

GETTING TO YES!
May 18, 2014 –Baptism Sunday –2 Corinthians 1: 18-22
The Church of the Covenant

I think sometimes the church of the Lord Jesus Christ comes off as a big negative. Everything about it is NO. Too much negativity and too much judgment. Too many rules; not enough grace. So many of the people within the walls of a church are so negative. They can look at the Mona Lisa and see its one flaw; they see their “job” as finding fault with what others do; they spend their time circling the bulletin with red ink to find the one typo instead of searching for the One, True and Living God. It is always easier to criticize others than it is to bring that same critical light to oneself. Whatever spirit that is, and trust me, it is not the Holy Spirit, it is soul killing and off-putting; it is a HUGE turn off to people considering uniting with a congregation, as in, “Why would I want to be part of a group of people who are so small-minded, negative and off-putting?” Beloved, there is a whole generation of people out there who have sifted the heart of the church and have decided they want nothing to do with us. So our spiritual task is getting to YES. We need to get to the same place that God is in relation to us. The church needs to reflect the same YES we have received in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Our scripture for today from 2 Corinthians is instructive. The Apostle Paul begins by saying that his word preached to the Corinthians Church *“has not been Yes and No” (2 Corinthians 1: 18)* Paul has not been equivocal where Jesus Christ is concerned. He doesn’t argue in favor of one position today and another position tomorrow. His gospel is not lukewarm it burns with the fire of the Holy Spirit. As the Bible says elsewhere –his YES has been YES and his NO has been NO. As Paul notes: *“For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who we preached among you...was not Yes and No; but in him (in Jesus) it is always Yes.” (v. 19)*

What does it mean that in HIM, in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is always YES?

First, from before the beginning of the earth God ordained a Sovereign plan for you in your life. He set forth life for you from before the beginning. He spoke a Word at creation and the Word He spoke is YES. God’s YES is always stronger than our NO. He has claimed us and made us His own. His plan is to adopt us as sons and daughters. His plan is to reach out to us in love. His plan is to speak a profound YES into the very center of who we are. His plan is to love us and to reconcile us to Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ. IN HIM IT IS ALWAYS YES!

Second, before we ever did any good thing or understood anything, God reached out to us in love. God claimed us in the waters of baptism. A baby or a child is baptized before they can profess their faith. A child is baptized before they can serve the Lord. God reaches out to them and their families and speaks a profound YES right into the center of the heart of the family. After baptizing a child I walk up the aisle of the church and I look into your eyes and say –*“See what great love God has for us, that we should be called children of God, and so we are.”* The way the mother and the father look in love at their own baby is the way God looks at us in Jesus Christ. The YES that a parent has in their heart for their baby is the same YES that God has in His heart for us. IN HIM IT IS ALWAYS YES!

Third, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Long before we believed, long before we repented, long before we ever turned to God, long before we ever professed our faith, long before we ever worshipped and served the Living God, God sent the Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to suffer and die for us. We did no good thing. Our sin was heaped upon our Savior at Calvary. The WORD of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, entered into the world and suffered and died for His creation. The WORD that God

spoke was YES at Calvary. YES to your heart. YES to your soul. YES to the person you have been. But better yet YES to the person you can be. Calvary is God's profound YES for us. IN HIM IT IS ALWAYS YES!

Because it is in Christ that we find the profound YES that we seek in our life. As Paul writes: *"For all the promises of God find their YES in Him."* (2 Corinthians 1: 20) Every promise in the Bible finds its fulfillment and its YES in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Now everyone who is inherently negative, frustrated, angry, judgmental, condemning, exuding negativity, with a critical, perfectionistic spirit, everyone like that isn't fooling me one iota and isn't fooling God either. Somewhere deep in your soul you have been wounded by life. Someone who should have embraced you and given you YES, instead rejected you and judged you and instead spoke a profound NO into your heart. Maybe it was a parent. Maybe it was someone at church. Maybe it was someone you looked up to; maybe even someone you loved. Maybe you even got the false impression that God didn't like you or accept you. But however it happened, they managed to speak a NO into your life, instead of a YES. And this hurt you and wounded you and broke you in some profound way. The NO killed something in your heart that should have been YES. The NO you received then becomes the NO you give out to others and in abundance. Hurt people, hurt people. People who say NO with their lives are people who received NO from others in their own lives. You aren't fooling me and you aren't fooling God. You better not preach YES and NO with your life. You better preach YES. Because in Jesus Christ, IN HIM IT IS ALWAYS YES!

And His YES in our life has the power to break the NO in our life. A lifetime of NO fades away in the light of an eternal YES spoken into our heart by Jesus; something inherently transformational in the YES of God.

Now I want to be careful at this point to note that God is not saying YES to *everything* in our life. There are things that we do that are inherently harmful to ourselves and God wants us to avoid such things. There are pathways we are on that lead us away from God and not toward Him. There are prideful attitudes in our mind, like, "I want it the way I want it and how I want it and when I want it" that are always expressions of a soul turned away from God. To these things God does not say Yes. Because these things are not in His Son Jesus. And it is IN HIM, in Christ, that it is always YES. But think about it this way. There is the person you were created by God to be. I call it my best inner self. When you look in the mirror it is the person you want to be on your best day. It is the person, may I say, that you truly are. It is the person you can be in Christ Jesus. This is the person that God says a profound YES to. This is the person that God's YES calls forth from your life. This is the Sovereign plan of a Sovereign God for your life. This is the YES HE speaks to us today. Look in the mirror. See that person deep in your soul that you truly are. See the person you have always wanted to be. And in this moment hear God's YES spoken to your heart, spoken through the Word of God, His Son, Jesus Christ. It is YES to you. It is YES to the person you can be. It is YES to your past but all the more it is YES to your future. It is YES to an eternal future with HIM. That is the person Jesus Christ says YES to today. IN HIM IT IS ALWAYS YES!

I have always wondered about a particular story in the Bible. It is the story of the woman caught in adultery, where the angry crowd are about to stone her, you might say, to say to her the most profound NO imaginable, and Jesus Christ intervenes. Hurling stones is like saying NO to the soul of another. You know the story, Jesus says, "let him who is without sin cast the first stone", and the angry crowd of NO melts away. He concludes by saying to her: *"Then neither do I condemn you."* (John 8: 11) But this is what I have always wondered. Jesus is writing in the sand as the scene is unfolding before Him. He is writing something there with His finger. Someday I want to ask Jesus: "Lord, what were you writing in the sand?" What Word did you speak and write? This is utter speculation on my part now. But, you know, I think the MASTER wrote the word YES into the sand. YES to this women. YES to her soul. YES to

her future. YES to the person who she could become in HIM. YES, to God's Sovereign plan for her life. Yes, Yes and Yes. YES TO US! He wrote in the sand what He brought with His life and death and resurrection. Because IN HIM IT IS ALWAYS YES! And YES always cancels out NO...

Beloved, where does Jesus need to write YES in our heart today?????

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IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*