

**"Jesus Christ's Work of Reconciliation"****Colossians 1:20-23**

**Introduction:** Tonight, as we return to our study of Colossians, we are going to look at a few verses that focus upon the subject Jesus Christ's work of reconciliation.

**I. What is Reconciliation?****Notice Colossians 1:20-21**

The word reconciliation literally means "to change" or "to exchange." It has the idea of changing enemies into friends or to exchange hostility for acceptance. It is a word that describes what happens between two people that have been at odds and are now brought back together in a friendly relationship. Let us notice a few other places where the word is used.

**1 Corinthians 7:11**

<sup>11</sup> *But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.*

**Matthew 5:24**

<sup>24</sup> *Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*

Both of these texts point to a restoration of a relationship between two people. In Colossians when Paul writes concerning reconciliation he is speaking of the relationship between man and God being restored. The word that Paul uses in Colossians is not the same word that is used in 1 Corinthians 7 and Matthew 5. The word used in those two passages means "to change" or the exchange" but the word in Colossians means "to change completely" or "to reconcile completely." The use of the word here was a rebuke toward the Gnostics. Let us remember that they taught Jesus was not enough. In order to be right with God, they believed you had to go through other steps and other means. The word Paul used here defeats their teaching because he lets his readers know that with Jesus Christ we are reconciled COMPLETELY with God. God was letting the Gnostics know that He alone is able to thoroughly reconcile all things to Himself through Jesus Christ. Another point to see here is that in these verses Paul informs his readers that reconciliation is a **ONE-SIDED** process.

**Notice Colossians 1:20-21**

Notice the words "by Him" and that "He hath reconciled." It is all one-sided. There is nothing that man can contribute to his reconciliation.

**2 Corinthians 5:18**

*<sup>18</sup> And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;*

**II. The Greatness of Reconciliation.**

There are two categories of reconciliation.

**Notice Colossians 1:20**

**1. All things of creation.**

When sin entered into the world so much was lost. The earth came under the curse which changed everything.

**Genesis 1:31**

*<sup>31</sup> And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*

On the 6<sup>th</sup> day after all was created God said that it was all good. Then in chapter 3 sin came in.

**Genesis 3:16-19**

*<sup>16</sup> Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.*

*<sup>17</sup> And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;*

*<sup>18</sup> Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;*

*<sup>19</sup> In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

After sin came the curse and now all of creation is no longer in harmony with the Creator, but it longs to be.

**Romans 8:19-22**

<sup>19</sup> *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*

<sup>20</sup> *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,*

<sup>21</sup> *Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

<sup>22</sup> *For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*

There is coming a day when all that was lost in Eden will be restored and this will take place in the Kingdom. This is exactly why there **MUST** be a Millennial Kingdom.

Notice the words from the hymn "Joy to the World."

*No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make His blessings flow  
far as the curse is found,*

So, one category of reconciliation is creation, but there is something that needs to be clarified in all of this.

**Notice Colossians 1:20 again.**

We must pay close attention to the words "all things." There are some who use these words to teach "universalism" which means that one day all the world will be saved. They will tell you that when it is all over no one will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. But to teach universalism is to tack something that is completely contradictory to the Bible. All things will be reconciled that can be reconciled. Satan will never be reconciled; the fallen angels will never be reconciled and unbelieving man will never be reconciled.

**2. Man.**

**Notice Colossians 1:20-21 again.**

The second category of reconciliation is "YOU" or man. Man is the crown of God's creation because we are created in the image of God. When sin came the image was greatly distorted. Now man in his depravity is the enemy of God.

**Notice Colossians 1:21 again.**

Because of Adam's sin we were born in sin and we were then set against God. In our minds we had thoughts that were anti-God. We can see a magnified picture of man in his sin in Genesis.

**Genesis 6:5, 13**

<sup>5</sup> *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

<sup>13</sup> *And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.*

I want to go back to Colossians 1:21 again and look closely at something that Paul said.

**"alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works"**

The word "alienated" means "estranged" or "separated" and it refers to a constant position. No matter what we did we never improved our condition. This alienated position causes our minds to think sinful thoughts and they were manifested through what we did. This is what James writes also.

**James 1:13-15**

<sup>13</sup> *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:*

<sup>14</sup> *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

<sup>15</sup> *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

Getting back to Colossians; if the truth is stated, we were God haters.

**Notice Colossians 1:22**

Herein lies the greatness of reconciliation. We who were God haters have been reconciled. We are still sinners living in sinful bodies but God no longer sees us in our sin but He sees us as blameless. We are presented as holy, unblameable, and unreprouvable in his sight.

**III. The Way of Reconciliation.**

**Notice Colossians 1:20, 22**

Reconciliation is only possible because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ when He died upon the cross. The world believes they can be reconciled by others means. They trust in

good works, sincerity, religion, measuring themselves against others and the list goes on and on. But the Bible is very clear that Jesus gave His life's blood in exchange for our reconciliation.

**Isaiah 53:4-6**

<sup>4</sup> *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*

<sup>5</sup> *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

<sup>6</sup> *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

**Hebrews 9:22**

<sup>22</sup> *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*

In order for man to be reconciled to God all sin had to be paid for and removed from our account. God is holy and righteous and cannot permit sin into His presence. Therefore, Jesus paid our sin debt with His blood and removed our sins from our account so that we could be reconciled to God.

**Psalms 103:12**

<sup>12</sup> *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*

**Micah 7:19**

<sup>19</sup> *He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.*

**Hebrews 8:12**

<sup>12</sup> *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*

Not only are we reconciled by the work of Jesus Christ but we are also secured by His present life.

**Romans 5:10**

<sup>10</sup> For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

#### IV. The Barometer for Reconciliation.

##### Notice Colossians 1:23

He will present us holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight if we continue in the faith. Now let me explain what Paul is saying here. He is not preaching lordship salvation as many do. He is simply stating that evidence of your reconciliation is walking in the faith. He is stating that this is the barometer and he was sure they would continue. Now let me say that we are not saved by how we live after we trust in Jesus Christ. There are many who believe you must live a certain way or that is proof that you are not saved. The Truth is that when we are saved our lifestyle should reflect our relationship with Jesus Christ. But at the same time, we can be sure that many true believers have followed after the flesh and have fallen into some serious sin. David was one such believer. Peter was another such believer. John Mark left Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey. We all have the potential of drifting away. But if we are saved and we do there are consequences.

##### Hebrews 12:6-11

<sup>6</sup> For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

<sup>7</sup> If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

<sup>8</sup> But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

<sup>9</sup> Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

<sup>10</sup> For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

<sup>11</sup> Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

##### Conclusion:

Real faith is shown by real life changes.