***Reconciliation, No. 4

Colossians 1:15-20

COL-150***

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"Only one life t'will soon be passed. Only what's done for Christ will last."

Hebrews 4:12, "For the Word of God is living and alive and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as a division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

This morning, we continue in our study of Colossians 1:15-20. Our subject is "Hymn in Honor of Christ," number 40.

Nice people do not make it into heaven. Nice people do not make it into heaven. Only the reconciled do. Only those whom God has reconciled to Himself make it into heaven. It is very important that we not be carried away by the spirit of our times, which thinks that people who are nice make it into heaven. They don't. Most of them fill the categories and the recesses of Hades, waiting for their transfer into the lake of fire. Only those who have been reconciled go to heaven.

This is no small doctrine that we have been studying. Since the rebellion of man in the Garden of Eden against God's authority and His standard of absolute righteousness, man and God have stood back-to-back, separated by a wall of sin. Upon the death of Jesus Christ, bearing the sins of the world on him, God's justice against sinful man was satisfied. The penalty was paid in full. So, man started as friends of God. They were hand-in-hand in the Garden of Eden. Once sin entered, that fellowship was broken. Now, there arose a terrible wall of evil that separated God from man. God had to turn His back upon man, and man turned his back upon God. Once Christ had paid for the sins of mankind, represented by this terrible wall, it was replaced by the cross. The covering for sin had been made. God had been satisfied. His justice said, "Sin must be paid for by death – eternal separation from God: physical and spiritual death. But now, when God's justice had been satisfied, God could now turn once more and face man in his sin. Now God could extend His hands out once more to receive mankind. That is God is (the theological word that the Bible uses:) propitiated. He's been satisfied.

Now man, in his lost condition is being offered the free gift of salvation. If we would trust in the provision of Christ on the cross to satisfy the justice of God, which demanded eternal death, we can be saved. Those people are the ones who can go to heaven. So, God reaches out, and He extends the gospel of grace.

Now, the believing sinner who accepts Christ as personal Savior (and the key word is "believes") – he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. That sinner, at that point, turns and faces the cross of Jesus Christ. And when he does, there is imputed to him the absolute righteousness of God, the judge. And God and man once more take hands, and clasp one another as friend-to-friend. Man has been reconciled to God. God has been propitiated. And the sinner becomes a saint.

Please don't get confused in all that you're hearing on public media today about what a "saint" is. A "saint" is a person who is in Christ. He can be a lowdown, dirty, rotten saint; or, he can be an upstanding holy, outright saint. But the Word of God says, "I'll make it all come out straight, because God is not mocked. You may be a secret, non-saintly type; not living up to your position in Christ; getting away with it; and, people don't know about it, but you're going to get brought down. You can count on it. You act privately with the same integrity as if all the eyes of the world were there, watching you, and you knew it. But you act privately, where nobody is seeing you, with the same integrity. God knows it, and you will be exalted. God is not mocked in that way either. He sees to it that He honors those who honor their relationship of "in Christ" – their reconciled position.

So, now the believer is reconciled. He is adjusted to God's standard of absolute holiness, so that he is assured of going to heaven forever. So, the satisfaction of the demands of death for sin, and the reconciliation of man to God's holy standard through justification, enables God freely now to express His love toward the believer. God cannot express His love toward anything but His own absolute righteousness. And it takes being reconciled to God's righteousness before He can turn loose His love towards you.

The reconciled believer who maintains his position in temporal fellowship is, therefore, showered by God's blessings every day. The believer has unhindered access to the Father in prayer for daily guidance. That is a way of life. The believer is capable of growing to super-grace spiritual maturity, if he's taught the Word of God and to be able to serve the God with *divine* good works, which are performed by the Holy Spirit through the believer. And then God rewards us because we permitted ourselves to be agents of the Most High God.

Anything that is produced on the human level comes out of the sin nature. The sin nature produces things that are evil, and the sin nature produces things that are good. When the world sees good coming out of the sin nature, they're all gaga with it. They praise it. They honor it. And they exalt the person who has been producing that kind of good. Yes, it is good, but it's an evil good, because it came out of the sin nature, and it's unacceptable to God. And the more of that kind of evil good you do; the greater will be your condemnation and suffering in the lake of fire.

People don't understand that the good that comes from the sin nature is not the good that comes out of the Christian for which he's rewarded. That kind of good is the product of God the Holy Spirit. Therefore, that Christian has rewards in heaven. And it all depends on reconciliation. If you're not adjusted to God's standard of absolute righteousness, you have nothing. There is no way for a lost sinner to be reconciled to God, however, except through faith in Jesus Christ. There are not several roads into heaven. There's only one way. John 14:6 makes that very clear. And that is through Jesus Christ.

In Matthew 7, Jesus points out that the gate to enter the road leading to heaven is small, because that gate is Jesus Christ alone, and the road itself is narrow, because only Jesus Christ is the way to the Father in heaven. There is no other way. I don't care what your religious system is, if Jesus Christ is not the sole way, apart from human works, and apart from all doing-way of grace salvation, I don't care how many good works you perform, and how the world will praise and laud you and esteem you, and give you money up to your eyebrows to do that human good work, it's nothing. It is still evil in the sight of God, and it will not get you to heaven. And your sincerity will not take up the slack. Sincerely entering a different religious gate other than Jesus Christ, and taking a different road, other than Christ for salvation, inevitably leads into the lake of fire. That road is very broad. That road to destruction, Jesus says, is filled with people. Only a few find the small gate and the narrow road.

Salvation is a grace gift from God to those who believe the gospel. So, they trust in Jesus Christ, Who then gives them reconciliation to God. Because they are justified, they're given absolute righteousness. Now, they're up to God's standard. Of the mass of humanity since Eden, only a few find the grace-oriented gate, and the road to heaven, in spite of a world which is filled with religion and genuine sincerity.

You can cover your human good, and you can cover your sincerity with pomp and circumstance, but you don't con a God who must be propitiated towards sin. He must be satisfied in His own justice. Now, either you'll pay the price of death for all eternity, separated from Him, or you'll say, "I'll let Christ, who already paid it for me – I'll accept His gift. I'd rather He paid for it than I suffer unendingly in the lake of fire, never able to pay that debt. God cannot, and he never does, compromise His holy integrity. He doesn't compromise His integrity relative to salvation of a morally guilty sinner. So, human good works are unacceptable, and they're condemned. When God says, "I'll reconcile you to myself, and take you to heaven," it is because He satisfies His own righteousness.

All of this is clearly explained in the Bible. That is what's so amazing. It's all there in plain, ordinary, everyday English. And yet, the world misses it because Satan has driven people so far away from the Word of God.

**The Implications of Reconciliation**

This morning I would like to direct you to the implications of reconciliation. First of all, it is based, as we've indicated, on the moral integrity of God. The word "reconciliation" describes a change on the part of one party induced by an action on the part of another. Here in Scripture, the sinner is changed by an action of the holy God sending Christ to pay for the sins of the world on the cross. This word "reconciliation" is the word which is used in 2 Corinthians 5:18-19: "Now all these things from God, Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ." There's the system. He reconciles us to His standard of righteousness through what Christ did on the cross: "And he gave us the ministry of reconciliation; namely, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, because He laid them on the Son, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation."

Now, don't get impatient with me when I keep trying to stress to you that, down the line very closely, there's coming an counting day, and when Jesus said, "Let the dead bury their dead," He wasn't kidding. Let the spiritually dead of this world handle the things of this world. They don't need you, but God does. You are spiritually alive. He needs you, and all the services that enable us to reach out to the world about us. – the services that you might consider very insignificant, like being a nursery attendant, or the lawn cutter, or the things that don't look too glamorous. All of those are necessary. And if you're off out into the world, knocking yourself out – you only have so much capacity every day, and you're pouring it out into the world, or you're just sitting at home, and letting it trivialize and blow off, then the work of God does not get done.

One of our people recently was taken to task because they were talking about the great rewards that God gives for to believers in heaven for their Christian service. And they were looking happily forward to whatever those rewards were. And the person was rebuked that that was a very selfish way of thinking about this – that it is very self-centered to be serving God for rewards. Well, the truth of the matter is that if God rewards you because you have performed Christian service that He has called you to, and the spirit of God has enabled you to execute that Christian service, why will He not reward you? He will not reward you because: you didn't do that; because you didn't carry through; because you didn't pick up the mission; you got sidetracked out in the world; and, you got sidetracked accumulating one thing and another – fame and fortune, and what other interests. And because you did that, He doesn't reward you.

So, what have we said? We have said that if Christians are not earning rewards in heaven, then God's work is not being done on this earth. Don't let anybody kind you with that stupid remark that it is very selfish. If God is not rewarding the believers, and if the Christian is not storing treasures in heaven, there's only one reason. It's because you're not performing God's work that He has for you to do.

So, when you say, "I have accumulated great treasures in heaven," you have also declared to us how you have honored your God. When you have said, "I've quit having a life out in the world, and I've gotten a life for myself of walking in the context of association with God my Father every day. Therefore, I'm about His business. He's going to reward you enormously and tremendously, because you're doing the work that He wants done.

So, here in 2 Corinthians 5:18, please notice the words at the end of the verse, "ministry of reconciliation." That's what your life is all about: the ministry of reconciliation. Now you put in there all those things that have occupied your time this week, and the ministry of reconciliation includes cutting these lawns, and fixing these buildings, and all these other things. And I'm humbled. I sit around, and I listen to some of these people talking about the joy that they've taken in improving our properties in this way, and that way, and the plans that they have, and they sit there, reminiscing about the things that they want to do down the line. And I am humbled to be in the presence of this kind of ministry of reconciliation, because it all fits together for reaching out to the people of this world as their first point of contact with the realities of God.

Then look at the end of 2 Corinthians 5:19: "the Word of reconciliation." What is your life all about? Doctrine and doctrine and doctrine. Well, how can you sit at home Sunday-after-Sunday, or how can you sit under preaching that isn't through the book of a Bible, verse-by-verse, from the original languages, and say that you have the Word of reconciliation? You don't have it. You have your own word; you have your own opinions; your own interpretation; and, your own arrogance. Then you go out and spew that out to people? Boy, is there going to be some waking up at the Judgment Seat of Christ for a lot of Christians?

We have the Word of reconciliation. We have been called to the ministry of reconciliation, because if we can't get the Word of the gospel, to get people reconciled to absolute righteousness, they're going to spend their eternity in hell. And you cannot do that without the word of doctrine that conveys that truth of reconciliation.

Now do you see why I tell you that every time you give a single dollar to support a ministry, or to support a church, or to support a preacher who is not preaching through the book of the Bible, verse-by-verse, with expository explanation, God's going to hold you accountable for using His money in that way?

Here you have it. 2 Corinthians 5:18: "Now all these things." The context tells about the wonderful things that God has done for us: "Are from God, Who reconciled us to Himself." No one else could do that. It had to be a grace gift, and he does it through Christ: not through Muhammad; not through the gods of Hinduism; not through Joseph Smith; not through Buddha; and, not through Confucius. He does it through Christ. And you can have all the money in the world, and all the fame, and all the good life, but if you die without Christ as your Savior, without the reconciliation that God has brought from Him, the moment you take that last breath, your eyes have opened up in Hades. And you are with the rich man, in the rich man and Lazarus event. You're with the rich man, sharing his agony.

"Through Christ He gave us the ministry of reconciliation." That is my life; namely, that God was in Christ. This is what we're telling people. He was adjusting the world to His standard of absolute righteousness (His Own character), not counting their trespasses against them. Forget sin. Sin is not the issue. God has resolved that issue. Christ paid for that. And He has committed to us this message of reconciliation. Why on earth do you think these men and women are going to knock themselves out starting next week in the Berean Youth clubs? It's because they have a ministry of reconciliation, and they want to reconcile these kids, first of all, in salvation. Then they want to reconcile their lives into godly holiness. That's what the achievement program is all about. But you can't do that until you have men and women who have a heart for these kids to get on board as leaders and do the job.

That's one song title (of the old song) that's really true: "You Gotta Have Heart." You need lots and lots of heart, or you're not going to be there. You're going to be there in your own little way. Well, you'll get some satisfaction. You'll prove something to someone else. You'll show your independence. You'll show your power structure. But you're going to stand at that Judgment Seat, and it's all going to collapse then. And you'll stand there humiliated.

The ministry of reconciliation through the word of reconciliation. These phrases refer to beseeching unbelievers to accept the reconciliation provided by God, through the justification that He can give you through Christ. Once you have been justified, you have absolute righteousness imputed to you. You are now up to God's standard for entering heaven. You've been reconciled to the standard He requires. Unbelief rejects reconciliation, and the individual parishes in spite of the reconciliation that God has provided. The provision of reconciliation by God for the sinner clearly establishes the fact that God blesses only on the basis of integrity. God cannot bless what is not reconciled to His standard.

Now that is true, we all understand, relative to the unsaved. God is not going to bless an unbeliever with heaven. But now wait a minute. I want you to be aware of the fact that this applies to you as a Christian as well. God does not bless what is in your life which is incompatible with His absolute righteousness. And His absolute righteousness is expressed as His will and His purpose for your life. No one who falls short of the standard of divine righteousness (of absolute righteousness) will still go to heaven. He's not reconciled to God. He won't go to heaven.

Letting evil go unpunished would violate the holiness of God. And this is true in respect to the unbeliever, but I want to remind you it is true in respect to the believer. John 3:16 handles the unbeliever. God says, "I cannot let your evil go unpunished, but because I wanted to express My love to you, I have sent My Only Begotten Son into the world, so that He could replace you in death, and in order that anybody who believes in Him (trusts in Him) will have eternal life, because I will have reconciled you to Myself.

However, now, on the other hand comes the Christian – the Christian who is reconciled, but the Christian who is not living in the ministry of reconciliation, and the Christian who is not living by the moral standards of God.

Oh, you should hear some things that some Christians come and tell me about other people, and they say, "Here's the secret. Here's the behind the scenes. Here's the sneakiness of this person. Here's the front that person is putting on." Well, it's no fun, and I don't listen to it, and I try to deflect that, but it's sad, and it's disappointing, and I know that it is absolutely potentially there for anybody. If we all have the sin nature, then we have the snake in us. And that poisonous snake can bite you. Unfortunately, most Christians are so insensitive to the holiness of God, and they're so ignorant of doctrinal principles that they live their whole lives out of fellowship. But 1 John 1:9, thank God, is the solution: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all on righteousness." "If" – maybe you do; and, maybe you don't. This is a third-class condition in the Greek. But if you do: "God is faithful." He'll forgive you every time that you confess. And He is righteous. He can forgive you because He has already paid for that sin with Christ on the cross. "And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" – from those things that are sin that you didn't know that they were evil, or from that human good that you didn't realize was under God's condemnation, or from the thing that you did that you weren't even aware of.

I was listening to Jack Smith describing his duties at the maximum security prison, the Kentucky State Prison, when he was a prison guard. And he told that it was his day to go around searching in the nook-and-crannies through the cells, and through the establishment, to see if there were things that were potentially something that the inmates could use to attack the guards, or to make a prison break, or to create an uproar. And he's walking through the chapel. He had to check the chapel out too. That's a good place to hide contraband. And he pulls open a drawer. And there's some cassette tapes. He has to check them out. It could be made a lethal instrument. He picks up this tape, and it says, "The Confession of Sin. Berean Memorial church, Irving, Texas." So, because for 50 years, he's been knocking around in religious circles, looking for reality, wondering why the ups and downs are there. In church, after the service they'd say, "Those of you want to rededicate your life to God, please come forward." And he'd hump it down there, and nothing would get rededicated, and nothing would get changed.

Then they would say, "Those of you who want prayer to help you make it better, raise your hand." And he would raise hand, and nothing would change. So, he took that tape, and put it in a tape machine. And for the first time in his life, he heard a preacher explain what you know so well of 1 John 1:9. He heard the inner and outer circle concept – the diagram. He understood suddenly why God has saved him and reconciled him to God's standard forever. He cannot lose that. But on the other hand, his walk with God can snap just like that, and when sin comes in, he's in the same boat as the unbeliever. He can be just as rotten. He can be just as out-of-step with God. He loses his capacity for prayer, and he loses his tastes for going to church.

So, what does he do? He listens to this thing carefully a couple times, and he says, "Oh God. This is the answer that I've been looking for. I never understood that what I had to do was confess to Him what I had done, and everything is back on track. So, he proceeded to do exactly that: confess sin. He said, "And heaven's doors opened before me. All of a sudden, the burden like Christian in Pilgrim's Progress rolled off my back. I was in fellowship with my Father. The relief was so enormous." And I can understand that: at 50+ years of age, for the first time, he was finding that now you can make your life worthwhile.

You kids who are here (you young people) – you should be glad that you know about this principle of confessing known sin. There are Christians sitting in churches all over this city now who are wasting their lives, year-after-year-after-year, because they never get back on track with God. They don't make reconciliation operational in their lives.

Jack keeps embarrassing me because he keeps referring to it. He almost does it without thinking. I've heard him on other tapes, speaking to church groups. He says, "Now in 1 John Danish 1:9, we are taught . . ." And I understand the great relief you have in appreciation for whoever the instrument happened to be that call attention to that enormously important bit of information to your understanding. And reconciliation for the Christian is no longer getting into heaven. That's settled. Reconciliation for the Christian means keeping your rewards coming. And if you let your reconciliation get botched up in terms of your temporal fellowship, it's not worth living.

Matthew 16:26: "What shall it profit a man (a Christian man) if he gains the whole world, and loses his life?" Matthew says: "Loses himself." Luke says "The worth (the value) of your life."

I'm very much concerned when Christians live their lives (day in, and day out). They have a life, but it's a life in the world. Whereas, we are to be separated from the world. Let the world bury its own dead world, and let us stay alive to the things that we should be doing. Then we would not be pleading for people to get on board to do the work of God. God never compromises His holiness. And so He preserves His personal integrity. He doesn't do it with the unbeliever, and he doesn't do it with the believer. He's not going to bless you or me when absolute righteousness is not functioning in our lives, and when we are not living up to the reconciliation we have.

So, just don't waste your time praying. Don't waste your time asking. When you know have resentment; when you know are resistant; and, when you know you're arching your back against what you don't like the interpretation of, or something about Scripture. Don't waste your time speaking to Him. You're not going to beat His integrity. When you get straight, He'll put His arms around you, and He'll draw you into a life of great significance. He will make every day, a day in the service of the King. What divine holiness thus demands, is the basis upon which God acts. There are no exceptions to that.

So, all the prosperity and happiness is given by God to the man or woman on the basis of that person's integrity. And many a Christian who is out of integrity, and who is out of function with his reconciliation to God, may see that things are going well for him. You have a job. You're making money. You have friends. You have a good social life. You're moving ahead in your career. And you think that God is prospering you. No, He isn't. Not if you're out of step with His integrity at some point. He is not prospering you. And if God doesn't prosper you, and if God doesn't promote you, you haven't been promoted.

I've heard Christians say a stupid thing: "Yes, I have a great deal of money. God has blessed me with a great deal of prosperity. But He knows who to trust with His money." And I've heard some of the sorriest people say that, who are the ones who are the least qualified to be the stewards of God's great sums of money, because their own lives are out of integrity, and out of sync with God. All prosperity and happiness is given by God on the basis of His integrity. People should not ask others, therefore, to do that which is a violation of the integrity of God. With people, the lack of integrity is no big deal. It is with God. People often do violate their integrity for some passing benefit. But God will only bless on the basis of His integrity. There is no looking for some way to ignore evil.

So, don't ask the Lord to bless something which violates His integrity – some act of sin, or some pumping out of your human good evil from the sin nature. Learn the doctrines of Scripture, so that you can pray in keeping with the integrity of God. Very often, we Christians fail in our prayer life, because we're not praying in keeping with our reconciliation. We are reconciled to the standard of God, but we're praying as if we were unbelievers. Don't think that God is going to excuse some evil that you're engaged in simply because you didn't consider it too bad. You didn't realize how bad it is.

This is what a child does. A child does something wrong, and they say, "Oh, I didn't realize that it was so bad." And they think that because they didn't realize it was so bad that they should be excused. But that isn't the way that God works. He is a God of fairness. Integrity is the guiding factor. And don't think that, because you can pull the wool over the eyes of the people about you (some shenanigan that you're engaged in) is also conning God. What we want is to pray for full compatibility with the character of God, so that he can prosper you in every possible way, and make you as happy as the proverbial lark. Doctrine makes that possible. Then you will rejoice in God your Father. And that is a life. That is a life to be able to walk every day and rejoice in God your Father.

**Why People do not Rejoice in the Father**

Why do people not rejoice in the Father? There are several reasons that I would call it your attention.

1. **Justification by Faith, Apart from Works**

Number one, people cannot rejoice in God their Father because of their failure to understand the nature of justification by faith apart from works. They don't understand that they really are saved, and that they can't lose it again. They're still trusting in their human work behavior to save them. They're still trusting in balancing their good works against their bad works. They cannot take pride in their own works and God's work of salvation at the same time. So, they take pride in their good works, and not pride in God's saving work through Christ. These are mutually exclusive. You cannot take pride in your works, and pride in God's work. It's grace, or it's works. People do not understand that justification comes as a gift from God. And remember that justification means: "I impute to you absolute righteousness." They don't understand that it's a gift from God at the moment of salvation, never to be retaken. They are not going to rejoice in God their Father. They're going to be scared stiff that they may face Him the next moment, and they're not sure how they stand.

Here's Romans 4:4-5: "Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness." This is in the context of Abraham. Abraham didn't know a whole lot when he came out or the Ur of the Chaldeans, but God taught him enough. He said, "Abraham, trust Me. I'm going to send a Savior down the line. He will cover your sins." Abraham said, "I believe it." Therefore, Abraham didn't try to give his circumcision, or his good works, or his money, or anything else to try to gain justification. He had it because he believed that God said, "I'll give it to you."

Now, he either had to believe Him, or not. He couldn't have it both ways. Romans 11:6 is even more explicit: "But if something is of grace, it is no longer on the basis of works. Otherwise, grace is no longer grace." You can't say, "Yes, I believe Christ died for my sins, but I'm a Roman Catholic, so I'm taught that I must pay penance here on this earth for my own sins. Then when I have paid penance in time for what I have done, then what Christ has done for me for eternal life can be applied to me. But until I have done my penance works, Christ can't apply it to me." That is justification by progression: bit-by-bit. I can assure you that no Catholic ever goes to heaven, because that Catholic is strictly basing his destiny on his good works and on trusting in his church as having authority to take him in.

1. **Self-Effort**

Number two: the reason believers do not rejoice in the Father is because they're trying to complete God's work of justification by their own efforts. They believe that they have to suffer for their sins, as well as Jesus Christ. These are the people who punish themselves in one way or another, so that they can justify themselves. Self-merit actually prevents rejoicing in God's complete provision of divine good, which we need for salvation.

1. **Understanding the Presence of the Sin Nature**

Number three: failure to understand continued presence of the sin nature in the believer causes us not to rejoice in the Father. There is a false concept of holiness – sinlessness. I can get rid of my sin nature. You'll chase rabbits trying to keep holy, no matter how you try. This is a failure to distinguish between eternal fellowship with God and temporal fellowship. Eternal fellowship cannot be changed, but temporal fellowship – that you can step out of. And your real security is your eternal fellowship. You cannot leave the outer circle.

1. **Doctrine**

Number four: there is the failure to take doctrine, the Word of God, into the soul to maintain your divine viewpoint perspective on what God has provided in justification. You are a very foolish Christian if you ever take the attitude that you've already heard something in the Word of God, so you don't need to know about that. You're above something that you're being taught in Sunday school or in Training Union, or that you hear in church. Here's what the apostle Peter had to say when some people were doing that to him. In 2 Peter 1:12-13, Peter describes what God has done, and things that he has talked to them before about, and things that are before them – the abundance that they're going to enjoy in the eternal kingdom of God. And he gets to 2 Peter 1:12, and he says, "Therefore, because of all of this that is potentially ahead for you, I shall always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you." You know these things. You have believed them. You have established them.

Then 2 Peter: 1:13, "I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder." Oh yes, I tell you things many times that I know we have talked about before. We do that all over our teaching ministries in one way or another. We have done it before, but what are we talking about? We're talking about the things that you cannot forget, and the things that you get reminded of. I can guarantee you that a number of people have sat here this morning, and they've been shot out of the water by things that they've heard, because that's how the Holy Spirit works. He does it in every service. They're brought up short and they say, "Whoa, I never made that connection, and we are going to constantly remind you of the things that you cannot let slip away from you. If you do not get reminded, and you do this on your own when you read the Scripture as well, you will not share God's mind, and when you don't, you'll not be awed by His fantastic wisdom and His provision for you. It is only as you learn the principles of doctrine that you are awed.

**Television**

Now, if you sit in a church service where entertainment is the key, and where playing on your emotions and get getting you excited is what you're looking for, you're not going to have a basis for rejoicing in the Father, because after the show is over, you're out. When you get through listening to some comic on television, are you ready to rejoice in the Father? I rarely watch television that I have not previously recorded. I find it very hard to imagine that people sit down in the evening and pick up their television control unit, and start looking through the book, and start finding something to watch, because you'll watch all the rot if you do that. You have to record it ahead of time, and listen to it at your leisure – the things that are worth listening to, as few as they are.

But the other day I turned the TV on when I was going switch to a station, and for a moment, while I was looking, I'm listening to this program geared to young people. And it is a humorous thing. And I would not even repeat to you in this mixed audience what went out there all over the country. And young people are sitting there listening. It was so vulgar. It was so coarse. It was so debasing. And people were laughing themselves silly. The rottenness of the sin nature of man was right out there. And any Christian who sat there and listened to that program, when it was over, I guarantee you they did not rejoice in God their Father. They didn't even want to think about Him, because it might make them nervous that He knew, since Christ is in us, the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit sat there watching this program with them.

It's a disaster for parents to put a TV set in the room of their children – to give a child his own TV set. A few years ago, the thing to do was to give your kids their own telephone. The telephone company was running short of nickels at the time, so they were promoting for every teenager to have his own telephone. And the reason was that then you won't be bothered with being on the line when you want to use the phone, and they just carried on. Well, they'll be on the phone, all right. And because they're off there in their room, you won't know what they're on the phone for, and what's going on. They'll have their television program; you won't know what they're watching. I know that if any parent, even the worst of the Christian parents, who, if they had walked in and saw that program, and I just saw a few minutes' snippet of it, they'd have been horrified, and they'd have walked off and turned that TV off. But the kids are sitting there watching it.

People who are into the world's system, and the detachment from the frame of reference of the Word of God, they do not rejoice in God their Father, because it is so easy to be inundated with the sin of the world about us. The preoccupation there is horrendous. So, people do not rejoice in the Father because they fail to understand how they have been justified in their security in salvation: because they try to complete God's work by their own efforts; or, because of their failure to understand that there's an old sin nature in them ready to respond if they give it a chance to be fed, insulting the power of God's grace. People don't rejoice in the Father because of their failure to take doctrine into the soul to maintain a divine viewpoint. It is the perspective that God has. So, constantly, Peter says, "I remind you of these things," and again and again. Well, we're too busy to meditate on the Word. We miss the impact of God's provision from us. Kids go off to school in the morning and never read their Bibles. Parents haven't even thought about that.

I remember in times past some of our parents mentioning how after breakfast they sit down with their children, and read a portion of Scripture, and then they're off to school. Instead, we're shoveling them out, especially to the public school with all of its contamination, without any cleansing of the Word of God in their minds first. Because we do not share the mind of God, His fantastic wisdom from Scripture, our divine viewpoint is weak. So, we're not very friendly with the Father.

When church services are entertainment, they're playing on your emotions. And when it's over, just like a television program, it's meaningless, and you have nothing left. In some church services, I watch some of these gentlemen on television, some very famous ones, and they run a show. I mean that is what they run. They get little one-liners, and people laugh. Throughout the whole service, people are clapping. Nobody ever claps for my sermons. Nobody ever applauds anything I say. They hardly laugh at it sometimes. I see people leaning over and asking, "Was that funny?" They say, "Yeah," so the other person laughs. They're not sure it's even funny sometime. But here, this gentleman – his whole service is one-liners, and little things he makes cracks about, and jokes, and people are cheering, and he gets himself wound up, and he makes a big declaration for God, and everybody cheers. It must be exhausting to go to church that way. When you don't have any content in your mind for making logical deductions, then you'll have no ground for rejoicing in God, and what He has done for you. Reconciliation won't mean a thing to you. But Christianity is logical. It is not mindless.

1. **Anticipating the Loss of Salvation**

Finally, why don't I rejoice in the Father? Because I'm anticipating the loss of my salvation, because I find no pleasure in God. Because I find no pleasure in God, I'm not sure I'm even saved. A Christian who lacks the joy of the Father in assurance of salvation does not understand justification and the reconciliation it has brought. To be certain of salvation is not presumptuous. To be joyless toward God is not humility.

Father, we thank You for the implications of our reconciliation.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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