***2 Cor 5: 17-21 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. 21For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.***

I love fall of the year – watching as the leaves change and fall, the animals prepare for winter, gather nuts and build nests. Old things pass away. Once green and vibrant, now brown and wilting, dying, not with sorrow, but with the hope and promise of new life, when the ground begins to warm, and the temperatures begin to rise. Our God brings new from old, life from death, beauty from ashes. What an awesome God we love and serve.

In verse 17, we learn of God’s restoration. *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.***If** anyone is in Christ, living in Faith, saved, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, surrendered to Jesus, living in submission to Him, he is a new creation. He is no longer the same – he thinks differently, feels differently, talks differently, sees differently and, most importantly, loves differently. Old things have passed away, just as surely as a leaf drifting to the ground, leaving bare the branch waiting expectantly for new to appear. We wait expectantly as new thoughts, ways, and words appear in us. Jesus did not save us to leave us the same, but to change and reconcile us.

Verse 18 *Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.* When we are in Christ and become a new creation, all things in us are focused on God. Our view changes from downward at the world to upward toward heaven; from downward toward the temporary to upward toward the eternal; from downward toward the sinful to upward toward Christ. We are reconciled from enemy of God to friend through Jesus. Through this reconciliation, He has given us the ministry of reconciliation that brought us to be reconciled and in agreement with Him. The very ministry that changed us has now become our ministry. 1 Peter 4:10 *As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.* We received the gift of reconciliation by the Grace of God. We are to minister this gift that others might receive it and glorify God.

Verse 19 *that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*That is, meaning to sum this all up – God in Christ reconciling, bringing back into relationship, the world to Himself. Adam, through sin, broke the fellowship. Christ reconciled. Romans 5:17 speaks to this - *For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.* Adam broke it, Christ fixed it. I broke it, Christ fixed it. Not imputing sin, but freely forgiving those that believe, repent, and confess the name of Jesus. And God has entrusted to us the word of reconciliation, the most wonderful message ever, the Gospel of Jesus that leads from death, or the old, to the new, which is everlasting life.

Verse 20 *Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.* We are new creations, given the ministry of reconciliation, entrusted with the beautiful message of God’s merciful Grace to save. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ – Divinely appointed, individually anointed, highly privileged to go to the world with a message of eternal importance, Victory in Jesus. Everything we do we do on Christ’s behalf, as Christ’s representative. We implore, not as one berating, but pleading, encouraging the lost off the ledge, away from the cliff, off of the precipice, and into the loving arms of Jesus. An ambassador can be an official of another country representing the home government in that foreign land – we are not of this world, we are sojourners, travelers, passing through. We are ambassadors of Heaven representing Christ here on earth. We plead, but cannot force, be reconciled to God.

Verse 21 *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.* Christ knew no sin, yet was made a sin offering, not for His sin, but for ours. Romans 3:10 says *As it is written*: *There is none righteous, no, not one*. Romans 3:23 says *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*. God took His sinless Son and sacrificed Him that we might be made righteousness.

This week, let’s consider our divine commission: to represent Christ’s Kingdom as ambassadors, going to all nations, all peoples, all tongues, bringing the ministry of reconciliation, pleading with others to be reconciled to God. Is Christ’s gift to us sitting dust covered on the shelf somewhere in the back of the house or is our Light shining boldly so others might see and give all glory to God? We have a ministry, a mission, a job to do. How will we be found when we stand before Jesus?