

Preached on 2/11/24 at GBC - Ruston

"RECONCILED"

II Cor.5:18-20

The Gospel is a plain, reasonable, and simple declaration - "*And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them **THAT PREACH** the **gospel of peace**, and **bring glad tidings** of good things!*" (Rom.10:15) Yet many times as justified saints we CAN and DO over think this simple message, complicating the "gospel of peace", and causing our message to bring forth something other than "*glad tidings of good things*" - "*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the **simplicity** that is in Christ.*" (II Cor.11:3) The word translated "*simplicity*" means 'singleness, sincerity, **MENTAL HONESTY**'. We're not being **MENTALLY HONEST** with sinners concerning the truth when we complicate the message of God's grace with our **WORDS** or **IDEAS** - "*For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in **SIMPLICITY** and godly sincerity, **not with fleshly wisdom**, [which literally means - not with carnal wisdom which belongs to man by nature] **but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.***" (II Cor.1:12) We just need to read the word of God, and prayerfully ask our God to give us spiritual understanding of those things that are of encouragement and comfort to our sin-weary souls. We also need to ask Him to enable us for the sake of His elect who are at present unregenerate, to simply "*preach the Word*". That's what I want to do this morning, and I hope that is what I can by God's grace do every time I am given opportunity to speak or preach the Gospel of His grace.

Look at Vs.18 - "*And all things* [are] *of God, who hath reconciled us to **HIMSELF** by Jesus Christ.*" The "*all things*" in this verse is a reference to the same "*all things*" that Paul declares have "*become new*" in Vs.17. A man being brought into a state of spiritual life **is "OF GOD"**. The **FACT** that "*old things ARE passed away*", and "*all things are become new*" **is "OF GOD"**. Just as all things in the old creation were from God, all creatures owing their existence to him, are supported in their existence by Him, all are made for His pleasure, and for His glory, so **ALL THINGS** in the new creation are of Him; the work of the **NEW BIRTH** is God's work; all the grace that is implanted in regeneration are **OF GOD**. **Listen to me: NOTHING** is of the **MAN**, or can be ascribed to **MAN**. The **CAUSE** of this "*new creation*" is found in this next statement Paul made - "*who **HATH** reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ.*" Just think about what Paul is saying - "*and All things* [are] **OF GOD, WHO** hath reconciled us to Himself **BY JESUS CHRIST.**" Paul tells us that **GOD** (in this case, **God the Father**) is the one who **purposed and determined** to send His Son to make the propitiatory sacrifice required to reconcile His elect to Himself. God the Father assigned this work to God the Son - "*I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work **which thou gavest me to do.***" (Jn.17:4) God the Father assigned this work of reconciliation to the Son in His eternal council and covenant; He promised to send Him; prophesied in the Old Testament of Messiah being sent; and then actually sent the Son into this world for this express purpose - "*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To **redeem** them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*" (Gal.4:4,5) The **PURPOSE**, eternal council or covenant of God **DID NOT** reconcile sinners to God - the **ONE** sent by God reconciled sinners to God - "**HATH RECONCILED** us to Himself **BY JESUS CHRIST.**" **CHRIST BLOOD AND SACRIFICE, HIS SUFFERING AND DEATH**, is **THAT ALONE** to which, and **BY WHICH** the Scriptures ascribe our peace and reconciliation - "*For if, when we were enemies, **we were reconciled to God***"

by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."(Rom.5:10); "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in [your] mind by wicked works, **yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death,** to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight."(Col.1:21,22) This offering was made to "**HIMSELF**" **as the offended party,** the One whose law was broken, against whom SIN was committed, and the One WHOSE holiness and justice **REQUIRED** and **DEMANDED** satisfaction. **I always think of Christ's prayer in the garden** - "**And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou** [wilt]."(**Matt.26:39**) Had there been **ANY OTHER WAY** God could reconcile sinners to Himself other than by the death of His holy, harmless, undefiled Son, God would have answered Christ prayer and spared Him. But **NOTHING** else would do, and thank God, **NOTHING ELSE** is required.

Notice what Paul wrote next - "**and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.**" What a blessed gift the last part of Vs.18 provides to God's preachers, as well as to God's people - "**and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.**" **Literally translated this verse reads** - "**and hath granted or bestowed on us the office of declaring that which restored sinners to favor with God.'** **Think about that:** As those who have been regenerated and converted by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of Christ's accomplished work of redemption, we've been given the unique responsibility and privilege of heralding to other sinners the **BASIS** or **GROUND** of reconciliation to God. But the Holy Spirit doesn't leave this important truth up in the air as something mystical or ethereal. This "**ministry of reconciliation**" isn't an **OFFER** of salvation to sinner's if they'll do their part. It's not an emotional plea by us of God's wish to save sinners if they'll let Him. By Paul's hands the Spirit gives us the **MESSAGE** we are to declare for the calling out of God's elect. **Look at Vs.19** - "**To wit, THAT GOD WAS IN CHRIST, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.** Let me explain to you the meaning of this all important Gospel truth - **ELABORATE.**

Paul then writes this - "**and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.**" God **DOES NOT** use vision, voices, or angels to call out His sheep to true faith and true repentance. He is pleased to use the voice of men, those whom He has reconciled to declare His Gospel - **Rom.10:13-17.** Those for whom Christ came, lived, died, rose again, and ascended to glory for, they will in each successive generation come under and hear this "**word of reconciliation**". Somebody has to tell you that God **IS NOT** His people's enemy because He has reconciled them to Himself through the death of His Son - "**Ye [are] my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I [am] he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, [even] I, [am] the LORD; and beside me [there is] NO SAVIOUR.**"(**Isa.43:10,11**) Sinner's don't need to be threatened with punishment and eternal condemnation, nor do they need to be promised mansions over the hilltop. They need to hear about God's mercy, His free grace, His eternal love and purpose to save every object of His love - "**Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?**"(**Rom.2:4**) **BUT SOMETHING ELSE JUMPS OUT AT ME IN THESE WORDS.** Paul basically repeats what he wrote in Vs.18, only changing **TWO WORDS.** In Vs.18 Paul wrote: "**and HATH GIVEN to us the MINISTRY of reconciliation**". In vs.19 he writes: "**and HATH COMMITTED unto us the WORD of**

reconciliation." Like I've told you in the past, **WORDS** are important. It isn't some random use of words, but the declaration of God's truth by His Holy Spirit through His chosen servant, the Apostle Paul - "*All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*"(II Tim.3:16,17) In Vs.18 Paul was telling us that God had given or committed into our hands the Gospel of peace, that message which preaches out and declares **PEACE WITH GOD** through our Lord Jesus Christ. In Vs. 19, Paul is telling us something altogether different. The words translated "**hath committed**" means 'to set, put, or place'. The little word "**unto**" in the original means 'IN'. And the word translated "**WORD**" is the Greek word "LOGOS", which refers to Christ the **LIVING WORD** - ("*In the beginning was the WORD.....*") So Paul declares: "*and has put or placed IN us, Christ Jesus the Lord, the **SOURCE and CAUSE of reconciliation***". God has placed or put in each of His children as a **RICH and VALUABLE** treasure this doctrine of peace and reconciliation by the blood of Christ - **Listen to Paul** - "*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But **WE HAVE THIS TREASURE** in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*"(II Cor.4:6,7) Isn't that exactly what happens when an elect sinner is made a "new creation" in regeneration and conversion? Only those who **KNOW** Christ are fit, qualified, and capable of declaring this glorious truth. That's what **ETERNAL LIFE** is, to **KNOW GOD** - "*As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*"(Jn.17:2,3) Unless you have been reconciled by the death of Christ; unless the Lord has revealed "**Christ IN YOU, the HOPE of glory**", how in the world could you ever tell anyone about HIM? The true and living God has committed this sacred trust (**not into the hands of angels**), but into the hands of **JUSTIFIED SINNERS**, to be used of them for the purposed of calling all those who are His to Himself. That is **OUR PRIVILEGE** and **RESPONSIBILITY!!!**

Quickly look at **Vs.20** - "*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [you] by us: we pray [you] in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*" Since **GOD HAS MADE RECONCILIATION** by the death of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and has committed that message to us who are reconciled, we go forth declaring this **GOOD NEWS**. We aren't offering terms of peace or conditional surrender to sinners, hoping they'll bow to it. We publish and proclaim **PEACE** made by God, declaring the God who made peace by Christ. **It's as if Paul is saying:** Since we are God's official representatives in this world, and since Christ **IS NO LONGER** on this planet **in the flesh**, we admonish you in God's place, i.e., as if it were God Himself were the One doing the admonishing, "*be ye reconciled to God*". **Keep in mind the context and truths Paul has already set forth:** "*God was **IN CHRIST** reconciling the world unto Himself, **NOT IMPUTING** their trespasses unto them.*" God was the offended party, and man (including God's elect) were the **OFFENDING PARTY**. God was the One **who reconciled His elect to Himself through the death of His dear Son** - "*And all things [are] of God, who hath reconciled us to **HIMSELF** by Jesus Christ.*" What grace it is on the behalf of God that He purposed, promised, and provided the remedy to reconcile those that were His to Himself, and now He woos the hearts of His people to accept and rest in the promised offer - "*be ye reconciled to God.*" God calls on His people by His representatives to accept and rest in Christ as the Lord your righteousness, **AND YOU HAVE TO ACCEPT AND REST IN CHRIST**. But always keep this

in mind: The **ONLY REASON** any do accept and rest in God's promised grace, is because He made them willing - **Ps.110:3; John 6:37**.