

You Are Complete in Christ *Paul's Letter to the Colossians*

In Jesus We Are God's Image Bearers *Colossians 3:5 – 4:6*

Introduction: Whose Image?

Which image are you more concerned about? Your image? Or God's image? Here's the second movie clip from *Evan Almighty*. [CLIP] I want you to notice how focused Evan Baxter is on his own image. 'I am successful, I'm powerful, I'm handsome, I'm happy.' This last week, one of my housemates rented the movie *Mean Girls* and I saw it for the first time. That was intense. How image conscious the characters were. Lindsay Lohan's character – whoa. Talk about someone who becomes the image she projects.

What does it mean to care about the image of God? Here is a example of one way my wife and I have experienced it. In May of 2001, our next door neighbors, a Jamaican family with a single mom and four kids, were going through a time of craziness. They had reported to the Boston Housing Authority that their landlady would not clean up the mice and roaches in the house, so she was threatening to evict them. The oldest son in the family (age 17) had just gone to juve lock-up for the second time. The oldest daughter (age 16) had just gotten pregnant. On top of that, Hyacinth, the single mom, just started a second job, a night job. That left the two younger kids, Stacy and CJ, who were 13 and 6, home alone most of the time. Because we're good friends with Hyacinth, we asked her, "Hey, how about if Stacy and CJ stay with us, and we'll make sure they do their homework and eat right." Hyacinth said, "Yes!" So we took them in: two Jamaican kids living with an Asian-American family, in a multiethnic Christian household. We had a lot to learn, like Jamaican Patoa. While we were reading *Curious George*, they taught me how to say, "Curias Jage was all-ways curias." During that summer, we took Stacy and her little brother everywhere we went, including about 3 Christian weddings. We thought she'd be bored, but she was fairly interested in what was going on, and asked some questions. We said that the wedding had symbolic elements of two becoming one. We said that marriage represents the sacred union of Jesus and those people who join themselves to him spiritually, two becoming one. One day, I was coming into the house when Stacy came bounding down the stairs to go outside. She stopped me and randomly asked, 'Mako, when I get married, will you walk me down the aisle?' I said, 'Uh, yeah.' I went inside and told my wife, 'Do you know what she said?!?' Do you know how hard it is for a girl who had been abused, whose own father left her, who was surrounded by hip hop culture's degradation of women, and who was herself able to manipulate boys from a young age, to have hope for a good marriage, God's good ideal? God's original, good ideal for humanity?

Relevance:

Which image are you more concerned about? Your image? Or God's image? If you are living for your own image, chances are you're just trying to manage your image so you can impress certain people. My question for you is this: Do you just want to impress people? As you look around the room and you see the suffering and evil that people have caused, when you see what we're capable of, when you really let it sink deep into your soul that humanity needs some serious help from God, *do you want to just impress people?* Whether it be a lot (like if you're a politician) or a few (like if you live for your family), is that enough? To derive your image and identity from *people?* Is that the purpose of your life?

Or is your life purpose going to be the Image Bearer of the one true God of this entire universe who extends His Image into human beings? That is the question for us. And keep in mind that this is not a God who is easily satisfied because He loves us to perfection. He loves the hell out of us. This is the God who is committed to restoring His love and justice and goodness to the world, who has given all of Himself in the person of Jesus.

This weekend, we've seen that Jesus works out in himself a new way of being human, and then shares that with us. Let me quickly review this chart. We actually become a new humanity in Jesus, sharing in the new humanity Jesus has made. We are going to read further ahead in Paul's letter to the Colossians to see how he encourages us. What are the implications for committing our lives to this Jesus?

Who We Used to Be: 3:5 – 9a

We are now called by Jesus into a new life. Look at v.5 – 9 on **SLIDE 3**. ‘Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry... in them you once walked, when you were living in them. But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices.’

Paul follows the traditional Jewish format of deeds and words. It’s a way to summarize all the activities we do. Verse 5 lists deeds. Verse 8 – 9 lists words. Once we were ‘living’ in ‘immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed.’ We were characterized by those things. But now we are to be ‘dead’ to them: that is, unresponsive. That means if you are sleeping with your boyfriend or girlfriend, you need to die to the temptation to continue that. Today. If you are primarily motivated by the desire to get rich, you need to die to greed. Today. If you’re just living for yourself, even if you approach service as a way to make yourself feel better about yourself, you need to stop. Right now.

The words we are to stop are: anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive speech, and lying. So if you have an anger problem, you need to keep giving that to the Lord, and maybe process with a counselor. Just imagine if, later in life, you’re in a social justice organization on campus and you’re causing tension in the organization because of your words. Or, in the future, if you’re claiming to be for Christ’s love in the world but you give your spouse a tongue lashing every night you come home. That’s kind of a problem. Or if you have a lying or an exaggeration problem, you need to keep giving that to the Lord. That’s a problem as well.

Not to mention the fact that those types of deeds and words are evil. Paul uses the word ‘evil’ here in v.5 and v.9. We have ‘evil desires’ (v.5) and ‘evil practices’ (v.9). To play around with relationships that God has ordained? To verbally mistreat someone who God loves? That is evil. If we find this hard to relate to, part of the reason is because we don’t really spend a lot of time resisting our own evil. It’s so easy to just look at pornography. For just \$10 a month, we fuel an industry that degrades people and leads to child sexexploitation. Or, it’s so easy to ignore the poor and shop ourselves silly. We just indulge ourselves without thinking about it. It’s only as we press in and resist the self-centeredness that we have that we find ourselves knowing evil more. That’s why the great saints of history, even though they did amazing things, write about knowing how evil they are. They resisted their own evil so much, they felt it. They knew how hard it was. We don’t know how hard it is. That’s why we don’t understand our own evil, even though it’s there.

Illus: A little while ago, we were treated to a tantalizing movie trailer of Spiderman 3. It definitely got my attention. Being a fan of comic book heroes, especially when Spiderman got the black suit, I was psyched. For our viewing pleasure, here is that trailer of Spiderman 3. [Play <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GVvaLH-c9Co&feature=fvvr>] I love that trailer because I find a lot of spiritual truth there. The more we fight the darkness, the more we find it in us. What I find helpful to remember is that we have to fight the darkness, nevertheless. It’s like the black, alien suit that Peter Parker had to rip off. In a sense, that represents Peter Parker’s true turning point, his conversion. There was an internal decision he made to rip out something from himself that matched the outward decision he made to rip off the suit. That black suit, powerful as it was, was fueled by his own character flaws; it was an outward symbol of the inward flaws he had. And what were those flaws? They were the everyday human flaws we all have. *Self-congratulation*: Peter was getting very attached to the appreciation he was getting by newspapers, the crowds, the girls. He thought he was all that. *Arrogance*: He was starting to become very attached to his own accomplishments, his own struggles, and his own heroism. He thought he knew it all. *Bitterness*: He was also sinking into his own desire for vengeance, which he had never totally ripped off, or more appropriately ripped out, of himself. There were dark things bubbling up and surfacing in him, things that he had kept hidden for a long time. But now, he had to rip them out, or the alien suit would destroy him. So he had to make a decision to be a fundamentally different person. Then, in order to be consistent with that new person, he had to rip off the black suit.

That gives us insight into what Jesus had to do to make a fundamentally new, fresh humanity. In some sense, we are all infected by the black suit, in a much deeper way than we can imagine. God came into a human body, the body of Jesus, in order to fight the black suit from within, and rip it off, or perhaps rip it out of himself. He cleaned it out. He wrestled it and killed it by going to his own death. But then he rose as a new, cleansed, God-drenched, God-soaked, God-cleansed, God-filled human being. And now he can share the Spirit of his new, God-cleansed, God-

filled humanity with us!! Now we must fight a new battle within. But we must answer the question that Spiderman 3 asks: “How long can anyone fight the darkness before he finds it in himself?” We must fight the darkness within and fight the darkness outside us, but only by the powerful love of Jesus!!

Maybe you’ve been a Christian for a while, so this will be a good reminder, a clarifying reminder, of how we must do battle with the darkness within ourselves, as well as outside ourselves, but we need to be the change we want for the world. Or, maybe you’re not a Christian, and you’re wondering what difference it makes to know Jesus. It makes a profound difference.

Who We Are Now: 3:9b – 10

That pivotal decision to rip out and rip off is the same way Paul thinks of the transformation that all human beings need. He uses that language of ‘put aside’ evil thoughts and impulses. He says in 3:8 to ‘put them all aside’ – all these evil things. Why? Because in 3:9, we put aside the old self. **SLIDE 4:** Now what is that ‘old self’? That term is also found in Romans 6:6 in the all-important passage on how God transforms people through Jesus. The term ‘old self’ is the old humanity, the old human identity, the one that is defined by ‘alienation from God’ (1:21) and collapses in on itself. It’s the old humanity that is filled with self-centered motivations and evil deeds.

Paul says in 3:10 that we have a ‘new self.’ And that is in contrast with the ‘old self.’ That is the new identity that is possible because it’s found in Jesus. It is the humanity that he has brought into the love of God. We ‘have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.’ We have put on the new self. There is a new humanness, a new humanity, that Jesus has worked out in himself. It’s a humanity that is completely aligned with the love of God. That is the new self that we have put on, that we are connected to if we have believed in Jesus. And that new self is being renewed according to the image of Jesus, who is the creator of this new humanity. We are sharers in the image of Jesus, which means his life and character.

Illus: I got an email from a friend of mine in San Diego back in October 2007 (October 30th, 2007) in which I was reminded what it means to bear the image of Jesus. He writes, ‘Hi Prayer People: The fires are mostly contained, and the local news have already moved on. Though for some, they are just starting to rebuild. But the fires, like Katrina, had a way of exposing the underlying brokenness of our city’s systems. In Katrina, the poor were the hardest hit. Here in San Diego, the migrant workers were still working in lung-blackening smoke while their employers evacuated. Many of our staff had to evacuate, and have now returned and are starting back to their routines. I’m most appreciative of the staff and students who pitched in to serve those who were displaced, and a few went out to serve the migrant workers as well. In a time of great tragedy, it’s great to see people express the **image of God** within them and love their neighbors.’ (boldface mine)

Paul speaks in Colossians to Christians, so it’s important that we understand what he knew of his audience. By coming to Jesus, the Colossians did do that. They had already let Jesus rip out their fundamental evil. Unlike Spiderman, they couldn’t do it themselves. God helps those who cannot help themselves. So they allowed Jesus to rip out the darkness in all of us. **SLIDE 5:** Look at the past tense back in v.7 and v.9: ‘In them you once walked, when you were living in them’ and ‘Since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices.’ So what happened? By committing themselves to Jesus, they weren’t suddenly perfect, and they still had to struggle with what remained. But at a fundamental level, **Jesus had changed their identity.** Now they had to allow him to change the rest of them. He wanted to help them rip off the black suit, the alien parasite that lives off of us.

Why? Because Paul says that evil is inconsistent with who we now are in Christ. Apathy towards these children in the world is inconsistent with who we now are in Christ. Self-centeredness in the face of the world’s suffering is inappropriate with who we now are in Christ. We have the Spirit of his new humanity in us, so the question is, ‘Is Jesus apathetic, or self-centered?’ **ABSOLUTELY NOT!** That is what it means to bear the image of Jesus. It’s not abstract at all. It’s very concrete, and it results in the life and love of Jesus being poured out through us. Jesus is who we were meant to be. And he makes it possible again to be who we were meant to be.

A Renewal: 3:11a

Perhaps that’s why Paul calls this ‘a renewal.’ **SLIDE 6:** Literally, in v.11, the new self is ‘being renewed.’ When we think of the word ‘renewal’ today, older people like me may think of going to a spa and getting rejuvenated, putting that glow back into your face and skin. You may think of getting your passport or driver’s license renewed,

or made good again. There is a state you're returning to. In Scripture, the concept of 'being renewed' or 'anakainoumenon' is very Jewish. 'Renewed' by itself is a rare word for Paul, but he uses it in very significant places (2 Cor.4:16; Rom.12:2; Eph.4:23). For example, 'He saved us...by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit' (Ti.3:5). That is, God is making us new again. He is making a new creation, a new humanity. Notice the words 'new self,' 'renewed,' 'image of the One,' and 'created.' That clustering of words are either from Genesis 1 and 2, or they describe a return to the original goodness of Genesis 1 and 2. He is not just forgiving us, although that is involved. He is actually returning us to who we were supposed to be. That is true 'renewal.'

That gives us a great insight into how God works in a broken world. Illus: **(QUESTION)** How many of you saw the movie *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*? In C.S. Lewis' *The Magician's Nephew*, there is the story of the beginning of Narnia. Right at the beginning, a boy named Digory allows the White Witch into Narnia. Aslan says, 'Adam's race brought evil into the world. Adam's race will help to heal it.' In the biblical story, Adam's race brought evil into the world, but God is so committed to the place of humanity to reign in creation that He arranged for Adam's race to help to heal it. All the pain and injustice of the world introduced by human beings is resolved by a human being, Jesus. And Jesus heals and empowers us to join in that.

SLIDE 7: Why did God do this thing with Jesus? Why doesn't He just control the story from outside, like in Option 3? Because that's not who He is within Himself! God doesn't stand outside our story and tinker with it from the outside. It's more like this. **SLIDE 8:** He creates us in relationship to Himself, but once He does that, He binds Himself to us, because the bond of love between God and humanity is like the bond of love between the Father and the Son. That's because we're made in the image of God, and precisely, in the image of THE Image. So even when we try to break that bond of love and commit all sorts of evil, God is still committed to us. From His perspective, the bond of love that He extends beyond Himself is like the bond of love that He has within Himself. So He sends Jesus to be the one true human being, to make more human beings into samples of himself. God preserves us, the relationships, the story, and everything; everything has integrity because He is love.

Illus: Somehow, we know that in all good stories, the happy ending doesn't just come out of nowhere. It replays the mess ups people had done before. Like with Anakin and Luke Skywalker. **(QUESTION)** How many of you are Star Wars fans? Do you notice that Luke repeats motifs from his father Anakin's life. In Anakin's duel with Count Dooku, Anakin loses his green lightsaber, but he also has Obi-Wan Kenobi's blue lightsaber. During the fight, a power cord is cut, which turns the lights off. So Anakin and Dooku fight in a blue and red lightsaber duel, with blue and red lights reflected in their faces. In that duel, young Anakin loses his right hand. Of course, Anakin later chooses the dark side and becomes Darth Vader. Luke Skywalker replays his father Anakin's story, but redeems it. He has a blue lightsaber, and with it fights Darth Vader, who now has a red lightsaber. So Luke and Darth Vader fight in a blue and red lightsaber duel, with blue and red lights reflected on their faces. They are in a dark room, and replay the same moves that Anakin and Dooku did. In that duel, young Luke Skywalker loses his right hand. So the stories parallel each other. But Luke later does not choose the dark side. He stays on the good side of the force and redeems his father, yes, but also his father's story. The victory echoed the defeats of the past, but reversed them.

Illus: The Red Sox have a lot of history like that. The Red Sox won the World Series in 1916 and 1918, and then traded Babe Ruth to the NY Yankees in 1920. They didn't win another championship for 86 years. It was called 'the curse of the Bambino', i.e. Babe Ruth, and it seemed true. **(QUESTION)** How many of you know that sad story? Whenever the Red Sox went to either the American League championship or the World Series, they lost through some weird fluke, each time. In 1975, the Sox lost to the Cincinnati Reds in game 7, in the 9th inning, after being ahead 3-0. In 1978, the Sox lost the American League playoff to the Mets. In game 6, Bill Buckner just had to catch the ball and throw it to home, but he let the ball go through his legs, and the Mets scored the winning run. They lost that game, then lost the next game and lost the World Series. In 2003, in the American League championship, the Sox were beating the Yankees in the 8th inning of game 7. They were up 5-2. But the Yankees won in the 9th 6-5. It did seem like the Red Sox were just cursed. No matter how well they did, something tragic always happened. But in 2004, as we all know, the Red Sox won the World Series. But they didn't just win, they won in such a way that they replayed many of the past events but redeemed them. They beat the Yankees, their arch-rivals, for the American League Championship after the Yankees had already won 3 games. And the amazing thing is that NO ONE has ever come back to win 4 straight games after losing the first 3. Curt Schilling pitched on a bleeding ankle because he had torn sutures because he had torn tendons. And in the World Series, the Red Sox beat the St. Louis Cardinals in 4 straight games. To add a surreal touch to the World Series victory, there was a total

lunar eclipse that colored the moon a deep red color. The moon was red when the Red Sox won the World Series at last. The victory echoed the defeats of the past, but reversed them.

Happy endings don't come out of nowhere – they repair the failures of the past. Adam's race brought evil into the world. Adam's race will help to heal it. Why does it work that way? – Because God is committed to working inside the story. Not from outside it, because He would then overrule humanity's place in the story. He is so committed to us, in love and justice, that this is the way He brings it about.

So why is Jesus the true Image of God? Look at the slides comparing Option 3 and Option 4. **SLIDE 9:** God acts from outside our story, or inside our story? God changes humanity from outside us, at a distance, or from among us, as one of us as Jesus, as one with us by his Spirit when we believe in Jesus? And what is God's core characteristic? Coercive power? Or love? He takes the bond of love within Himself, and extends it outside of Himself. But once He did that, God is committed 100%. Once He establishes that relationship, He never gives up on restoring it to what it originally was. So he reconciles people to Himself. And does God solve a relational problem coercively? Or does God solve it relationally? The right hand column just makes a lot more sense to me. Why is Jesus the true Image of God. Because Jesus reveals everything about God. Everything. The way God is inside Himself – Jesus reveals it. The way God is towards those outside Himself – Jesus reveals it. Jesus shows us all that. Jesus **IS** all that. He makes us image bearers again because he comes into us by his Spirit, drawing us up into the very life of God. And God loves us so much He transforms us in His love, to be reflections of His love, mercy, justice, goodness!!! **God literally loves the hell out of us!!** Adam's race brought evil into the world, so Adam's race will help to heal it.

First, You Are Part of a New Community: 3:11b

There are three major implications of this that I want to touch on. First, you are part of a new community. Second, you have a new suit. Third, you have a new mission. If you're wondering how to express that image, Paul answers that in v.11. One place is in and with Jesus' new community, which deals with the issues of race, ethnicity, or class. Look at v.11. Paul says, 'A renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised.' That refers to the greatest racial divide in history, the divide between Jew and Gentile. Then come various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, as Paul gives two more examples, 'barbarian, Scythian.' Barbarian had the connotation of being uneducated. Whereas Greeks thought of themselves as educated, they thought of barbarians as not. Scythian had the connotation of being violent. And Christ bridges class background as well, as Paul mentions, 'slave and freeman.' Jesus represents not just Jewish humanity, but ALL humanity, humanity going back not to Abraham but to Adam.

Being immigrants and children of immigrants, we tend to look at other people through eyes of distrust and competition. Probably most of our parents taught us to compete with white people, and avoid black people, and to look down on poor people. **(QUESTION)** How many of your parents said to you: 'Do better than them, but 'marry Korean,' or 'marry Chinese.' The struggles of immigration and the pursuit of the American dream make us look at other people through eyes of distrust and competition. And this doesn't just happen to us, it happens to every group that comes to the States. It makes us guarded and parochial and sometimes hostile.

But, Jesus is reconciling all people to God and therefore to each other. The differences are important but secondary, and the hostilities between people must fall. Paul says in the last phrase of v.11, 'but Christ is all, and in all'...believers, that is. I think what he means there is that Christ is the only thing that matters. Christians must look at other Christians and see Christ in them. We see Christ changing them and loving them, as they look at us and see Christ changing us and loving us. So we encourage that forming of Christ 'in' one another. What matters is 'Christ is all, and in all.'

This is why I am not talking about individual random acts of kindness. We are talking about Jesus creating a new community. He reconciles lots of people in himself and mobilizes them to address really large problems, sometimes problems that exist between each other. That's why Christians have been on the forefront of non-violent resistance, civil rights, abolition, women's rights, poverty relief, and widespread literacy. All of those issues involve powerful vs. powerless, rich vs. poor, educated vs. not. But Jesus is bringing about 'a renewal in which there is no distinction between' them. Jesus has been the greatest force for good in the world. This is not about just individual acts of kindness, although it includes that. We're talking about addressing huge human issues together with the power of Jesus. Do you want to be a part of that?

Illus: Here's an example. In the summer of 2006, my friend Gary VanderPol and I started a fast-replicating small group called Lazarus at the Gate. Our focus was to simplify our lives economically so we can give more generously to the crisis of global poverty. We shared our budgets with each other and talked about ways to save money. Not for ourselves, to eat at nicer restaurants or to buy crap nobody needs. But in order to give more, like Jesus commands, to the poor. In this case, we gave to smart Christian organizations like WorldVision, International Justice Mission, Honduras Hope, and others. We – 14 people – gave a total of \$40,000. From there, last summer, we teamed up with the Boston Faith and Justice Network and launched 3 more groups, which involved a lot of students and people in Cambridge Community Fellowship Church. Those groups gave \$15,000 more to the global poor. From there, three more groups started, one in Park Street Church, another in HighRock Church in Arlington, another in Hope Fellowship in Roslindale. They are finishing up soon. Now 7 more groups are starting in Boston churches: the Boston Vineyard, CBCGB, and others. People are starting to use the curriculum in New York, Denver, Los Angeles, and I want all of you to do it, especially when you're seniors or shortly out of school. Within 20 years, we hope to say that this helped mobilize hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of dollars to help the poorest of the poor. How? Through the new community that is joined to Jesus. Through the partnership between Christians serving in slum cities in Bangkok and Manila, and smart Christian lawyers and development experts, with Christian with American Christians with wealth.

At BC, you may know that there are two InterVarsity fellowships: the Asian fellowship and the Multi-Ethnic fellowship which is mostly white, with a few Asians and a couple Latinas. For the past two years, we've gone to New Orleans together for spring break. That's a great opportunity to engage the world together. Many of you know that I am not really excited about 'Christian group get togethers' where Christian groups do a worship service together and think we're accomplishing something but we're really not. But I am totally for Christians working together to accomplish something in the world.

Second, You Have a New Outfit: 3:12 – 15

Second, you have a new outfit we must **put on**. Look at v.12 – 14. 12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, **put on** a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. 14 Beyond all these things **put on** love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

Now this is the new outfit that helps us live in our new community. The distinctive thing about Christian character is that it is not about loving humanity in general. That is not a Christian idea. It's more a liberal idea that's especially popular among college students. Jesus loved people in particular, or particular people, so Christian character is about loving people in particular. In reality, we can say we love 'humanity in general,' and love nobody in particular. Jesus calls us to see people for who they really are – farts, warts, and all. We love particular people. Sometimes when we love 'humanity in general,' we don't really see the things that make human beings unlovable and repulsive. That's why 'forgiveness' is the capstone of the list in v.13 – 14. We forgive particular people. But what happens instead is that we 'love humanity in general' and then we put on 'good intentions, drivenness, and performance-orientedness.' But that's not in this list. What's in this list is the character of Jesus.

I've been around BC for about 6 years now, and I can see the changes in BC's admissions policy among the Asian students like you. You are much more ambitious and studious than...But you're not as good as loving people in particular.

Third, You Have a New Message: 4:2 – 6

Third, you have a new message. Paul refers to his mission, and then to the mission of every Christian. It is to speak of Jesus. Look at the words having to do with speech in 4:2 – 6. ^{4,2} Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; ³ praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for **the word**, so that we may **speak forth** the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; ⁴ that I may make it clear in the way I ought to **speak**. ⁵ Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. ⁶ Let your **speech** always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should **respond** to each person.

It's not just what you say about Jesus, although that is also important. It's how you say it. Let it be always with grace. And what is grace like? God is His grace is personal, attentive to each little detail of who we are. God in His

grace is compassionate, loving, sometimes firm, sometimes tender, but always interested in our best. Let our speech always be with grace. Even when other people are hostile, insensitive, apathetic, or whatever, let's speak graciously. Just as salt seasons a meal and makes it delicious, Paul says, so grace seasons a conversation about Jesus and makes tasty, satisfying, and memorable, so that people want more.

Illus: Azibe

That is what it's like to speak of God restoring people to what they were meant to be, renewing them through Jesus. What about you? What impact can you have at BC, and in the world? This is why we are training you to have spiritual conversations using the interactive displays. Allyson Hale is an IVCF staff with IV Multi-Ethnic. Last November, she and I were in Hillsides doing the survey called So Why Are You Here Anyway? Three people signed up at that point to meet again and talk about purpose, and how Jesus gives us purpose. Now Allyson has been meeting with them for

Remember, Jesus brings us not just into the After-life, but into the Mission-life. Because what it meant to be in the image of God in Genesis 1 was to spread out over the world and bring forth life. The same is true now. We who are remade into the image of God are to spread out over the world and bring forth life. Jesus is for us and for the world. It's a 'both – and.' In Jesus, we are God's image bearers. Adam's race brought evil into the world, so Adam's race will help to heal it.