

Transformed Bible Study

The bible is filled with the concept of transformation. Transformation means a change or renewal from a life that conformed to the world to one that aligns with how the Lord desires us to live, based on what He has done for us through salvation. Paul's appeal to the church was not to receive the grace of God in vain. What did he mean when he appealed to them with those words?

2 Corinthians 5:17–21 (ESV)

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave 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 to us the message of reconciliation.

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore 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.

2 Corinthians 6:1–2 (ESV)

1 Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

2 For he says, "In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

All of this is from God!

All of the work and the blessings from the work of being made into a new creature is an act of God. Like the first Creation (of the universe), the new Creation is initiated by God. Also, like the first Creation, the new creation becomes a reality **through** the work of **Christ**. Christ's death on the cross makes possible human reconciliation to **God**.

Reconciliation -- to reestablish proper friendly interpersonal relations after these have been disrupted or broken. The word is a metaphor from the realm of personal relations in which enemies have become friends again.

Ministry of Reconciliation -- "the work of bringing other people back to God" or "the task of helping others to accept that friendship".

The Message of Reconciliation –

Ephesians 2:11–22 (ESV)

11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—

12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility

15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,

16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Ambassadors – to act as an authorized representative of one sovereign ruler to another. God makes His appeal through His representatives. Ambassador news is that God made Christ to be sin for us, and we become the righteousness of God.

When Paul says don't receive the grace in vain the sense is that they have already accepted or received God's grace, and now they should respond to what God has done. The words *in vain* mean “without result” or “without living the way that Christians should live.” Paul appeals to his readers *not to* let their response to the gospel be marred by entertaining criticisms of that gospel or of the one who brought it to them. To underline the gravity of his appeal Paul reminds them that this is now the day of God's favor and implies that they should not receive this favor of God in vain.