***Reconciliation, No. 5

Colossians 1:15-20

COL-151***

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Our subject is "Hymn in Honor of Christ," segment number 41 in Colossians 1:15-20.

Heaven will be filled someday only by people to whom God has imputed His own absolute righteousness, and who thereby have been reconciled to God's holiness. When we are reconciled to God's holiness, it is not just simply that we are going to do what is right, which will be beneficial for us in the world, but it also means that it will bring enormous blessings into our lives. What's your problem tonight? If you think back on whatever the situation is; whatever area of difficulty you may be facing; or, whatever the focus of the intensity of your prayer is, you will probably realize, as you think about it a little bit, that it is because you did not act as one who is reconciled to the absolute righteousness of God. You took a step out of righteousness. You took a step after the pattern of the world. You were deceived by maybe some sincere advice. You were carried along at the spur of the moment where somebody played on your emotions. And, so often, this is the way Satan makes a fool of us.

Sometimes, the next morning, it's gone, and we can resolve it. But sometimes, it takes a longer time. And sometimes, the consequences of stepping out of our reconciled relationship with God goes with us for the rest of our lives. The price can be very bad. So, when we say that we have been reconciled to God's standard of thinking, that is a very wonderful, marvelous thing. And this is one doctrine you want to keep up front all the time, to remind yourself how you should walk through this world.

**Justification**

Justification, we have pointed out, is the instant gift of God of absolute righteousness to the one who has trusted in Christ for salvation, without any additions in the way of human efforts. The one who is justified positionally is also reconciled positionally to God's standard of absolute righteousness; that is, the integrity of God. We are reconciled. All the world is reconciled positionally. Every unsaved person is reconciled positionally. But now that is objective reconciliation. But to make that subjective (one that you personally now enter into), that takes faith in Christ. Then what God has provided for all mankind becomes your particular readjustment to Him. And, in time, we will be, in our experience, completely reconciled to acting and thinking the way God does.

**Reconciliation**

Reconciliation is what qualifies us as believers for a permanent future in heaven, and for blessings and righteousness now. That's what I meant by saying that reconciliation has a very direct bearing upon how much fun it is for you to live now. We are constantly seeing about us people who do things, and who live a lifestyle that is self-destructive. And they do that because they don't understand what God's standards are, because they're not reconciled to God's standard of righteousness.

Confession to the Father maintains the flow of the divine guidance and blessing that comes from a person who is reconciled to God. But that can be interrupted when you're out of temporal fellowship. And that's why that principle of confession is so critical that you will enjoy the benefits of reconciliation.

**The Doctrine of Reconciliation**

So, tonight, let's bring it all together: the doctrine of reconciliation summarized.

1. **A Change Induced by Another**

The Greek words for reconciliation, mean a change in one party induced by an action on the part of another. The words for "reconciliation" in the Bible connote that one party is adjusting to a specific standard in someone else. Words used for "reconciliation" connote changing from hostility to compatibility, and from enmity to friendship. The meaning of "reconciliation" is illustrated by adjusting a watch to conform to the standard of a chronometer; or, to take a checkbook, and to adjust it to the standard of a bank statement. That's what reconciliation is all about.

The verb form of "reconciliation" ("to reconcile) is used in the Bible in 1 Corinthians 7:11, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, Romans 5:10, Ephesians 2:16, and Colossians 1:20-21. The noun form "reconciliation" is used in Romans 5:11, Romans 11:15, and 2 Corinthians 5:18-19. So, these words are repeatedly and frequently used in Scripture, because they are so important to a Christian to understand what his relationship is to God. That's point number one. And please remember that what we're doing now is part of the HICEE technique of expository preaching – once in a while, to stop, and to gather together from all parts of the Bible, which is what's going to be done now, what God has to say about reconciliation. So, when you're through tonight, it is not likely that you're going to find anything in Scripture that you have not heard tonight of what God has to say about this subject.

1. **In Eden, Man was Reconciled to God**

Originally in Eden, man enjoyed complete conformity to the absolute righteousness standard of God. Man was face-to-face with God in fellowship. They were hand-in-hand. When Jesus came into the garden each evening to teach them the Word of God (the principles of doctrine). They walked arm-in-arm with Him. They were delighted to meet Him. It was the high point of their day, as the sun began to set in the cool of the evening. And they had their Bible class with the Son of God. There was perfect compatibility with God in spirit, soul, and body.

This is what is behind the prayer of the apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 – the objective that he holds out for all believers who are reconciled to God. In 1 Thessalonians 5:23, the apostle Paul, in closing this book, says, "Now may the God of peace Himself (peace because you are reconciled to God, and you're no longer at enmity with Him) sanctify you entirely (set you apart, entirely as a person), and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame: (not sinless). You're not at blame when you sin. It is when you don't confess it, and cease and desist. That's when you're at blame. But you may sin, and then do the right thing in handling it, and you are blameless. That's what it means: "Without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

That's not going to be a very happy situation for you to be covered with unconfessed sin, when Christ returns to take you in the rapture to heaven. You'll go, but you'll go with all the disadvantages and all the loss that that will entail. That has put you on hold. There's nothing so terrible as being put on hold in the Christian life. And there are a lot of Christians whose erratic behavior in terms of church attendance is what puts them on hold spiritually, because it's a constant battle to live up to your reconciliation.

Originally, it was terrific. The spirit, the soul, and the body of Adam and Eve were in perfect conformity to the absolute righteousness of God, and to one another. Yet Paul says, "I pray that God would set you apart to that kind of a life now. That almost staggers the human imagination, but God does not tell us to do something (and the Apostle Paul does not pray for something) that realistically could not happen. Yes, you can be just that good a person.

1. **Man Turned his Back on God in Eden**

Man sinned in Eden, and, thereby, he, in effect, turned his back on God. The result was that man was now out of adjustment with God, and he needed to be reconciled. I stress again that God never needed to be reconciled. God is never out of step with His character. It is a man that needs the reconciliation. Man could not have fellowship now with God. Absolute righteousness cannot have fellowship with total depravity. That was the problem. And we are all guilty. We are all subject to the terrible condition of total depravity. Total depravity does not mean that you're a lowdown rotten read. Some of you perhaps are, but that's not what total depravity means. Total depravity means that you can't do anything good in God's eyes. Total depravity means on your own, without the Spirit of God producing divine good, you cannot take one step good toward God.

Aha! So, here's somebody who is doing a lot of good in the world of one kind or another. Yet, that person is not a child of God because they don't have a system of salvation that is my faith in Christ. That person is totally depraved, and that person functions on total depravity. And all the things for which all the world would laud this person, and hold him in the highest esteem, is evil in the sight of God. And it is going to add to the condemnation of that person in the lake of fire. It may be someone who holds great public prominence, and yet, maybe is a believer, but does not understand the principle of reconciliation and the standard of God's righteousness, and the fact that total depravity means that unless you keep yourself in temporal fellowship, you're going to be operating on sin nature capacities, and thinkings, and judgments, and decisions. And you will be a loser. And the person can spend a whole life, with the whole world in awe and praise of somebody who is functioning on the basis of total depravity.

That's why it's so important to maintain your reconciliation with God in your experience through that system of confession of sins. While God was still absolute righteousness, man, now having sinned, was spiritually helpless. He was hostile toward any divine viewpoint thinking. He was an outright sinner, and he was indeed an enemy of God.

1. **The Standard is God's Absolute Righteousness**

The Bible indicates that all mankind is compared by God to the standard of God's Own character of absolute righteousness. God does not deal, like people do, with their relative righteousness. You can always find somebody that's worse than you are in thinking and conduct. But Romans 3:23 says that it's not relative righteousness that is the standard. It is absolute righteousness: "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." The glory of God is the absolute righteousness of God. God has not set up some arbitrary standard by which to judge man's performance. God Himself is the moral standard by which He judges people. Therefore, you cannot revise the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are an expression of the righteousness of God. Therefore, you cannot revise them to adapt to some modern system of thinking. Since God Himself is immutable (He's unchangeable), His standard of judgment is absolute, and it's inflexible. His glory is his absolute righteousness. And Romans 3:23 says, "Everybody fall short of it."

This is the condition now with man. He had his back turned against God. Does that mean that he was no longer religious? No. He was more religious than ever. He was creating his own religion. He was cranking it out on the basis of his sin nature. He was cranking it out, and designing a religion that would please him and that would make him look good. But everybody falls short of the standard by which God judges. And that's the issue. You can go ahead and play your whole life away on a standard of comparison that is very pleasing to you, and makes you look good. But I guarantee you that when you check out of this life, and they take you down that long trip that's called "going out feet first," down the aisle, and back out, you're not going to be judged on the standard that you have created for yourself, or that your friends have assumed and accepted. You'll be judged by the glory of God – His absolute righteousness.

1. **Man Caused God to Turn His Back upon Man**

Man's lack of absolute righteousness caused God to turn His back upon the sinner. Man is now under divine wrath, and God has passed the judgment of death upon man. Therefore, God can have no association with man. He must turn His back upon man until God's justice has been satisfied. So, God cannot turn and face man again, to help him, until God has been propitiated, and until His justice has secured the death penalty.

1. **The Lost Sinner Lacks Absolute Righteousness**

The lost sinner does not conform to the divine standards of absolute righteousness (Romans 5:6-10). Please note: For a while, we were still helpless. At the right time. Christ died for the ungodly. Man is spiritually weak. He is incapable of conforming to God's standard of absolute righteousness. But while he was in that condition, that's when Christ died for him. Verse 7: "For one will hardly die for a righteous man. Though, perhaps, for the good man, someone would dare even to die." Man is ungodly. He is hostile to God. There's no friendship there.

Verse 8: "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," Because man lacks conformity to God in God's standard of righteousness, it was in that condition that God paid the price for him.

Verse 9: "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." The lack of conformity to absolute righteousness places a human being under the wrath of God. But having been justified by God, we will now be cared for even more wonderfully than before.

Verse 10 says, "For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Jesus says, "Because I live, you shall live also.

1. **Everyone Falls Short of God's Standard**

Every human being falls short of conformity to God's glorious standard of absolute righteousness. So, he needs to be adjusted, or reconciled, to Him. There's only one exception in the human race, and that was the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was always adjusted to God's absolute righteousness in His humanity. So, he never needed to be reconciled in His humanity (Romans 3:23, that we just read).

1. **Man Needs to be Adjusted to God**

God does not need to be adjusted to man, but rather man needs to be adjusted to God. God is not out of harmony with His character. And the Lord Jesus Christ, in His humanity, could say, "I do always the things that please the Father." What a wonderful thing to be able to say: "I do always the things that please the Father." That's what I've been trying to get across – a life that is walked in the presence of God, and a life that is invested in the awareness that you are fulfilling the calling of God in your life, every day of your life. God is not out of harmony with His character. He does not need to be reconciled. Man is out of harmony with God's standard of righteousness. So, God is always the One who does the reconciling. Man is always the one who is reconciled.

Reconciliation is not reciprocal between God and man, as if both equally had done something to offend each other, and now they were both forgiving each other, and they were going to become friends. God did not do anything to offend us. It is important to remember that. God does not need to be reconciled.

How many times have you heard somebody say something in an accusatory way against God? Something happens in the human race. Something happens to somebody: "Why did God permit this to happen?" And the implication is that that was not right for God to do that? Just talk to people a little bit about the doctrine of election, and see how they begin to bristle about the concept that God selects those who are going to believe, and He gives them the motivation to understand and to receive Christ.

People have to understand that there's nothing wrong with God. The problem that exists is with man. God does not have to be readjusted and realigned to anything. He is always in perfect harmony with His Own character.

1. **Propitiation**

The propitiation of God by Jesus Christ satisfied divine justice, and made it possible for God to turn once more and face man, and extend to him the invitation to be reconciled to Himself." 1 John 2:2: "And He Himself (Jesus Christ) is the propitiation for our sins." Please remember that the word "propitiation" means the satisfaction of God's justice. What does God's justice need to be satisfied. Somebody has to pay the penalty of death for sin: "And He Himself is the satisfaction for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." That is a shocking statement. Christ not only satisfied the justice of God for those of us who believe. But He satisfied the justice of God for all those who just died recently, and opened their eyes in Hades in the suffering of the compartment of Torments. Those people have had their sin covered by Jesus Christ. Those people have had God's demand of death against them satisfied. It wasn't sin that put them in that place. It was their refusal to accept the free gift of salvation. God has been satisfied for the whole world through what Christ did.

Also in Romans 3:25, we read, "Whom God displayed publicly (that is, Jesus Christ) on that cross as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God, He passed over the sins previously committed." There was never a time when God's justice did not have to be satisfied. You would make a mistake to think: "Well, in the Old Testament, He didn't have His justice satisfied." What He was doing was saving people on credit, and planning to cover them when Christ would come in due time and at the right time.

So, Romans 3:25 tells us that God was absolutely righteous in taking sinners into this heaven because the penalty had been paid. And if they would accept it, He could give them His righteousness. Then they were reconciled to His standard. Then they were qualified to enter heaven.

1. **God Has Reconciled Lost Humanity**

God has reconciled the world of lost humanity to his standard of righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:19); 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. Here is this verse that again declares this principle – that God has reconciled all of lost humanity. Christ reconciled the world. That is our objective reconciliation. Now, to make it personal (to make it subjective), your reconciliation requires the acceptance of Christ. "This world" refers to those who are under divine wrath; namely, that God was reconciling the world – the world that was under His wrath. God, through Christ, has made it possible for a believing sinner to be adjusted to God's standard of absolute righteousness.

What He has done was made man savable. Until Christ died, man was not savable. God could give him salvation on credit, but God could not take these people into His heaven. And God still retained His own righteousness. He had to pay the penalty for them.

So, God has established a basis on which to reach out for sinners, and still be true to His Own character of absolute righteousness. God maintains His Holiness. The death of Jesus Christ thus accomplished a great positional change which made it possible to reconcile the individual. Objective reconciliation becomes subjective reconciliation. This was provided for all mankind. The issue is whether people will accept it or not.

1. **God Removed the Wall between God and Man**

The objective reconciliation provided for sinners by God means that the wall between God and man has been removed. The wall that separates man from God was, first of all, sin, so that man was now in the slave market of sin. God sent Christ. He paid the price of redemption. That block was removed.

Man was under the condition of spiritual death. Christ paid the penalty of spiritual death in behalf of that person. And this person was regenerated – made spiritually alive, so that block was removed.

There was the block of the sin nature which dooms one to human good production. Everything man does, when he is dominated by the sin nature as an unbeliever, is evil in the sight of God. I mean, in the Old Testament, there's a verse that is so shocking. It says, "When the unbeliever goes out and plows his field, and plants his grain, he's doing an act of evil. It's a good thing, but it's not done under the guidance and the power of God, but under the power of the sin nature. Well, God has indwelt the believer by the Holy Spirit, and that block was removed.

Then there was the block of penalty, or of spiritual death, for one's evil, to satisfy the justice of God. Jesus Christ satisfied (propitiated) the justice of God. So, the penalty of spiritual death was borne by Him.

Finally, there was the fact that man was in a terrible position in God's sight. He was in the position of Adam, which was a position of death. When a man believes (a person believes in Christ – he is transferred into Christ), that block was removed.

So, suddenly this whole terrible wall was removed, and in its place was the cross of Christ.

1. **Reconciliation is Based upon what Christ did for Us**

Reconciliation is based on Christ's identification with the sinner whose place He took in paying the penalty demanded by divine justice. 2 Corinthians 5:20-21: "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us. We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him Who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." The sinner can be adjusted to God's standard of holiness because Jesus Christ became sin for that sinner. This is substitutionary atonement. Christ died vicariously for us. He paid the price of physical and spiritual death upon the cross. And because He was taking our place, that means that you were there with Him. When He died, you died. And when He arose to newness of life, you became spiritually alive. It is not possible, therefore, to adjust an individual in the lost world to God's standard of absolute righteousness. Reconciliation is based upon what Christ has done to carry that price.

1. **God Gave us the Ministry of Reconciliation**

In 2 Corinthians 5:18, we read, "Now all these things from God, Who reconciled us to Himself, through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. This describes man's subjective reconciliation to God as a completely new relationship. A sinner becomes a new creature, possessing the absolute righteousness of God: "Behold, all things have become new." The sinners old stat; the spiritual helplessness; his hostility toward divine viewpoint; his lack of absolute righteousness is life under the divine wrath of God; and, his life as an enemy of God – all of this has changed.

So, a sinner becomes a new creation of absolute righteousness, perfectly adjusted to God. Now he again faces God in friendship. God's love functions in this new creation as it could not before reconciliation. Until you are reconciled with God, he cannot pour the blessings of his love out toward you.

1. **Objective Reconciliation and Subjective Reconciliation**

Romans 5:10: "For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." The Scripture tells us that the sinner is said to be reconciled to God. That's potential reconciliation. But let's go back to 2 Corinthians 5:20 again: "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us. We beg you, on behalf of Christ, to be reconciled to God. In this verse, the sinner is called upon to reconcile himself. In Romans 5:10, it says that God has reconciled the sinner. That's objective reconciliation, for everyone. But in 2 Corinthians 5:20, it says that the sinner must reconcile himself by accepting God. That's subjective reconciliation. The reconciliation of the world of God made possible the reconciliation of the individual. The sinner must accept the divine provision of absolute righteousness to be reconciled to God standard.

Then God is free to face the sinner, and the sinner is free to turn around and face God, and to engage in eternal fellowship once more. Reconciliation of the world and of individuals is entirely the work of Jesus Christ (Romans 5:11). Any attempt to do something else, through some other way of salvation, simply cannot be done.

1. **God's Immutability**

The removal of God's wrath against the sinner does not contradict his immutability, but it confirms it relative to His Holiness. God is not changing just because He has wrath against the sinner. Now He changes from wrath to an expression of love. What God is doing is being consistent with His own character. Scripture says that God is not willing that any should perish. The last thing on earth that God wants is for anybody to go into the lake of fire. Therefore, He has made every provision possible. And He has given all the information that a person needs, providing that somebody delivers it to him, to escape the lake of fire. And because God says, "I'm going to send you to the lake of fire," and then changes that destiny, does not mean that God has just decided to change his mind. God is acting consistently because: "I will send you into the lake of fire unless you accept someone else's payment for your sin. If you accept that, then I'll be able to send you to heaven. But God is simply acting, in both cases, relative to His Holiness. He is not changing in some arbitrary way.

1. **Peace**

Reconciliation creates the very wonderful condition of peace between God and Man. Colossians 1:20: "And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven:" "Having made peace through the blood of His cross." This is the only way that a human being can come into a condition of peace with God. This is why unbelievers, who are following a works salvation never have peace. One of the things that comes, if you are going to heaven, is that you have peace with God. Why? Because you are adjusted to His standard, there is no conflict between you. And that adjustment can never be removed. It is a position that you cannot be taken out of. In your experience, you might act out of adjustment, but in time that will be corrected. But you can never, in your position, get out of being reconciled to God. And if you are not reconciled to Him, and understand the basis of that reconciliation, you're not going to sleep well at night. If you start thinking about it, you're going to be very uneasy whether you're going to make it to morning. And then during the day, you're going to be very uneasy whether are you going to make it to the evening because you're afraid of facing God.

1. **The Enmity between Jew and Gentile is Reconciled**

The enmity between Jews and gentile is reconciled by the death of Jesus Christ. So, these two bodies of human beings, Jews and gentiles, now form a new body, the church. Ephesians 2:16: "And might reconcile, then, the Jew and the gentile, both in one body to God through the cross by having put to death the enmity." Jews and gentiles had enormous enmity toward one another. They were always at each other's throats throughout history. Jews didn't like gentiles. They called them dogs. And gentiles didn't like Jews. And the result was that here were two religious groups that were totally at odds with one another. Along comes the reconciliation work of God, and the wall between them is removed. How can that be? What did God change? What he changed was the standard by which each operated. When the standard of the Jew and the gentile was changed to the standard of God's absolute righteousness, and as that righteousness was explained in the Word of God through doctrinal principles, suddenly the two said, "We're not enemies. We don't have anything against one another. We are at peace. We are reconciled. We are, in one body, a special group called the church.

Now, that does not mean that there is no future for the Jews. That's not true at all. What God is going to do for the Jew is to carry out all the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. That has not been done. But God says, "Before that happens, all the world is going to turn against the Jews. And the Jew is going to have a period of human suffering such as he has never experienced before." Now, that's kind of shocking, in a way, to think, because the more we hear about the history of World War II, and what went on in Germany, and the pictures that often are brought together (new ones found), and the documentaries, what was done to the Jewish people was absolutely horrendous: the suffering and the agonies were something that was beyond human comprehension, and the irony of it all.

If you stop and think of it, Adolf Hitler and his cohorts in the Nazi operation, undoubtedly were top candidates for the lake of fire. So, when they died, they went into Hades. And who should they find there but the Jewish people that they had put to death? Isn't that ironic. The very Jews that he had put to death went to the same place as Hitler did, because these Jews had not been reconciled to God's absolute righteousness; and, Hitler and his cohorts were not adjusted to God's absolute righteousness. Therefore, they both ended up in Hades.

However, what God has done was made it possible for Jew and gentile to become one part of a special body of believers, the unique body of the church

1. **Compatibility with Others and with God**

Achieving adjustments (making sinners compatible among themselves) in no way makes them compatible with God. This is what people think is how they deal with God: "If you and I can get a little religious system going, and we all agree upon the thing that we're compatible with one another, and that this is how God should accept us, and that this is how people should be received in the heaven, then we think that all is well. What did Adam and Eve do? The minute they lost their adjustment to God's righteousness, they tried to reconcile themselves by a human production. The first thing that showed that they were out of adjustment with God was that they were now aware of their nakedness, . . . and their nakedness now carried a personal shame, which it did not before, when they were adjusted to the righteousness of God.

So, here, suddenly, they're out of sync with God, and they are ashamed to each other. The Scripture says that before they sinned, they walked around naked before one another, and they were not ashamed. What was there to be ashamed of? Were they ashamed before the lions; the tigers; or, the hound dogs? That wasn't what they were ashamed of. It was before one another, because they were perfectly compatible human beings with the righteousness of God, in a single body unit. It was the best of all lives.

Now, suddenly, they've lost their compatibility with God. Now they don't have compatibility with one another. And they want to hide that in compatibility by making some kind of covering for themselves. So, they took fig leaves. I love that report on that – fig leaves. How long does a fig leaf dress last? How long does a fig leaf pair of pants last? You go to a party. And you sit down, and the thing is dried up and crumbles. Bingo! There goes your adjustment – trying to cover what has happened to you. It is stupid. And we laugh at it. But what do people do? That's exactly what they do all the time. They're making their own covering for their sins. And if it touches the emotional core in people, the whole world lauds them. And they'll say, "This person is a saint. We should view this person as a saint. We should declare that this person is a saint." And because they don't know the Word of God, they don't understand that a saint is anybody who is sanctified. And the person who is sanctified is the one who has reconciliation to the standard of God. That means that you are sanctified (set apart) to absolute righteousness.

That's why the apostle Paul addresses Christians, as a whole, in the local church as "saints." Everyone is a saint of God by his reconciliation.

1. **Believers are Entrusted with a Message of Reconciliation**

Every believer has been entrusted with a message of reconciliation to the lost world. We have looked at this several times. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20: "Now all these things are from God, Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, Who gave us the ministry of reconciliation;" namely, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not counting the trespasses against them. And He has committed to us the word of reconciliation: "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were entreating through us. We beg you, on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." One way a sinner is adjusted to the standard of God is through the testimony of believers who give him the gospel message. And that's what we have been entrusted with – the word of reconciliation. Thus, every Christian is an ambassador for Jesus Christ. The believer is not the representative of a church with a message of reconciliation. He's a messenger of God. You don't represent your church with the message. It is God that you are representing. The believer must point the unbeliever, therefore, to the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the agent of reconciliation.

One of the basis for rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ will be our faithfulness in telling people how to be reconciled to God. You're an ambassador. An ambassador carries a message to a foreign element. Your message is: "Be reconciled to God. God has made it possible for you to be as good as Jesus Christ. And if you're as good as Jesus Christ, you'll go to heaven." The question is not: am I a messenger of Jesus Christ? The question is: what kind of a messenger?

A couple of Sundays ago, Mr. Boozer referred to the sign that, years ago, we used to have over the front. It was a good sign. And people sat there and looked at it. And for those who were thoughtful about it, it was inspirational: "Every heart without Christ, a mission field; every heart with Christ, a missionary." We are ambassadors of reconciliation.

1. **A Plea**

God does not find it too humiliating to plead with messengers to be reconciled to Him, nor should we believers be. "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us, we beg you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God." It's not too humiliating, and it is not too degrading for you to say to people: "Please think through carefully. Please accept Christ as your Savior. Please let Him adjust you to God's standard for entrance into heaven.

1. **Reconciliation vs. the Lake of Fire**

Sinners must either be reconciled to God's absolute righteousness or be banished forever to the lake of fire, separated from God in punishment – one or the other. There's no in between. Forget the baloney about purgatory.

1. **Believers can never become Unreconciled**

Believing sinners are reconciled to God in perpetuity, and so can never become unreconciled. Anything that God does is perfect. You have no part in reconciliation. All you do is accept it like you do justification. You accept absolute righteousness. When you've accept accepted absolute righteousness, you've accepted reconciliation. You cannot make yourself righteous. You cannot reconcile yourself to God's demand and glory (His standard). God has to do it for you. And when He has done it, it's in perpetuity. You cannot undo does it. It is the height of arrogance for any person to say: "I can lose my salvation." What he is saying is: "I can lose my reconciliation to God's standard?" How dare you say that, when God says, "I have done it alone, and you can't contaminate My work."

1. **God's Integrity**

Finally, reconciliation establishes the fact that God blesses man only on the basis of divine integrity. There are no blessings except blessings that are compatible with God's integrity. God's integrity is His righteousness. So, if you want God's blessings in life, operate on His righteousness standard. If you want to bring a lot of grief into your life, just forget that you've been reconciled to that standard, and start acting as if you were back on the devil's standard. And grief will come.

That is the glorious doctrine of reconciliation. It could make you a very marvelous human being.

Father, we thank You for our time together in Your Word, and for this summary of the Scriptures that deal with this subject, and what we have given to us because of Your love. Thank You for adjusting us to Your standard that has brought us into the family of God – a family ruled by King Jesus. Therefore, it is a royal family. Please help us to be reconciled to the position of royalty, so that we do not act as those who degrade our royal position, but we live up to it in every way, and as we go out into the world this week, that we act as those who are the royalty of absolute righteousness. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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