***Reconciliation  
  
Colossians 1:1-2  
  
COL-020***

We are studying Colossians 1:1-2: "The Salutation," segment number 20.

Some years ago, a young woman was attending Berean church, and one time after the service, she asked me a question about something, and I said, "Well, I don't think I know the answer to that." And she responded, "Well, I'm surprised to hear you say that." And what she was implying was that the kind of preaching she hears gave her the impression that we could really know what's what. We could read the Word of God, and we knew what it meant. We could speak for God. We knew what He thought. And it is amazing how offensive that is to many Christians – how offensive that certainly is to the world. They do not like to think that we are capable of knowing something about eternal matters on the basis of the Word of God. The truth of the matter, however, is that we can.

**There is a God**

However, you must begin with the presupposition that there is a God. You must begin with the presupposition that that God is capable of revealing Himself in some way that's understandable to us. You must begin with the presupposition that that God is not just part of nature, but He is separate, and the Creator of it all. You must begin with the presupposition that the Bible is written in language that is meant to say what it says. It's meant to say what the words mean. You have to begin with the presupposition that God is everything He claims to be, and that He is fully capable of making Himself known in spiritual things very clearly to us.

So, we want to make it clear once more that, while you do not have to believe all the things you hear, you do have to listen to them, and you have to make your decision. And you have to act with great care as to how you treat the instruction from the Word of God, because that's what we are here for. And the reason people have many bad ideas and confused ideas about religious matters is because they don't know what the Bible teaches. They don't care what it teaches. They don't think anybody knows what it teaches. And they don't really think it makes much difference whether they know it or not.

So, as we speak again of the Word of God, I remind you not to pick up that spirit of our society and of our age. I've been listening to a series of programs on television called "The Mysteries of the Bible." And it has been one consistent effort after another to take the revelations of Scripture, and to cast doubts upon them, from Adam and Eve on down to Jezebel. They went through all the worst of the women of the Bible, and showed how this was male antagonism – that this was male chauvinism that was portraying these women in a very bad light.

What does that say? That says that the people who wrote the Bible were just writing on their own. They had it in for the ladies, and so they were making these women look bad. And they were presenting things that were simply their point of view, and people picked it up and believed it. So, when you got through listening to it, the Bible was no longer a mystery. It was just somebody's opinion, and if you didn't care for it, you could change it. And the result of that is that there can be no confidence, and certainly no peace.

**The Lord Jesus Christ**

It is the death of God's son, the Lord Jesus Christ, on the cross for the sin guilt of all mankind that has achieved three great things for all humanity who wish to participate in it. The death of Christ – of all the things it did, there are three great things, you should always remember, that have been done for you.

**Redemption**

The first is redemption. It is the death of the Lord Jesus that has released us as sinners from the slave market of sin. In Romans 3:24, we read, "Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." The reason we are justified (and the reason we have absolute righteousness forever attributed to our credit) is because we have been redeemed out of the slave market. We don't belong in the enslavement of Satan's market anymore. We're out of it. You don't have to be a dog as you live your life. You don't have to grow up and become a pig. You have been redeemed from the filth of the slave market of sin.

1 Corinthians 1:30: "But by His doing, you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." You have been redeemed. You were in the pawn shop. Satan had his hooks on you. The Lord Jesus Christ walked in with the pawn ticket, and he paid the price on the cross of redemption, and He not only took you out of the pawn shop of enslavement to Satan, but He turned you lose after He walked out of the place.

Galatians 3:13: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.’" One of the great things that redemption does is that you don't have to live under those legal regulations to try to please God anymore – those things that nobody could keep in his own capacity. The first great thing that comes to us from the grace of God through the death of Christ on the \ cross is redemption.

**Propitiation**

The second thing is propitiation. Propitiation is the satisfaction of the justice of God relative to the penalty of death for sin. When you sin, you must pay the price of death. Christ did that for us to satisfy God's demand. Romans 3:25, therefore says, "Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation (satisfaction), in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because, in the forbearance of God, He passed over the sins previously committed. God did not send people to hell who believed in the coming Savior Messiah throughout the Old Testament. He saved them on credit. He said, "The time will come when I'm going to be able to give you absolute righteousness. I can't do that now, but I'm holding you in reserve. You have trusted in the Messiah Savior to come, as people after Christ will look back to trust in Him. And the time came when the price was paid on the cross. Then God came and said, "Now I can pay the IOUs. Christ has paid, and I give you absolute righteousness, because My justice is satisfied.”

1 John 3:2 says, "Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet appeared as yet what we shall be, but we know when He appears, we shall be like Him because we shall see Him as He is."

1 John 2:2, "And He Himself is a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." What a marvelous thing for God to say, that Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Who is in hell? Those who choose to be? Have your sins been covered? Yeah, God's not mad at you anymore. There's no more wrath. Sin is no longer an issue. That's the great thing that the death of Christ achieved.

1 John 4:10 says, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and send His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

The apostle Paul, in the opening parts of the book of Romans, in Roman 3:12, says, "There is none that seek after God. No, not one." And God became the satisfaction for our sins when we weren't even interested in Him.

**Reconciliation**

So, we have redemption, propitiation, and the doctrine that we are currently considering – reconciliation. Reconciliation is the removal of the enmity between God and sinner by adjusting the sinner to God's standard of absolute righteousness. Romans 5:10-11: "For while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son. Much more now, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only this, but we also exalt in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."

Then in 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; namely that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them. And He has committed to us the word of reconciliation."

The apostle Paul, in the book of Colossians (in this salutation), prays that God's peace would be upon the Colossian Christians. What he is praying for them is that they would enjoy the results of reconciliation, because it is reconciliation that produces peace with God. It is the grace of God that, through Christ, has provided us with absolute righteousness, so that any lost sinner can be reconciled to God's standard of holiness. And if you are not reconciled to God's standard of holiness, you won't go to heaven. You will spend eternity in the lake of fire. But God had to bring you into alignment with Himself. God's provision of reconciliation to Himself is a perfect provision. Therefore, it ensures your personal salvation from hell. You can never become unreconciled.

That's why it's important for you to understand doctrines in depth. What good is it for you just to say, "Yes, I'm saved, and I'm going to heaven," and then, in the back of your mind, there's eating away the wonderment and doubt: "How can this be? I lived such a terrible life. Am I really going to be there, because inevitably you'll wonder whether you are good enough to make it? And I'm trying to help you to see that what the Word of God says is that God has provided a perfect alignment. He has realigned you to Himself.

Now, your relatives and your friends are too ignorant, spiritually, to understand this. And they're too impatient for you to say, "I'll have to have a little time. Let me explain the doctrine of reconciliation to you. If you understand this doctrine, then you won't be carrying on this stupidity about keeping yourself saved, or eating your heart out about whether you're going to make it, and have no peace. The only way you have peace with God is when you understand what it is to be reconciled to God. That's what's such a great tragedy when you talk about evangelism, and when you talk about preaching the gospel. It's *basically*: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved." But it takes some explanation of why that's true, because down in the human heart is that resistance (that desire to do something to make it with God). Why it's true is because of what God has done in reconciliation. Man cannot do anything to reconcile himself to God. He cannot reconcile himself to God's absolute standard of righteousness. It's purely a great gift.

**Peace**

However, reconciliation does provide us with the peace in our minds so that, while we are the enemies of God, we realize that He was our friend. We realize that it was the death of Jesus Christ to pay for the sins of all mankind that made reconciliation a reality. The peace that Jesus gives the believer about his eternal destiny is cause indeed for unrestrained rejoicing.

What greater thing could God have done for us than to have provided us with reconciliation, and removed any fear about what's waiting for us on the other side of death. Now, unless you are totally blind; totally insensitive; and, totally indifferent to your future, the normal person wonders what's on the other side for him. And after a while, it's not enough that the preacher said so. It's not enough that you have a church that has that in its doctrinal statement. It's not enough that all of your Christian friends believe this. You have to understand why it's not possible for you ever to go into the lake of fire. And the reason it's not possible is because you're as good as God Himself. Is God capable of going into the lake of fire? You have been reconciled to absolute righteousness. You are as good as God Himself.

That's not your experience now. That is your position. Once you come into his presence, as 1 John 3:2 tell us there, we will be like Him. When we see Christ, we shall be like Him. And I think that we should find some comfort and guidance from that principle of truth. It helps me to be very tolerant towards stupid Christians. It helps me to be very tolerant toward people who are deserters in the battle. It helps me to be very tolerant to sloppy Christians. It helps me to be tolerant of Christians who can never rise to act like the royalty that they are, but they're always going to be lower-level crumb-bum types. It helps me because I know that God's not finished with them. I know that someday they're going to be superior human beings just like Jesus Christ. And it helps me to remember that my own frailties are not a permanent defect. It's going to be changed.

Consequently, when you understand the doctrine of reconciliation (what God has done in principle), positionally aligning us with Himself and His total essence and character, will someday become a reality. In the meantime, we live, and we let live.

Now, coming back to Romans 5:10 again, we read "For if we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son much more." Here is a double emphasis on something even greater that is going to come to us – something infinitely much more. What did God do for us? He reconciled us to the standard of God's absolute righteousness. This phrase declares a greater degree of certainty of something in view of this fact of reconciliation. The idea is that it is obvious. The idea is that it is absolutely certain then. What is so absolutely certain? Having been reconciled by His death, we are going to be saved by His life. Having been reconciled (having been adjusted to the standard of God's absolute righteousness) to satisfy the demands of God's justice – that having been done for us, by our simple act of trusting in Christ as our Savior, we have been reconciled. And in the Greek language, this word "reconciled" is in the passive voice, which means that you don't do it.

Boy, if you could just remember this, and tell this to those stupid relatives or yours who are always trying to keep their salvation. The Greek word is "katallasso" (kat-al-las'-so), K A T A L L A S S O. This is the word for "to be reconciled." And when we tell you that it is in the passive voice, that means that you can't do it. Somebody has to do it for you. You're the recipient. And here the very Greek language tells us that you cannot reconcile yourself to God by your good works. You cannot keep yourself reconciled to God. Only He can do it, and only He can maintain it. That's the passive voice. That's not too hard to understand. You don't have to go get a degree to understand that passive means that you sit back; you float; and, God does it. And that is critical for you to understand.

Now, people who do not want to use their heads, and who do not want to think, are not going to be impressed when you say this to them. But those who are thoughtful will say, "That's very important. If that's what God the Holy Spirit put in that language, and used that tense to tell us that it's all of Him, and none of us, that's very important. That's no small thing." The major thing that God has provided for us then is reconciliation. That was hard – to take a sinner (to take people like ourselves). You and I know what we're like. And to make us totally compatible with the character of God? I mean there's not one whit difference between you and God in your character now. You're totally compatible. You're just as perfect as the Almighty.

So, somebody may say, "Who do you think you are, God or something?" You can say, "Well, as a matter of fact, I am. I haven't tied in (synced in) completely. I'm not quite on track, but really, I am as good as God." Boy, your relatives will love that. You'll make a big hit when you tell them that. However, that happens to be what the Bible says. You are in His perfect essence.

So, God has changed us from hatred and hostility toward Him to friendship and submission. It's a purely divine operation through the death of Jesus Christ for our sins. So, the great, humanly unsolvable problem of adjusting a sinner to divine grace has been forever achieved by God. That's the great thing.

Now you think that the greatest thing in the world is for you to be able to reconcile your checkbook to your checks. That is hard. It takes a God-like ability to reconcile your checkbook to the bank statement. And that's the thing that God had to do with us – to reconcile us in our sin, and in our deficiencies, and in our shortcomings, and in our deficits, and bring us up to where we are absolutely as perfect and as full as He is. This was the great (nearly impossible) thing to do.

So, this is what this verse says: we were God's enemies. We don't care for Him. We didn't like Him. We really didn't care to think about Him. Do you remember our illustration? Man begins the human race. Man and God are at peace. They're friends with one another. And then comes the fall into sin. Suddenly, man is at enmity with God. Man wants to hide away from God. There is this great terrible wall separating God and man. There's the problem of sin. There's the problem of spiritual death. There's the problem of our human good. There's the problem of God's divine justice. There's the problem that we're in Adam, in the place of death. All these things separate us.

So, where are we? God is full of wrath against us, and we are His enemy. And then what happens? Along comes the atonement of Jesus Christ, and we the sinners are made savable. Now man is still the enemy of God, but God now turns to face man once more because God is propitiated. But the sinner does not yet believe the gospel. This is potential reconciliation. This is objective reconciliation. This is what God has provided.

Then comes the point when the person believes the gospel, and now we come to reconciliation effected, and man turns to face God. They reach across the cross of Christ, and now they're holding hands much more, because they're at peace with God. Man is reconciled. God is appreciated. And the sinner trusts in Jesus Christ to make this real in his own experience. Now, from objective reconciliation, it becomes our subjective experience. Absolute righteousness is imputed to the believer.

Now to accomplish all that is the great problem that faced God. And that's what Paul means when he says, "We are His enemies, yet He has reconciled us through the death of His Son." Now, that being the case, what's going to happen? Something much more is going to happen: "We shall be saved." The word "saved" looks like this: "sozo" (sode'-zo), S O Z O, and it is in the future tense. Sometime in the future, you are going to be saved. While you have salvation now positionally, you have salvation now in your experience that you can conquer sin. But ultimate salvation, where we are free of the sin nature, and we are in (our person) as perfect as God, that is in the future. But please notice again that it is the passive voice: "You shall be saved," but you won't do it. You won't do it; Only God will do it. This is why you have to know a little bit about what's behind the English words. This is something that God is going to do, and it's indicative in the mood in the Greek. That means that it's a statement of fact.

This word "saved" refers to health and healing. It means an avoidance of death. The word "saved" means that you're going to avoid death. And the death that's referring to here is that you're not going to be in the death of the lake of fire.

**Eternal Security**

Notice Romans 5:9, "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." Since we have been justified (we have absolute righteousness) we're going to be saved from the wrath of God. The same phrase is in Romans 5:10: "Because we are reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Verse 9 refers to the wrath of God in terms of the lake of fire. We're going to be saved from hell. And verse 10 refers to being saved by the living, resurrected Christ, but saved from what? Also from the lake of fire. "Saved" means you don't go into that terrible place of torment. It's talking about eternal security, folks. Because you have been justified, there is no way you can be lost again. Verse 9 says, "You will be saved from the wrath of God." That's the lake of fire. Because you have been reconciled to God's standard, and you're as absolutely perfect as He is, now with no moral guilt, you will be saved by the fact that Christ is alive.

Now, how does that help us? We are saved by the fact that Jesus Christ is alive. A dead Christ could do nothing for us. In John 14:19, Jesus says, "Because I live, you shall live." What is He talking about? That tells us that we are going to be saved by His life. This is not the resurrection of Jesus Christ as such. It is the life that He's living now. Christ, the resurrected One, is the One who is keeping you secure in your salvation. It means that the life of the glorified person, Jesus Christ, after resurrection – this is our life. How is that true?

Hebrews 7:25 tells us why His present life secures salvation: "Hence also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." There it is: intercession for them. Did you realize that Jesus Christ is constantly praying for you? Jesus Christ is constantly butting heads with the devil. Every time the devil wants to condemn you for your sin; your failures; your shortcomings; and your evil, Jesus Christ says, "No, that person is not going to hell. I've already taken care of that problem. I have covered it." And because Christ is alive, He can make intercession for us.

How about Romans 8:34? "Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He Who died, but rather Who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." And there you have it again.

**In Christ**

Hebrews 9:24: "For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands; a mere copy of the true one. He went into the heavenly temple, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." For what? "To intercede for us." You can see what an unmitigated arrogant insult it is to suggest that the salvation that God offers is a temporary possibility rather than an absolute certainty. If He has reconciled you, that was the hardest thing He had to do – to make you as perfect as God, and for Him to preserve His holiness in the process; to satisfy His justice; and, to maintain His perfect righteousness. But he did it. He did it through Christ Who paid the price of the death penalty. If He could do that, do you think that now that Christ lives, He is incapable of retaining you in that salvation? You didn't have anything to with it do to get it in the first place. It was all a gift from God. Therefore, you can't do anything to lose it. You and I are positionally now in Christ. Do you know what that means? It means that you share everything that He is, and you share His destiny. To be in Christ means that you share everything that He is, and everything that is in His future.

1 Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body at the point of salvation; whether Jews or Greece; whether slaves or free; and we were all made to drink of one Holy Spirit." All believers were placed in Christ. We were placed there, and therefore, all that He is accrues to our benefit.

1 Corinthians 12:27, "Now, you are Christ's body, and individually members of it." So, everything that He is, and everything that's in His future is in your future. What is in the future of Jesus Christ? Hell? The lake of fire? Never. And there is nothing in your future that is not in the future of Jesus Christ.

We might add 1 John 2:1: "My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." You and I should find great comfort from the fact that Christ constantly intercedes His death for us against the attacks of Satan. You remember in the book of Revelation chapter 12, we're told that the devil accuses us, night and day, every time we do something wrong before the Father's throne.

So when Paul says, in Romans 5:10, that we are saved by His life, that means the life that Christ is now living. It means that all that He is, is what preserves us in the eternal life that He has given us.

The idea is that Jesus Christ, Who provided the basis for our reconciliation by means of His death, will easily and logically preserve us in that salvation, now that He is alive again, in full power of His deity. God has promised to make all believers the beneficiaries of a fantastic inheritance in heaven. Romans 8:17-18, 1 Timothy 6:17, Hebrews 9:15, and Ephesians 1:14 tell us that God has a great inheritance for you in heaven. And when God says, "I have an inheritance for you in heaven,” that means that that's where you're going to go.

The Bible presents our heavenly inheritance as a last will and testament made out by Jesus Christ to all believers. Hebrews 9:15-17 describe it as such. The will is God's promise to believers of an eternal inheritance. Verse 15: "For a will to be of benefit, the testator must possess wealth to pass on, and then he must die for that to pass on. In verses 16-17, Jesus Christ had something to pass on to us. He had the absolute righteousness of God. And then He died. And that made the will come into effect for us. Jesus Christ, the testator, secured, through His death for sin, the wealth of eternal life in heaven. The riches of grace are ours.

Now it's true that we have a multitude of promises to carry us through time and into eternity, but those promises were not ours until Christ's death. Then the will that He made (the testament He made) came into effect. So, this vast inheritance in heaven is made eternally secure for us by the fact that Jesus Christ is alive, and He's carrying out His own will.

Every now and then somebody may come to you (family members), and say, "I'm making out a will, and when I die, somebody has to see to it that the will is carried out. I want you to be the executor." And some of us have on our shoulders a couple of wills in which people say that you are the executor.

Many years ago, we had a family who had small children, and they said, "We want you and Mrs. Danish be the executors for our children. If we die, they're yours." I said, "I want to talk to the kids." And the point was that they were going to make provision for that. Now, those children couldn't be ours until they died. Fortunately, they grew up before the parents passed on. So, we didn't end up with them. But this is the way it works. The will is there, but you don't get it until that person dies. And Christ died, and then He was His own executor. He carries out His own will because He has been raised again. Since He is managing our spiritual affairs, it is impossible for us to lose the assets of reconciliation. It is impossible for us to dissipate our standard of being reconciled to God's perfect essence again. And you know what that gives us? Peace.

Now, I hope that you see the connection. Paul says, "I pray for peace for the Colossian Christians, and all who follow them through the centuries." Why? Because you are reconciled to God. You have nothing to worry about. You have nothing to concern you. You should try to be a really a fine person. But no matter how you turn out, you have nothing to worry about. You are as good as God Himself, and you can never be anything else. Why? Because Jesus Christ wrote that in His will, and said, "When I died, this is what I'm going to leave for you – all the resources of heaven." He died; He's resurrected; and, now He says, "I'm the executor of that will, and I'm going to carry it out." What a setup – all in the hands of God!

So, young people, why would you want to live like the world system of all the kids around you, when you are as good as God Himself? Since Christ died to provide our eternal inheritance in heaven, and since He now lives, He will much more see to it that we are never defrauded of our inheritance (Hebrews 7:22-25).

So, simple logic declares that, when God did the greatest thing that needed to be done (the hardest thing) of reconciliation, that He would not fail to do the lesser thing of keeping us saved. The principle is that those who are beneficiaries of Jesus' death will have to be the beneficiaries of all that is entailed in his resurrection life, which includes no return to death gain. Lots of verses tell us that. We will be the beneficiaries of all that He is (John 14:19, Romans 8:11, Romans 8:32, Romans 8:34, 1 Corinthians 15:23, Hebrews 7:25, Ephesians 1:19-22, Matthew 28:18). Thrill your hearts by reading those verses, and you'll find them all saying that we are inevitably the beneficiaries of all that He has. If Christ did had not pay for our sins: past; present; and, future, then He would not have been raised from the dead. And then there would've been no one to execute His well. But we believers have experienced reconciliation. It is real, and we hold it in perpetuity. And that's why there is peace in our soul. And when we sing the little chorus, "The Peace that Jesus gives," that's what we're talking about: the piece of reconciliation.

**We Exalt in God**

Then notice Romans 5:11: "And not only this (calling attention to all the benefits of reconciliation), but we also exalt in God." We, in addition, exalt in God. This word "exalt" means that we "rejoice." This word is in the Greek present tense, as we do this all the time. We personally do this. We Christians are happy, joyously euphoric, and elated. Over what? Over our privileged position in Jesus Christ, because that means that we are on His wavelength. We have been reconciled to His standard. The reference here is to the believer's current response to the fact of his eternal security in salvation. I am always rejoicing in the fact that I am certain of where I'm going.

What a contrast this is to what happened in the Garden of Eden. After Adam and Eve sinned, then they were depressed. They didn't want to see God. They didn't want to be seen by Him. There was no fun being with God anymore, like the way it was before. And suddenly, man and his sin, and separation from God became painfully evident. It was only when God reconciled them to Himself that they could once more have a sense of joy, and a sense of peace. And since they trusted in God now to save them, as they would not trust in Him before, in eating of that tree, now they trusted, and now they were both saved. And the result was that joy came back into their lives in the midst of their misery.

Not only this, but we have an enormous joy in God. It is in God that our joy lies. Before reconciliation, we dreaded God. Now we think that He's great. Now we have the normal attitude of being pleased to be with Him, and to think about walking with Him. Happiness is the result of being at ease with the living God: "And through our Lord Jesus Christ." It is through Christ that all this has been made possible. We have now received the reconciliation.

There are certain reasons that people don't rejoice in God Our Father. They don't rejoice because they fail to understand the nature of justification by faith, apart from man's works. People who are trusting in their own human good for their salvation are always balancing their evil against their good works. They don't understand that their good works are the product of their sin nature, so those are also evil with God. You cannot take pride in your own works and God's works in salvation at the same time, because you can't mix works in grace. So, if you are going to be have any satisfaction in some work you offer to God, that means that you're not taking satisfaction in His work through Christ.

Secondly, there are people don't rejoice in God the Father because they're trying to complete His work of justification with their own efforts. They believe that Christ had to suffer for their sins, but they had to suffer too. This is very clearly a Roman Catholic doctrine. Roman Catholics say, "Yes, Christ suffered for our sins, but you have to pay for it too." And this self-merit is what they seek rejoicing in, and there's no satisfaction in that.

Third, there's a failure to understand the continued presence of the old sin nature in the believer. Some people do not rejoice in God of Father because they think that they can become sinlessly perfect. And they're always chasing rabbits when they think that. They don't distinguish between the fact that we have an eternal fellowship with God and salvation (you can't change that), but your daily walk with God – yes, that's up and down. That depends on your obedience to Him, and your confession (1 John 1:8-10). Instead of preoccupation with sins, we ought to be preoccupied with admitting to God what we have done.

Then fourth, people don't rejoice in God the Father because of their failure to take doctrine into their soul, and to maintain a divine viewpoint perspective, so that they understand what God has provided. People are too busy to meditate on the Word of God, so they miss the impact of God's provision for them.

I think it's very sad when people cut themselves out of the opportunity of orientation to the Word of God. What is a church service for? For that purpose. And I think it is very bad when people come late to the church service. And I mean late, such that they barely make it to the sermon, because if you have not caught on already, then you haven't been paying attention. The Scriptures that are read are blockbusters. And through the book of Proverbs right now, there is an enormous inspiration. And I'm amazed how there's a need for a particular passage that we're reading at that particular point in time. And I've become aware, more and more, that had that one of the things we need to do with our kids is drill them more and more in reading Proverbs. We should lock them up in a room, and we should make them read Proverbs into a tape recorder so that we can listen to how they read it. Then they should read it again, and explain what they read. What a transforming human being you'd have if they read Proverbs, instead of the clods that so many kids are.

Well, when we read the Scriptures here, you're learning something, and not the least important of which (if you haven't caught on yet) is the announcements. The announcements are not trivial. People sometimes want to know: "Why don't you print a bullet in your church?" Because I don't want to print announcements. When I give announcements, they become points of inspiration; of instruction; and, of orientation. And people who ask stupid questions and have stupid ideas about Berean Church are often people who are not here to hear the announcements, to get the orientation of what's going on. If they did, then they would know how to act and how to relate themselves.

Everything about the gathering of the saints, if you have a pastor who knows what he's doing, is critically important to you, and every service to that effect. The church services are not for your spiritual entertainment. They're not for your emotional excitement. They're to provide you a basis for joy unspeakable and full of glory in God your Father.

Christians who have no content of doctrine in their minds cannot really be happy about God. They cannot rejoice in Him in their souls. They're too busy; they're too preoccupied; and, they're too disoriented. The height of contempt of a human being is: "I don't need to go to a church service. I don't need to be there regularly. That is hypocrisy of the most contemptible kind, because the Word of God says, "Don't do that. Don't neglect the gathering of yourselves together, as the manner of some is.

Not only this (we're going to be saved by His life because He intercedes for us), but we're going to have terrific joy through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received that reconciliation. It has come to us by an act of God, and it is ours.

**The Implications of Reconciliation**

We conclude with the great implications of reconciliation.

1. **God Blesses only on the Basis of Integrity**

The provision of reconciliation by God for the sinner clearly establishes the fact that God blesses only on the basis of integrity. That is the implication of reconciliation. God is not going to bless you because you're sincere and you're mistaken about how to go to heaven, but He is going to let you come in. That's an idea for Phil Donahue to promote, or other idiots of his ilk. But those who know the Word of God know that God is not going to compromise His personal holiness and His personal integrity. There is no center-norming.

**Gender-Norming**

For us to have women at the military academies, they have to norm the demands that are placed upon the men in every activity, because the women are not made by God to carry those terrible physical burdens, and to be able to do those terrible physical things. One of the funniest scenes I've ever seen is of some fire department training a group of women how to raise ladders. And here they have this scene, and all these guys are in their fireman suits, and they're standing around, and these women are in their fireman suits, and they're raising this ladder up to this practice building. And you could just see the men. They're standing there, and they're so nervous, like some little kid about ready to walk off the edge. And finally, they get this ladder up. And finally, it collapses on all of them. And all the men go running in all directions. The ladder comes crashing to the ground. That's called gender-norming. The men have to do 50 push-ups at the academy. The women can do eight. Well, just wait till they get out with one of those heavy packs on their back, in a combat situation, with that weapon of many pounds in their hands, let alone everything else, and that helmet on the head, and those senses at a high pitch of awareness, and life itself is on the line, and see what they're going to discover of what it means to be a woman against being a man.

I also watched another television program this week. I haven't done anything but watch TV all week. This was a program of "20-20" or something like that, where they showed a report that men and women are different. It cost them a lot of money. And they went, I mean from childhood: men and women are different. They try to get the little boys to play with the dolls, and the boys won't play with the dolls. They give them a little piece of paper, and the boy makes a gun out of it. And the girls, they'll play with a doll. But the boys won't play with the doll. And Betty Friedan says, "That is nonsense. They shouldn't even be making studies like that. We shouldn't study this. There is no difference between boys and girls. When I look at her, I can see that perhaps that's true, but she's not one of my most inspirational people. I never have figured out which one she is. But anyhow: "we don't want to know this. We want to keep this secret. We don't want you to know that boys and girls are different, and that they're not going to be squeezed into some unisex mold.

This is the norming. This is trying to equalize what God has delightfully made different, and what God has delightfully not made the same, because He has different purposes and different arrangements. So, the conclusion was that, no matter what people try to do and how they try to act, the boys are going to be what is their natural temperament. And the girls are going to be what is their natural temperament is, which is the way God has ordained it.

No one folding short of the divine standard of righteousness is going to go to heaven. That's the implication of reconciliation. God cannot let evil go unpunished, and God never compromises His holiness. He's going to preserve His integrity. What divine holiness, therefore, demands is the basis upon which God acts. There are no exceptions. He's not going to center-norm anybody.

1. **All Prosperity and Happiness is Given by God on the Basis of His Integrity**

All prosperity and happiness is given by God to a person on the basis of God's own integrity. People sometimes ask other people to do things that are not right. You should never ask people to violate their integrity. People often do violate their integrity, because they think they can get some benefit. It'll be short-lived. Don't ever violate your integrity just to get some immediate benefit. God is only going to bless us on the basis of our compatibility with His integrity. He's not going to look the other way.

1. **Don't Ask God to Bless Something that Violates His Integrity**

Don't ask God to bless something which violates God's integrity, whether it's sin or human good. Learn doctrine, and keep your nose clean in what you ask of God. Don't think that God is going to excuse some evil because you're engaged in it, and you don't think it's too bad. Don't think that pulling the wool over other people's eyes is going to con God in the shenanigans that you're engaged in. Pray for your full compatibility with the character of God, to Whom you have been reconciled. Then you will prosper.

1. **Distinguish between Self-Prospering and Divine Prospering**

Learn to distinguish between self-prospering and divine prospering (self-pleasure and divine happiness). A lot of people who prosper themselves, and they're attributing it to God. You idiots! You've been conniving; you've been cheating; you've been sneaking around; and, you've been getting yourself enriched in ways such that you can't stand up before God and man, and be proud of what you've done. That is not God prospering you. That is you, by your getting the benefits of Satan. But the prosperity that God gives you – that you can be proud of. That you'll delight in. And you know what else? You won't even hang onto it. Prosperity that God gives you, you won't hang onto. You'll see to it that it's used for maximum benefit while you're alive: in your life; the lives of others; and, in the work of God.

1. **Don't ask Other People to Compromise their Integrity before God**

Don't ask other people to do something which compromises their integrity before God. It won't bring you prosperity, or happiness for them. It will cost you both. Follow God's example, and deal on the basis of integrity, because you have been reconciled to His standard of integrity.

At the Judgment Seat of Christ for the believer, and at the great white throne for the unbeliever, we will see the greatest demonstration of divine integrity in action. We should remember that. For us, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, divine integrity is going to be there big. All the sham; all the kidding around; all the clowning; and, all that might have been is going to be there, grossly. And for the great white throne judgment of the unbeliever, His mouth will be shut as divine integrity stares him in the face, and he has no way out.

Thank God for the marvelous doctrine of reconciliation. . . There is nothing in your future to fear.

Dear God, we thank You for this, Your Word.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)