

Christ Community Covenant Church
“Celebrating Forgiveness”
Pastor Curt Vogt – March 10, 2013

Introduction: “What are things we celebrate?”

- Birthdays, graduations, anniversaries, getting a driver’s license, winning, holidays, even quitting smoking.
- Important things, benchmarks, accomplishments, etc.

Defining “celebrate:”

- To mark, typically with a social gathering
- To observe or commemorate (a day or event) with ceremonies of respect, festivity or rejoicing
- To extol or praise
- To make known publicly
- To honor

Today we are celebrating forgiveness (Lent – lectionary comments)

(Prayer)

To begin, we must remind ourselves of the big (huge) problem

- Holy/Perfect God – can have nothing to do with sin and evil
- Fall – Sin – Separation
- God has a plan – Christ’s work on the cross
- WE ARE FORGIVEN in and through Christ

Defining forgiveness (briefly) – debt paid or cancelled, pardon, renounce anger or resentment against, give up all claim on account of an offense or debt

We *should* celebrate forgiveness for some significant reasons

Preparation or “set up” passage from the lectionary: Psalm 32

Vs. 1 – 2, the feeling/tone of forgiveness (it’s a very good thing)

Vs. 3 – 4, the consequences of sin not confessed (it’s a very bad thing)

Vs. 5 – 6, the need for confession and its result (forgiveness) implies repentance

Vs. 7 – 10, things we gain from confession and forgiveness – protection, learning, understanding, control, love of God (grasping/“getting” it)

Vs. 11, Celebrate!

Again, we *should* celebrate for some significant reasons

Comment: “Why” we should celebrate compared to “What” about it we should celebrate – largely the same idea

1) Reconciled Relationship

Joshua 5:9 – 12

Explanation – including: Israelites had disobeyed, broke relationship with God, wandered in the wilderness 40 years, this passage indicates the end of an era as God reconciles His people back to Himself

Luke 15:11 – 32

Parable of the Lost (Prodigal) Son

Explanation – including brief story; God anxiously welcomes us back

2 Corinthians 5:16 – 21

Explanation – including: we are reconciled to God in Christ, far reaching, not holding sin against us. Also, Paul indicates that we are tools of reconciliation, getting the message out.

God is very interested in reconciliation – it's His idea and plan

2) New Creation

2 Corinthians 5:17

Old = bad; new = good, newly made; and it's here now

Parable similarly “dead is alive”

3) Lost is Found

From parable

Losing something or being lost feels terrible; illustrations

4) Chains are gone – we've been set free

Sin has imprisoned us; forgiveness sets us free – we'll sing about it

Conclusion: God's forgiveness is absolutely worth celebrating – so we should!

The tone or feeling of celebrating forgiveness can vary but don't neglect festive rejoicing

Let's Celebrate!!