

**RECONCILED TO GOD**

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

**Intro:** As we all know, the message of the Lord's Supper is a message of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Each time we observe this Supper, we hear the words,

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do  
show the Lord's death till he come (1 Cor. 11:26).

The broken bread and the cup portray that His body was broken in death and that His blood was shed. He really and truly died.

But it was our Lord, Who in instituting this Supper, said that His body was "given for you" (Luke 22:19), and that His blood, He told His disciples, was "shed for you" (Luke 22:20). So He did not die because He had become a human being. We know that He was not born in sin like we are, and so He would not have died. But because He was to become a Substitute for those who would be saved, we see that He died as a Sacrifice for sinners. He died that they might not die, that is, that they might not eternally have to suffer the punishment, the consequences, of their sins.

Isaiah spoke of this substitutionary aspect of our Lord's death when he wrote Isa. 53:6. And it is a truth that we find portrayed all through the OT, and explained in detail in the NT. It was necessary that someone die for us in order that we might be saved from the punishment of our sins. If that did not take place, we would have been hopelessly and eternally under the judgment of God.

But He did die, and He secured the forgiveness of His people, but there are many other things that He secured for us by His death that are explained for us in the NT. And I want to consider one of those with you tonight. It is *the doctrine of reconciliation*.

Primarily there are two passages which deal with this subject: my text for tonight, 2 Cor. 5:18-20, and Rom. 5:10, 11. There are a few other verses which speak of our reconciliation, one especially which I will mention, but 2 Cor. 5 and Rom. 5 are the main passages.

But first, let me define *reconciliation* so we will all know what we are talking about. It is a word of hope and of encouragement, and it was very important that Christ's death secure this for His people.

**I. RECONCILIATION DEFINED.**

When two people are out of fellowship with each other, they need to be reconciled. In 1 Cor. 7:11 Paul spoke about a woman being reconciled to her husband. Obviously they had a broken relationship, and they needed to be restored to each others favor. Someone has suggested that there is a reconciliation when enemies become friends.

Now in the case of our relationship to God, we are the enemies. And we by nature are not interested in getting things right with God. We are so blinded to our sins and the consequences of our sin, that we are content to live and die without God. Man's relationship with God was broken in the Garden of Eden, and that basically has been man's problem from that day to this.

So it is interesting to read in Scripture that one of the blessings which comes to us as a result of the death of Christ is that "we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. 5:10). And it was by the death of Christ, and by His death alone, that we who once were enemies of God have now been restored to God's favor, and, like Abraham, we have become *friends of God*.

But let me point out another truth that we need to know regarding this precious doctrine of reconciliation. It is this:

## **II. GOD INITIATED OUR RECONCILIATION.**

There is no record in all of Scripture that anyone ever requested such a reconciliation. Man was so blinded and depraved by his sin that he was not seeking God. God was not in all his thoughts. It is just like we see people today. Sin abounds in our society, but people do not realize that they are simply increasing the awful judgment they will suffer some day by the God-less lives that they are living.

And so Paul said in Rom. 5:8 that the love of God was displayed toward us as guilty sinners in that it was "while we were yet sinners" that "Christ died for us." In verse 10 of that same chapter he said that "when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son."

And the fact that God is the One Who took the necessary steps to meet the great need of our alienation from God, is brought out in 2 Cor. 5:18, 19, and 21. (Read.)

So it is very clear that if God had not taken the initiative by sending His own Son, we would still be in a state of enmity toward God, still in our

sins, and still under the eternal judgment of a holy God.

But now I want to point out in the third place:

### III. THE COMPLETENESS OF THIS RECONCILIATION.

One verse which tells us this is the last verse which I read to you: 2 Cor. 5:21. You will notice that Paul linked together in this verse reconciliation and justification. This is what it means to be made “the righteousness of God in” Christ.” It means that our Lord by His death has atoned for all of our sins, and we have a perfect standing before God, but this righteousness is ours, not by anything we have done, but solely because of what Christ has done for us in His death. He Who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He took our place on the Cross, that we might have His place before God. By His death we have been purged from our sins, the enmity in our hearts toward God has been removed, and we have been brought into the full favor of God Himself.

The completeness of our reconciliation with God is brought out also in Paul’s letter to the church at Colosse. Listen to what Paul wrote in Col. 1:21, 22:

21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled  
22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight:

It is not apparent in the English, but in the Greek Paul used this same word which is translated, “reconciled,” but he attached the preposition *ἀπό* in front of it, so the word then meant (and means), *fully* reconciled. Our Lord Jesus Christ by His death on the Cross to completely satisfied God concerning our sins *that He left nothing else for us to do*. We are remembering a finished work tonight, a completed reconciliation, a new relationship to God which cannot be broken because it was obtained by Christ through His death, and God has pronounced us *reconciled!*

And so of the many things that we are to remember when we come to the Lord’s Table, we, to God’s glory alone, can remember that we are reconciled to God. Once we were at enmity with God; now we love Him, and we love His Son, and we love the blessed Holy Spirit. And it is a relationship which will never revert back to what it was. Our reconciliation is secured eternally by the terrible death our Lord died for us.

Now, as I have said, Christ by His death has left nothing for us to do to

contribute to our reconciliation with God, but we do have a very important responsibility to fulfill. What is it?

#### **IV. “WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST” (2 Cor. 5:19, 20).**

The consciences of man and woman often make them uneasy about their relationship with God, and so, when that happens, they begin to do all sorts of things to make themselves acceptable to God. In other words, they try to establish some kind of a relationship with God which will make God look upon them with favor. What I am saying is that they in their ignorance try to reconcile themselves to God.

Of course, anything they do is folly, and will only add to their judgment. But it is not only folly; it is an affront to God. We insult God by attempting to do what Christ has already done, and what only He can do.

So what is our responsibility? (Read 2 Cor. 5:19b, 20.)

This is our mission in the world, not to tell people to get themselves right with God, but to tell them what Christ has already done for any sinner’s reconciliation with God. *And a part of fulfilling that responsibility is what we are doing here at the Lord’s Table tonight. We are showing forth the Lord’s death, we are proclaiming a message, of the death of Christ by which guilty sinners can be reconciled to a holy God. And we go from this place to show by our lives and by the testimony of our lips not only that we are reconciled to God, but also how anyone who comes to God through Christ can have this same reconciliation with God.* By God’s grace let us make sure that we are faithful in this ministry of reconciliation.

Let me add a final word about reconciliation with God that Paul mentioned in his letter to the Ephesians. It has to do with:

#### **V. THE RECONCILIATION OF PEOPLE TO EACH OTHER WHO ARE RECONCILED TO GOD (Eph. 2:11-22).**

One of the great problems we see in the NT is the hatred that existed between Jews and Gentiles, and even between Jews and Samaritans. Expanding that down to the problems we face in the twentieth century, one of the tragic effects of sin is race hatred. Our politicians have tried to legislate it out of people’s lives, but it still continues. Do you know what Paul was saying here in this passage, applying it to the attitude of Jews toward Gentiles, and Gentiles toward Jews. But we can make any con-

trast that we want to -- blacks vs. whites and whites vs. blacks, rich vs. poor and poor vs. rich, etc. What is the answer to all of this? Paul says that it is not the legislation of the right laws, nor trying to set up some ideal society. The solution for all of the ruptured human relationships which plague our society and the world, is to be found when people individually are reconciled to God. The solution to the problems we have in man's relationship with man, is in man's reconciliation with God. Things can never be right between people until they are right with God. And by the way, the form of the verb which Paul used for "reconcile" in Eph. 2:16 is the same that we had in Col. 1. Here it also means *to reconcile fully*.

So you can see how important and how far-reaching is this great doctrine of reconciliation. It secures our relationship with God, and it transforms our relationships with people. You can't help but feel differently toward people when the Lord Jesus Christ is your Savior.

**Concl:** Let us come to the Lord's Table tonight thankful that through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ we have been reconciled to God. And let us remember the words of the Apostle John who said that we love Him only because He first loved us. Cf. 1 John 4:19.