

Christ Reformation Church

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Hold Fast to Christ!

(Col 2:2b-3 ESV) to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

“Peace With God”

Jan 27, 2013

Sermon Text: Colossians 1:15 – 23

Scripture Reading: Eph 2:11-22

Introduction-

¶ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible,

whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. 21 ¶ And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. (Colossians 1:15-23 ESV)

One of the most vital things every Christian must know is that they have

been *reconciled* to God in Christ. This is what Paul speaks of here in verses 20-22. If you are a Christian, then this is a certainty – you have been reconciled to God. Look at it again –

19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to **reconcile** to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. 21 ¶ And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 **he has now reconciled** in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,

If we look up the Greek word translated “to reconcile” –we find out that there are several variations of it. One root with different prepositions affixed as a prefix and perhaps giving a bit of a different nuance:

- **Katallasso**
- **Diallasso**
- **Sunallasso**
- **Apokatallasso**

These are all translated in English as “to reconcile.” The Greek dictionary gives this definition -

To reestablish proper friendly interpersonal relations after these have been disrupted or broken (the componential features of this series of meanings involve (1) disruption of friendly relations because of (2) presumed or real provocation, (3) overt behavior designed to remove hostility, and (4) restoration of original friendly relations) - 'to reconcile, to make things right with one another, reconciliation.'

Listen to these verses that also mention reconciliation and you will see this very definition fits:

ESV Matthew 5:23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 5:24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

ESV Acts 7:26 And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?'

ESV Romans 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

ESV 2 Corinthians 5:18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

ESV Ephesians 2:16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

ESV Colossians 1:20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

ESV Colossians 1:22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,

So, here it is. We ALL were estranged and alienated from God in Adam's sin. We enter into this life in that very condition-

(Eph 2:1-3 ESV) ESV Ephesians 2:1 ¶ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions

of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Enemies. Warfare. Hatred. Hostility. These are the things that characterize the condition of every person who is not in Christ.

And the fall had even more far-reaching effects. *When man fell, the entire creation fell.* It became a corrupting realm of death.

(Rom 8:20-25 ESV) 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Did you notice here in Colossians 1:20 that God's purpose in Christ was to effect *the reconciliation of ALL things*

to Himself, whether they be in heaven or on earth? So what this all means is that Christ not only effected a state of peace and harmony and goodwill between the elect and God (at the cross), *but He also accomplished the reconciliation of an alienated, hostile COSMOS to Himself.* ALL things. ALL the things He created through Christ –

(Col 1:16 ESV) 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things were created through him and for him.

You will notice in the Romans 8 passage that the creation, the cosmos, is intimately tied to MAN. When man fell, the cosmos fell. Things are not right today in even the physical universe. It is not Eden. I think this is what Paul means when he says that the creation is groaning.

This fallen universe is groaning, it is in labor, yearning to ‘give birth’ to the New Creation.

And, as new creations in Christ, this same yearning is present in us as we await our transformation and resurrection. THIS is all part of the *reconciliation* Paul is speaking of here in Colossians. It does not mean a *universalism* in which every human

being is reconciled to God, nor every spirit being like Satan and demons. Nor the non-elect. But the ALL THINGS does mean that the entire creation has been reconciled to God, the whole created order, and the “seed” of the New Creation is going to one day be “birthed” and come into its full glory. The entire universe, man, animals, physical laws – all of it, will be fully restored to God.

We are reconciled to God. War has been replaced by a state of friendship. Not only have hostilities ended in a war that we could never win, but God now loves us as His own sons. And we Him. We are friends.

Let’s look a bit closer at just how this reconciliation was effected:

(Col 1:21-22 ESV) 21 ¶ And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled **in his body of flesh by his death....**

The same method is stated elsewhere-

(Eph 2:13-18 ESV) 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off **have been brought near by the blood of Christ.** 14 **For he himself is our peace,** who has made us both one and has broken down **in his flesh** the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments

expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, **thereby killing the hostility.** 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

Very interesting. Christ, **by His blood** – that is, by His work on the cross – reconciled us *to one another*, and to God. This reconciliation is effects peace.

Rom 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

We will look at this more closely as we move into Colossians 2, but look ahead for a moment –

(Col 2:11-15 ESV) 11 In him also you **were circumcised** with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 **having been buried** with him in baptism, in which you were **also raised with him** through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. 13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh,

God **made alive** together with him, **having forgiven us** all our trespasses, 14 **by canceling the record of debt** that stood against us with its legal demands. **This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.** 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

This is an amazing description of the meaning of the Cross of Christ. The record of debt – the Law that condemned us, the curse it brought us under – was nailed to the cross!

Wait a minute, the Romans did not nail a piece of paper to the cross! They nailed Christ to it. Right. On the cross, Jesus BECAME that curse and paid it's debt by His death.

(2Co 5:21 ESV) 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

(Isa 53:4-6 ESV) 4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned-- every one-- to his own

way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

1Pe 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

1Pe 3:18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

(Gal 3:13 ESV) 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us-- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—

Now, He effected many other things on the cross as well – our justification, sanctification, assured our glorification, and so on. But our reconciliation to God was accomplished there as well.

This reconciliation and accompanying circumcision of heart (regeneration) radically changed us from our old being:

“And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled...”

This reconciliation then is radical. It isn't just a peace treaty with Germany

whose citizens still remain Germans. It is the establishment of a REAL peace that entails a radical change of nature from one time enemy to son.

And this peace does not have to be enforced!

God is not surveying us constantly to see if we are re-building our armies or trying to move into a de-militarized zone. Well, I suppose there is one aspect of enforcement of this peace: it is the Lord making sure that we don't fall back into captivity to schemes of the enemy, the very thing Paul is writing Colossians to prevent.

It is a Father watching out for His children, not a conquering observer enforcing His law that we are always looking to break.

This PEACE then that Christ has established for us is a certain, permanent, eternal and real peace. He HAS NOW reconciled us. This is why the opening salutations of the New Testament epistles are not mere “fluff” —

ESV Romans 1:7 ¶ To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: **Grace to you and peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:3 ¶ **Grace to you and peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

ESV 2 Corinthians 1:2 ¶ **Grace to you and peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

ESV Galatians 1:3 ¶ **Grace to you and peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,

ESV Ephesians 1:2 ¶ **Grace to you and peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

ESV Philippians 1:2 ¶ **Grace to you and peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

ESV Colossians 1:2 ¶ To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: **Grace to you and peace** from God our Father.

ESV 1 Thessalonians 1:1 ¶ Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: **Grace to you and peace.**

ESV 2 Thessalonians 1:2 ¶ **Grace to you and peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

ESV 1 Timothy 1:2 ¶ To Timothy, my true child in the faith: **Grace, mercy, and peace** from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

ESV 2 Timothy 1:2 ¶ To Timothy, my beloved child: **Grace, mercy, and peace** from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

ESV Titus 1:4 ¶ To Titus, my true child in a common faith: **Grace and peace** from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

ESV Philemon 1:3 **Grace to you and peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

ESV 1 Peter 1:2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: **May grace and peace** be multiplied to you.

ESV 2 Peter 1:2 ¶ May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

ESV 2 John 1:3 **Grace, mercy, and peace** will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love.

ESV Revelation 1:4 ¶ John to the seven churches that are in Asia: **Grace to you and peace** from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,

And notice carefully that this grace and peace announcement is FROM God.

This means, Christian, that if God were to phone you tomorrow, or write a letter to you, this is the first thing He would say. We can be confident. God HAS written us such letters! And He DOES “phone” us by the assurance of His Spirit in us.

Think of it. Even when God wrote, through the Apostles, to His people like the Corinthians or the Galatians, who he would later admonish; EVEN when He wrote to the 7 churches of Asia, 5 of whom had some serious issues, His attitude toward them is GRACE and PEACE.

Because Christ has reconciled us to God.

We Must Stand Firm in This Grace

Can you begin to see the very practical implications of getting a firm hold on the fact that YOU ARE AT PEACE WITH GOD AND HE IS AT PEACE WITH YOU?

“In this life, we can lose friends. You can get un-friended at Facebook with the click of a button. Deleted. We spend our time re- and cross-examining ourselves after an interaction with a friend, fearing that

we have said something to offend, something to destroy the friendship. And sometimes it happens. Sometimes we do it ourselves. We re-work emails in our minds after we hit the send button. Fear. Fear of loss of relationship.

But this can NEVER happen with God in Christ! NEVER. This friendship is permanent and eternal and unshakeable.

So we must stand firm in this peace. We must never be taken captive by false notions and philosophies. One person I corresponded with last week wrote this (she is trying to recover from a very, very legalistic environment in which she was raised)

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Here is another example:

As my family bounced around over the years with dad being in the military, we have been in many different churches. And at each church, we would get a verbal beating from my dad on the way to church, but as soon as we pulled up, all of the fake smiles would go up, and the family would act like nothing was wrong. I could never do this. I could never put the fake smile on and pretend that I hadn't watched my dad throw the breakfast dishes in the sink that morning because

someone dared to speak back to him. I couldn't stand by and watch my siblings suffer while no one knew what happened behind the doors of my family's home.

I don't remember when my parents got introduced to Bill Gothard's patriarchy ideas, but I have seen this stuff totally mess up my family, myself, and many other families. One of my biggest griefs with his version of patriarchy is that it enables narcissistic, controlling, manipulative, and abusive men to continue their abuse under the name of "God-given authority as the husband and father to rule over the wife and children."

Fathers who are abusive are enabled through this ideology by basically being "God" for their family. There is no one above them, and they are the ultimate rulers. God speaks through them, and never to the wife or children. It's no wonder that I have seen, read, and watched so many children who were raised under this mindset leave the faith because of the hypocrisy they had seen in their dad.

Bill Gothard's "patriarchy" says that women are simply baby making machines who bow down to their husband's rule, and who aren't allowed to have a voice. "Patriarchy" says that young women are their father's property and are to be traded

to off to the father-chosen men when the time comes.

"Patriarchy" seems to have this unspoken rule that even if it is a living hell at home, you don't tell anyone else.

"Patriarchy" told me that when I questioned something dad said, with the purpose of understanding better, I was not honoring him, or respecting him.

"Patriarchy" said that when I fell in love with my husband, I was being idolatrous, lustful, and that I wasn't honoring my dad.

"Patriarchy" says that when I talk about the pain, the truth, the real life that I have experienced, I am not being forgiving, I am bitter, I am angry.

Well, "patriarchy," I am angry.

So there is just ONE example. False, enslaving traditions that were brought to bear upon many, many marriages and families through one "Christian" ministry.

In contrast, listen to this comment which describes coming to understand that we ARE reconciled, justified, redeemed, adopted!! It is all done!

It really frustrates me when I see a church more concerned about dealing with their sin, and digging up the root of their sin, staying at the foot of the cross, begging God to forgive them for their sin, and it's nothing but sin, Sin, sIn, SIN, SIN. Where is the joy of being redeemed? Where is the freedom that Jesus has been born, died, and raised to give us? He suffered the infinite wrath of God in OUR place so that we wouldn't feel the condemnation that we would have faced without Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. I like to use an illustration about why I don't believe that we as Christians should be so sin focused. If someone tells you "don't think about elephants." what are you going to think about? Obviously, elephants. It's just the same with being overly aware of sin in your life. If you talk about sin, you dig up scriptures about sin, you pray about all this wretched sin you have, all you are going to think about is sin. Then you become more and more depressed and feel guilty about all of the sin you have.

So many people forget to see the balance. There is a balance about how much you take a look at sin, and how much you focus on the freedom and grace that is yours. There is a balance in understanding that the gospel does not just consist of Jesus dying on the cross for your sin. There is so much more to the gospel than that! Our lives

as Christians should not be clouded with grasping at joy while being crushed beneath a weighty pile of condemnation. Our lives as Christians should not be found at the foot of the cross as I've heard so many people say. Why should we stay at the cross when Jesus did not stay at the cross? Jesus rose, folks, He has set us COMPLETELY free, and through that freedom, we are no longer bound by the laws that once bound us. We are free from sin, but will still sin, but are no longer under condemnation for that sin.

When I suddenly woke up and realized that the gospel is so much more than just the cross and my sin, and that I cognitively recognized that, I breathed a sigh of relief. I am free to enjoy God, to love being in His presence, and to no longer know the guilt of past or present sins. Does this freedom give me freedom to sin all I want? No, it does. But when I am more focused on enjoying God, my desire to sin becomes less. When I feel the freedom to be who I am, and to enjoy the life I've been given, I am finding myself no longer willing to go back to condemnation and a life centered on the cross.

Focusing on the cross is not a bad thing. It really isn't, and it is an influential part of the gospel. But please, don't forget that it isn't the

whole gospel. There is so much to the gospel that it would take posts to thoroughly talk about.

Don't live a cross centered life. Live a life centered around freedom, joy, laughter, deep breathes, enjoyment. Jesus has given you all of these things, so bask in them!

That is what Colossians is all about. That is the gospel.

Grace to you and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.