When you are saved, you enter the community of faith.

When you come to faith, God calls you to be an ambassador to lead people into his community.

