***Peace and Reconciliation

Colossians 1:1-2

COL-019***

Please open your Bibles once more to the book of Colossians 1:1-2: "The Salutation," segment number 19.

The apostle Paul, in this passage, prays for God's marvelous and fathomable grace to be with the Colossian Christians. God's grace exercises a transforming power over the believer's life, from salvation to heaven itself. Christians who do not function on the basis of God's grace are compared to one who is physically incapacitated in Hebrews 12:12-13. God's grace provides peace with God by means of reconciliation with God's absolute righteousness, and sanctification by means of our union with the Lord Himself. Reconciliation produces peace with God. Sanctification produces holiness in life. If you do not understand the two doctrines of reconciliation and sanctification, you cannot make much progress in the Christian life, nor appreciate very deeply what grace has done for you. Believers who fall from God's grace basis of living find that their lives become spiritually frail, and they become incapacitated in the work of God.

Nothing is sadder than to see some poor Christian, especially one who knows better, and is experienced better, to fall from the grace way of life, and to constantly be substituting for the moments of serving God and of spiritual enlightenment, to the trivialities of this world. You and I must always be on top of the fact that it takes everything in us to maintain our temporal fellowship with God the Father by confession of known sins to Him. And we must, having done that, also have the capacity, because of grace, to accept the Father's forgiveness, and His restoration to temporal fellowship and we must forget the sin, and we have to move on in the will of God with good cheer. Believers who do not function on God's grace become embittered by the trials; the sufferings; and, the pressures of life in the devil's world, whining over their bad breaks.

Now, I know that we have to be careful of that. I have to sit on top of myself. I have come to an age now, and I've walked through the valleys and the high points, such that I have less and less patience with the whiners, and the deserters, and the objectors, and those who turn their nose up in the air, at the great and good things which flow from the Berean ministries. Therefore, it takes an enormous amount of grace functioning within me to leave these people in God's hand, and at the same time, to pity their disorientation. Falling from the freedom of grace-living produces self-induced misery, and personal bitterness toward God and man, and it defiles others spiritually whom we touch with our lives. That's one of the worst things about it.

**Peace**

I would direct your attention to the last part of verse 2. We have been exploring the grace of God, but Paul also prays for one other thing for them, and that's peace – peace from God our Father. The word "peace" looks like this in the Greek Bible. It's the Greek word "eirene" (i-ray'-nay), E I R E N E. "Eirene" (i-ray'-nay) means "tranquility." It means "rest." It means "harmony," It means "contentment." It means "cessation from a state of warfare." And it means "freedom from molestation." This word is used in the Bible in referring to order in the political state in Acts 10:36. It is also used in the Bible in reference to stability in the local church in 1 Corinthians 1:3. It is a condition of happiness in both the eternal and temporal fellowship with God. That is peace with God. It is a sense of repose in the turmoil that surrounds us in the devil's world. When God's grace is abused by the rejection of salvation, or by the lack of the filling of the Holy Spirit on the part of a Christian, then peace is disrupted in the soul. Indeed, you have to be crazy, as a human being, to do either one. And it is an insanity to reject the peace that Jesus gives through salvation. It has to be insanity on the part of a Christian to reject the peace that comes to the life of a believer who walks in godliness. Peace is something all the world seeks. All the religions of the world; all these human efforts; and, all these things that people do, in their stupidity, to try to make it with God, has one objective in mind – trying to get a sense of tranquility between themselves and God.

When God's grace is abused, terrible things happen. Grace, of course, is the basis for salvation, and it is the basis for inner peace which results from salvation. Peace is the product of being in temporal fellowship with God, and thus to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and controlled by Him. The gospel of peace is the message of salvation by means of God's grace. Ephesians 6:15, Acts 10:36, and Ephesians 2:17-18 speak about the gospel of peace.

Peace of course is a mental attitude. It is not affected, therefore, by external things. Isaiah 48:22 says, "There is no peace for the wicked." That isn't because they're surrounded by bad things. It is because, internally, they have no condition for peace. And for us, peace is not something external. Peace is always an internal factor.

**Peace with God**

The Bible actually uses this word "eirene" (i-ray'-nay) with two distinct meanings. And it is important that you understand both of them. First of all, it talks about peace with God. You'll find that, for example, in Romans 5:1, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Now, those who have not been justified by faith in Jesus Christ do not have peace in this life, and they certainly do not have peace when it's time to check out of this life. Peace with God refers to a salvation status. It comes to us only by God's grace. And it is the status of being justifying. You should be able to define justification. You should be able to identify justification as the status into which God places a believer by imputing to him the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ. To be justified means to be, in the eyes of God, as good as the Lord Jesus. You have His absolute righteousness. And from justification with God (possessing His absolute righteousness) comes peace with God. His absolute righteousness gives us peace. At our worst moments; at our most ridiculous sins; and, at our most degraded condition, there is the strange quality as far as facing God – that we are still at peace. Nothing can separate us from the love of God and the peace that that love extends to us.

Regarding this word, "peace with God," the Greek word "with" looks like this: "pros" (pros). This a preposition that means face-to-face. Anytime when you see "pros" in the Greek Bible, we know that it's talking about eyeball-to-eyeball. Here's a relationship with God. You're in His very presence. You're standing before the Almighty – the Holy One: the One who is absolute perfection. And you're not quaking in your boots.

Now, when you stand before the Lord Jesus Christ, who is probably the only person of the Trinity you will ever see in heaven (this representative of the Godhead), you will not be quaking in your boots. You'll not be standing there wondering what's going to happen to you. You'll be awed, but joy unspeakable will be flowing through every molecule of your body. And it'll be joy beyond our fondest dreams. And it'll be peace. Here we are, face-to-face with the Creator. Here we are with the One Whose justice demands death for sin, and yet He has made it possible for us to be there completely free. The lost sinner is saved by the grace of God. And He stands justified in the very presence of the holy God, face-to-face.

**Reconciliation**

God's wrath toward the believing sinner, thus, has been removed, and there is peace with God in the circle of eternal fellowship. We call that being reconciled, or adjusted, to God's standard of righteousness. That's what we're talking about. Peace is connected with reconciliation. Peace gives us a standing with God such that we are now adjusted to His standard.

The justified sinner then has a harmonious relationship with God. So he enjoys an inner tranquility. He is no longer in fear of God's wrath. Do we step out of line? You betcha. But when we do, our peace is disrupted, but it comes right back when we get back on track. We get back into those ruts (those wheel tracks that we read about in the previous session in Hebrews), and we get right back on track in the peace of God.

Every human heart longs for contentment in the soul. And yet people who do not know the Word of God seek that in many fruitless ways. Peace with God only comes one way – through faith in Jesus Christ as one's personal savior. If anybody thinks that salvation status can only be known after death, then he can never have peace with God. That is a terrible condition to be in. And this is the condition that most church people are in: "Am I going to heaven? Oh, I hope so. Am I going to be with God forever? I surely hope so." And that kind of talk immediately signals the fact that this person does not have peace in the heart at the point of death. And nothing is so agonizing. Nothing is so hair-raising as to be standing by someone who is not in the family of God, and who is now on a deathbed, and they're rapidly going downhill, and the fear and the terror is all over them, because they don't know where they're going to end up.

Now, that kind of a thing is never true of a believer who understands the principle of justification that gives you God's absolute righteousness, so that you qualify for heaven as much as Jesus Christ Himself, in His humanity does. Consequently, there is nothing but tranquility in the soul. There's nothing but peace in the heart. Peace with God comes from knowing that one's sins are forgiven, and that the absolute righteousness of Christ has been permanently imputed to us. We are reconciled the God standard. Nobody can make his peace with God. God has already done that through Christ. He has already made peace with us, with our God our Father.

The problem that human beings have is that that which is objectively true, they never make subjectively true. God is not at odds with anybody. The peace has been made through the universal atonement that has been provided by the death of Christ. The problem is that people do not seek that. People do not accept that.

**Peace of God**

Now, along with peace with God, there is another kind of peace that we just want to touch in passing, and that is expressed by the word "of." We read about the peace of God. You can see this in Philippians 4:7: "And the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." "The peace of God" connotes a way of life as a Christian. It connotes experiential peace of mind as progress in personal sanctification.

So, here we have, on the one hand, peace *with* God, providing us with reconciliation. On the other hand, we have the peace *of* God, providing us with sanctification. Peace in time is expressed as inner happiness. Isaiah 26:3-4 refers to that. Peace in time is maintained by the confession of our known sins (1 John 1:9). This peace is multiplied by our learning of the Word of God.

So, the nature of peace with God is expressed in the doctrine of reconciliation. Peace with God means to be reconciled to His standard of absolute righteousness. We are no longer the enemy of God. We're no longer at war with Him. Man, by nature, is the enemy of God, and he hates everything that God has to say. Unsaved man resents God's authority over him, and he seeks independence from God. Jesus Christ is rejected as the Savior of mankind by most of the human race. And the Bible tells us that none of them seek after Him on their own. Unless God the Holy Spirit thrusts you toward Christ, you will not go to Him. So, every person is, by nature, at war with God. He is God's enemy. And there is no peace between them. God's provision of peace comes, then, through this principle of reconciliation.

So, we look at the doctrine of reconciliation now: Romans 5:10-11. There is this wonderful provision of God called "reconciliation." Paul, in Romans 5:10, says, "If while we were enemies (which we all are by nature) with God, we were reconciled to God through His Son." The word "reconciled" looks like this: "katallasso" (kat-al-las'-so) K A T A L L A S S O. "Katallasso" means, basically, "to change" or "to exchange." This word comes from the part "allasso." "Allasso" means "to make something different," or "to swap something." And this first part, "alla," means "to make it something that it wasn't before." And it means to change, or to transform, into something else.

In Acts 6:14, this word is used in reference to Jesus, where they were accusing Him of changing the customs of the Jews, which had been given to them by Moses. So, it says that: "He is altering the Laws of Moses:" "He's making a change."

Galatians 4:20 speaks about having a change in the tone of your voice.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 talk about the rapture event – when the body will be changed from a corruptible mortal death body to an incorruptible body that has no sin nature.

Hebrews 1:12 talks about our changing from our garments of sin to the garments of righteousness.

So, this word basically means "a change of relationship." Reconciliation is "a change of relationship." And this preposition, "kata," intensifies it. It means that it's an intensive change.

In the classical Greek language, this word was used of changing money transactions. It was used of a mercenary soldier who had exchanged his life for money. It was used of bringing nations and individuals together who had been previously at odds with each other. It is a word which describes what you do to your clocks when we go on Daylight Saving Time. This is exactly what that means. When you go on or off Daylight Saving Time, you reconcile your clock to another standard. This is what's described when you get your monthly statement from the bank, and you look over your checks, and see how many of them you bounced, and you reconcile what your checkbook says you have, over what the bank says you have, and you get the two together, because the bank is the standard. Banks are never wrong. Banks have a direct line to that big bank in the sky. So, when they say, "That's what you have," that's what you have. And you better conform to that, and you make a reconciliation. That's what "katallasso" means – getting yourself back to the standard.

One illustrative example of the use of this word is in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20. Now if the person sitting next to you does not have a Bible, please lean over, and say you're sorry that they forgot their Bible, and perhaps they might like to look at yours. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20: "Now all these things are from God, Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." Please notice two things. All these things, which go back up to 2 Corinthians 5:17, where He's made a new species of humanity out of us: were no longer in Adam; and, we are now in Christ. All of this, the results of justification, comes to us from God Who has reconciled us to Himself. Notice who's reconciled. We are reconciled to God. The first thing I want you to remember is that Christ is never reconciled to us. The Lord does not need to be reconciled. We need to be changed to a standard. And He gave us, furthermore, the ministry of getting other people reconciled: the ministry of reconciliation. This is your business. When you go out into the world tomorrow, in the back of your mind should be the concern for reconciliation.

We gave you a new supply, by the offering box, of our evangelism brochure. I hope you're still remembering to be taking those, and handing them out to the people you do business with, and the people you buy groceries from. This is one easy way for you to make an effort to carry out your ministry of reconciliation; namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. Again, it isn't Christ who needs to be reconciled. We in the world need to be readjusted to the standard: "Not counting their tresses against them. And He has committed to us the word of reconciliation," stressing again our responsibility. "Therefore," 2 Corinthians 5:20 says, "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us, we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

Now just look through those verses, 18-20. You see the word "reconcile" several times. That is the great theme of those that have found peace in God: bringing others to that peace. Sinners are, by nature, at enmity with God. They're hostile to His authority. Sinners are incompatible with God's standard of absolute righteousness. They are out of whack. They're out of adjustment.

So, sinners are under the divine wrath of God, and therefore, they lack peace. The sinner needs a change to make him compatible with God's standard of absolute righteousness. And that's what reconciliation is all about. He needs to be reconciled to absolute righteousness. God does not need to be reconciled to the standard of absolute righteousness. What God does need is to be propitiated. God needs to have His justice satisfied that somebody has paid for sin. So, we need to be reconciled, but God needs to be propitiated. The sinner who is changed by reconciliation goes from enmity to friendship with God. He goes from relative righteousness (comparing himself to other people) to absolute righteousness, where he is compatible with God's standard. The believer is responsible, then, for appealing to unbelievers to be reconciled to God. He's asking people to make objective reconciliation subjective by faith in Christ, what God has already done to make it their own.

That, to me, is always one of the saddest facts of life – that anybody who goes out, as most people do, into eternity – into a separation from God into the lake of fire, they don't do it because the price hasn't been paid to cover them in order to escape that. They do that because they refused to be reconciled to God through faith in Christ. They refuse the gray spaces of salvation, and without being reconciled to God, they're doomed. 1 Corinthians 7:11 says, "But she (the wife) does leave, but if she does leave, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband; and that the husband should not send his wife away."

Here's a wife who decides that she doesn't want to stay with her husband. The guy has become a Christian. He doesn't have any fun anymore in life. And she wants to cut out, and divorce him, and go her own way. And the Bible says that if you come home, and you have a wife like this, and you discover that all the close closets have been emptied, and everything is gone, and she has flown the coup, then let her go. She's out of line. She's out of the will of God. And to her, the admonition is: just be sure you don't marry somebody else. If you want any change, you get yourself back there, and get reconciled to your husband. What does that that mean? That means get back there to return to compatibility with the standards of her husband that she does not like – his standards of righteousness. You go back, and you get adjusted to those standards. The picture here is that the wife represents the church as the bride of Christ, while her husband represents Christ as the bride groom. So, efforts and the appeals of the husband to marital reconciliation are to be responded to by the estranged wife.

Romans 5:10 declares that the sinners, as God's enemy, were given the ground of reconciliation to God's standard of righteousness by Jesus Christ. Romans 5:10: "For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son." That was the basis of our coming into compatibility with God. This does not mean that all sinners are automatically reconciled to God, but the ground has been provided. Those who are reconciled are those who are ready to accept it. The unbeliever has to accept Christ as personal Savior to make actual, in his case, the potential reconciliation provided by God, so that he may come to peace with God. Romans 5:10: "For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God." This indicates the standard to which we must be adjusted to *the* God, God the Father. He does not need to be reconciled to us, but we need to be reconciled to Him.

Now, unsaved people make a certain monumental mistake in adjusting themselves to one another, and thinking that all as well. Our society now is so corrupt that that's even worse than ever. But this is what people do. They adjust themselves to one another. This is what vast segments of the female population do. The women of the feminist movement feel that they adjust themselves to one another, and that all as well with them in society, and that all is well between them and God. That is a very great mistake. And unsaved people do it all the time: "If we are all in the same boat, then all is well." The standard is not man's lost condition under domination of the sin nature. But unbelievers believe that adjustment to the standards of our society (being a good citizen) will also adjust them to God.

This is why it's so tough for a biblical Christian to live in today's society. And I know that all of us are tempted to play the ball of our society. There is something that society does that you know is wrong, and you're tempted to do it because at some point it might give you an advantage. Don't even think about it. You are not to adjust your standard of life to the world. You adjust your standard of life to the character of God.

This is what happened with Adam and Eve. When Adam and Eve fell, what did they do? Up to then, they had been adjusted completely to the standard of God's character. What did they do? They took some fig leaves. And they made themselves some little shorty pants and clothing type of thing. They got a little vine, and strung some things around themselves. And then they adjusted themselves to one another. Up to then, the Bible says that they had gone around nude, and they were perfectly at ease. They had no shame of it. They were not embarrassed, because they were really covered by a glory light. They were in perfect righteousness with God.

So, now they're out of whack with God. They're not in tune with God. They need reconciliation with God. And what do they do? They reconcile themselves to one another with this clothing, and then they go and hide from God. And that's the way the natural man does. Instead of going to God to get adjusted to His standard, they get adjusted to the standards of people.

Of course, the value of that was very readily shown by the fact that those fig leaves dried up, and there was nothing much left. Therefore, their adjustment to their standard was meaningless.

"For while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God." And the means: "Through the death of His Son (due to payment of Christ for the sins of the world. Specifically it has *the* Son, the second Person of the Trinity. This emphasis is on the Son, as the agent of reconciliation also stresses the fact that the Father is the one to whom the sin needs to be reconciled. It is Jesus Christ bringing God the Father and the sin together. That's what reconciliation is all about. So, we have here the sinless, unique God-Man who is the agent of this reconciliation.

We may illustrate it this way. Originally, man was created in innocence. Man was sinless. He was perfect. He was in total compatibility with God. So, man and God are friends. They're hand-in-hand. Along comes sin into the Garden of Eden, and the result is, with the fall of sin, a terrible barrier rises between God and man. Man turns his back upon God. God turns His back upon man. And between them is this wall separating them. Man is now the enemy of God. God's wrath is now directed toward man. Man has the wall of sin. He has the block of spiritual death in that wall. He has human good, which keeps him from God. He has the divine justice of God, which man's death. He is in Adam, the place of death. So, here's the wall separating him. There is no way he can go through this wall, and he doesn't even want to. He has turned his back upon all that separates him from God, and God's wrath is against him.

**Objective Reconciliation**

Then, in time, God Himself solves the problem. He brings Christ into the world, and, in place of the wall, He places the cross, on which payment has been made for the sins of the world. And justification is now available. At this point in time, God's justice is satisfied; that is; God is propitiated, so God now turns to face man. Man, however, is still the enemy of God. What we have here is objective reconciliation.

**Saveable**

The sinner is now saveable. This is a term that you won't read very often. It was invented by Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, the founder of Dallas Seminary. He told us in class how he wanted to find a word to describe what had happened to man once the cross had come in, and God was propitiated, and that man was still the enemy of God. And Dr. Chafer lay in bed one night, and the thought hit him that what God has done was that He has made man saveable. And he said that he hit the ceiling in joy. I don't think he really did. That's just a hyperbole, unless he had a lot of bounce on his bed. But anyhow, he was thrilled by the fact that there's the word: man is "saveable."

**Subjective Reconciliation**

Does that mean that he is saved by what the cross has done? No, he has his got his back against the Lord, yet he is antagonistic. This is objective reconciliation. Now some good Berean Christian comes along, who is in sync with the fellowship of God (in temporal fellowship), and he hands him a brochure, and he follows up and talks to him about what it means to be saved. And this person now takes objective reconciliation and makes it subjective reconciliation, because he believes in Christ as Savior. And the result is that man now turns to face God, and they clasp hands across the cross of Jesus Christ. This is what reconciliation means.

God never had to be adjusted to absolute righteousness. He had only to be adjusted to satisfying His justice with propitiation. But man had to be adjusted to the standard of God's absolute righteousness. And that's what He has achieved through the cross. So, reconciliation makes you savable. And when you trust in Christ, you are actually saved. What a wonderful arrangement that God has made for us.

So, what is the thing that is incumbent upon you and me as Christians when we understand the doctrine of reconciliation, and all that that implies, in terms of what God has done for us? 2 Corinthians 5:20: "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God we're entreating through us. We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." And that is your mission in life.

You will sleep comfortably tonight on your bed, I hope. And you will wake up refreshed tomorrow morning, and you will face the world. And whatever you have on schedule in employment or all the things you have to do, at the top of the list, you must remember that you are the ambassador of the living God who wakes up with a mission of reconciliation. Your interest is to get as many people in the human race reconciled to the absolute righteousness of God. And that reconciliation is already in place. It's objectively there. And your job is to say, "Come over here. Let me show you how you can turn around, away from the wrath of God, to make Him your friend, so that you can reach over and be hand-in-hand with Him. And that is through the cross of Christ." And you must be very careful that that's what you say – that you believe what God has promised to do for you because Jesus Christ has paid for your sins. You must believe that God says, "My justice is satisfied." I'm no longer angry at anybody. My wrath is no longer being poured out, but it will be poured out if you insist on it for all eternity in the lake of fire. Now you are free to escape that wrath if you'll accept My Son as your Savior: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved."

Do not give people false invitations to the gospel. False invitations to the gospel are bad for many reasons, not the least of which is that it undermines the reconciliation of God that you are supposed to be extending to people. Do not talk about giving your heart to Jesus. Your heart is a garbage pile. Who would want it? Do not talk about inviting Jesus into your heart. What does that mean? You pull your coat back here, and say, "Jesus, come in." What does that mean?

Put yourself in the place of the unsaved person. Invite Jesus into your heart. Most people don't even know that "heart" means "mind." Invite Jesus into your head: "Oh, come Jesus into my head. Maybe if I massage Him in. Maybe I could write the word 'Jesus' out and put it on my forehead." The unsaved can't grasp that. And don't talk about walking down the aisle to pray for your salvation. That's one of the most brutal things to do – to tell people: "Do you want to be saved? Come on down the aisle buddy." And it is especially brutal if you have a bench up here that they can have as a mourner's bench, to kneel down in front, and to get real emotional.

You should be ashamed of yourself. Christian should be ashamed of themselves – to sit in a church ministry where people are told that they can be saved by coming forward in the meeting. That is diverting people from reconciliation with God. And the only reason it's being done is because people are building memberships. Preachers are building reputations. You can't be saved anywhere but where you are, wherever that is. And it is saying in your mind, "God is right. The Bible is true, and I accept Christ." Do not ask people to join a local church at the point of salvation. That creates a lot of confusion. Some want to bring people in, at the point of salvation, into the membership. How do you know they're saved? How do you know that they're not confused? How do you know that this is a genuine act of God upon their heart, or if they're emotionally high for some reason?

Just tell them to trust in Christ. Don't ask them to do something good. Don't ask them to avoid doing something bad. Do not talk about people's sins at the point of salvation. Do not talk about the good things they can do in life, because people who are not saved can only do human good. And human good is evil. People who are not saved do a lot of sins, and sins are evil. But that has nothing to do with getting saved. If you tell them that, they're going to start trying to clean up their lives. And now pride comes in.

Just think of yourself. Look around this crowd. Just think how many people you're superior to, form those who are sitting here. Just look up and down the row – all the pride you can take, and how much better you are than they are. And that's exactly what the unsaved person does. And you send them right into hell. And don't try to play on people's emotions, or their sorrows, or all these terrible things that you can bring into the picture in order to try to get them to be saved.

I once heard of a minister who had notes. After the service, somebody went up and looked at his notes. And in it, he had written emotional notations to himself: "Laugh here; smile; look sad; weep; cry;" and, "yell." That probably is a good idea. He had it all orchestrated so that he knew what to do at a certain point. What was he playing to? He was playing to the sin nature of man. He was not playing to the mind to get people reconciled to the absolute righteousness of God.

So, just let people come in all of their filth, and all of their evil, and God will do the cleaning up. That's all you need to do. You're His ambassador of reconciliation. That is what we have been called to do. And if you don't do it, who will?

Dear God, we thank You for the mission to which we've been called. We are greatly honored by You. We are sinners who are saved by Your grace.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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