

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 4-10-16 PM NOTES
"RECONCILIATION: GOD'S SOLUTION FOR MAN'S ALIENATION"
COLOSSIANS 1:20-23
#5 in Series, "Colossians: Jesus Is Enough"

There are five problems that are almost universal among mankind: condemnation, guilt, lack of acceptance, bondage to sin, and estrangement from God.

Condemnation—Justification

Romans 3:24 (NASB) "being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

Romans 5:1 (NASB) "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Romans 8:1 (NASB) "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

Guilt—Forgiveness

Ephesians 4:32 (NASB) "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

Lack of Acceptance—Adoption

Romans 8:15-16 (NASB) "¹⁵For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!' ¹⁶The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God."

Bondage to Sin—Redemption

Colossians 1:14 (NASB) "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Estrangement from God—Reconciliation

Reconciliation is when sinners are brought from hostility toward God into a state of fellowship and harmony with Him through Jesus Christ's payment of His blood on the cross.

Romans 5:10 (NASB) "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."

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 (NASB) "¹⁸Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹namely, 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. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

I. The Provision of Reconciliation (v. 20)

A. The Initiative (v. 20)

Romans 3:11 (NASB) "THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD."

John 6:44a (NASB) "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him..."

2 Corinthians 5:18a (NASB) "Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ..."

B. The Inclusion (v. 20)

Genesis 1:31a (NASB) "God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."

Romans 8:20a (NASB) "For the creation was subjected to futility..."

Genesis 3:17-19 (NASB) "¹⁷Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat from it; cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; ¹⁹by the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Isaiah 11:6-9 (NASB) "⁶And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them. ⁷Also the cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. ⁸The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. ⁹They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

Romans 8:21 (NASB) “that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”

Matthew 25:41 (NASB) “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

Matthew 25:46 (NASB) “These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Philippians 2:9-11 (NASB) “⁹ For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

C. The Price (v. 20)

Leviticus 17:11 (NASB) “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.”

Hebrews 9:22b (NASB) “...without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

Romans 5:9-10 (NASB) “⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 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.”

Romans 6:23a (NASB) “For the wages of sin is death...”

II. The Problem Calling for Reconciliation (v. 21)

A. We Were Alienated (v. 21a)

B. We Were Hostile in Mind (v. 21b)

C. We Were Engaged in Evil Deeds (v. 21c)

III. The Presentation of the Reconciled (v. 22)

Jude 1:24 (NASB) “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy.”

2 Corinthians 11:2 (NASB) “For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.”

A. Those Who Are Reconciled to God Are Holy (v. 22a)

Ephesians 1:4 (NASB) “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.”

B. Those Who Are Reconciled to God Are Blameless (v. 22b)

C. Those Who Are Reconciled to God Are Beyond Reproach (v. 22c)

IV. The Proof of Being Reconciled (v. 23)

First Baptist Church Powell 4 10 2016 PM

Sermon 5: Reconciliation: God's Solution for Man's Alienation

Series: Jesus is Enough

Colossians 1:20-23

There are five problems that are almost universal among mankind.

1. A Sense of Condemnation – Because of the things we have done, there is a cloud of condemnation that hangs over the head of many. I am reminded of a little cartoon character named Ziggy who had a black cloud over his head everywhere he went. People try many things to rid themselves of this cloud of condemnation, but the ghosts from their past keep the cloud of condemnation in place.
2. Guilt – Guilt like heavy chains wraps itself around us and impedes our walk in this world. Man's way to deal with that guilt is to balance it with blame. As a result, we live in a culture where most everyone seeks to blame others for their problems and failures. That tactic of dealing with guilt goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden. Adam said in Genesis 3:12b: "The man [Adam] said, 'The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.'" Oh how heavy are the chains of Guilt and the damage that comes from blaming others to balance the guilt.
3. A Lack of Acceptance – The need for love and acceptance is basic; it is there from birth. I believe that God gave us this desire for love and acceptance to draw us to Himself, but mankind seems to always look to other people to get their need for love and acceptance met. This desire is at the root of so many of our compromises and sins.
4. A Sense of Hopeless Bondage to Sins – So many are in the shackles of sin that holds them captive and destroys their lives. Some of those sins are socially acceptable, and some are not, but deep down we know that none of them are acceptable to God. Many, after years of trying, have just given up overcoming these "besetting sins."
5. A Sense of Estrangement or Alienation from God – These people intellectually believe that God is surely there, but they can't sense His presence and feel separated or estranged from Him.

I dare say that if we brought in a team of psychiatrists, psychologists, and other "mental health professionals," and asked them to list the problems their clients struggle with, every problem that they would list could fit under one of these five categories. Listen carefully: Jesus Christ and His work accomplished at Calvary's cross are sufficient for victory over all five of these "common to man" problems. Jesus is enough! Watch how Jesus has provided for each of these needs at the cross.

1. A Sense of Condemnation – In Christ we have *justification* by faith. To be justified means that we have been declared righteous before a Holy God because the righteousness of Christ has been imputed to us (put on our account). Justification by faith in the finished work of Christ is the only solution for condemnation. Romans 3:24: "being justified as a gift by His grace..." Romans 5:1: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 8:1: "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Jesus is enough to deal with our condemnation.
2. Guilt – In Christ we have *forgiveness*. To those who have come in repentance and faith to Christ Jesus, the Word of God says, Ephesians 4:32: "...God in Christ also has forgiven you." For those wallowing in the guilt of past sins, Jesus gives complete forgiveness. Our sins are removed from us as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12).
3. A Lack of Acceptance – To those who have been rejected by someone close to you and crave a sense of belonging, a sense of acceptance, in Christ we have *adoption* into God's forever family. Romans 8:15-16: "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God."
4. A Sense of Hopeless Bondage to Sin – For that bondage to sin, we have *redemption*! That word translated "redemption" means to purchase out of the slave market of sin in order to be set free. Those who have savingly believed in Christ have been set free from the bondage of sin. Colossians 1:14: "in whom [Jesus] we have redemption..." Romans 6:6: "knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin."

5. A Sense of Estrangement or Alienation from God – In Christ, we are *reconciled*! Colossians 1:21-22: “And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.” Jesus is enough!

We will now examine reconciliation. Let’s make sure that we understand its meaning. The word “reconciliation” in one of its forms is found about twenty-three times in the Scriptures. Here is a formal definition of reconciliation: “Reconciliation is when sinners are brought from hostility toward God into a state of fellowship and harmony with Him through Jesus Christ’s payment of His blood on the cross.” 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.” 2 Corinthians 5:18-20: “Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

I. The Provision of Reconciliation (v 20)

There is no genuine peace apart from reconciliation. It has always been God’s plan to reconcile all creation including saved mankind unto Himself.

A. The Initiative (v 20)

If there is to be reconciliation between man and God, the initiative must come from God. It could not have come from us. We were spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins. We were without capacity to take initiative. Romans 3:11: “THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD.” One preacher said that a rock is more likely to roll uphill by its own power than a spiritually dead sinner could take the initiative to be reconciled to God. Jesus said in John 6:44a: “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him...” 2 Corinthians 5:18a: “Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ...” Notice that it was not the incarnation that reconciled God and man. It was not Christ’s perfect life and His teaching that reconciled us to Him. It was Christ’s bloody death on the cross that brought this peace, this reconciliation between our holy God and those who were alienated and separated from Him and who were even enemies of God.

B. The Inclusion (v 20)

This reconciliation involves more than sinful men who come to Him in repentance and faith. The reconciliation also involves a fallen creation. When God finished His work of creation, He said in Genesis 1:31a: “God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.” God’s perfect creation was affected drastically by the coming of sin into the world. Sin destroyed the perfect harmony between the animals as well as the harmony between animals and man. The effects of sin on creation are summarized in Romans 8:20a: “For the creation was subjected to futility...” We see the far reaching effect of the curse on sin in Genesis 3:17-19:

Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat from it; cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; by the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

We live on a cursed by sin earth in a cursed by sin universe. One day that curse will be lifted. When Jesus Christ comes to rule and to reign, the curse on the earth is lifted and Isaiah describes it in Isaiah 11:6-9:

And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them. Also

the cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

At Christ's Second Coming, the sin cursed earth will be set free. Romans 8:21: "that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God." The phrase in verse 20 of Colossians 1 says: "whether things on earth or things in heaven" refers to all creation – the earth and space.

Some have taken the "all things" in verse 20 to justify a false teaching called "universalism." Universalism says that because Jesus has reconciled all things to Himself, all humanity will be saved in the end. One of the basic principles of interpretation is called in the Latin *analogia Scriptura*. That basic interpretation principle teaches that no part of Scripture, properly interpreted, contradicts any other passage of Scripture. When we compare Scripture with Scripture we see that verse 20 has to refer to all things for which reconciliation is possible. The truth that fallen angels (demons) and unbelieving humans will spend eternity separated from God in a place called hell is clearly taught in multiple Scriptures. Matthew 25:41: "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'" Matthew 25:46: "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Even fallen angels and unbelieving mankind will be forced to submit to God and to Christ for final sentencing. Philippians 2:9-11: "For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Even those in Hell will be forced to submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

C. The Price (v 20)

The price of reconciliation is "the blood of His cross." Critics of Christianity have called it "a bloody religion." In a sense that is true. Why the emphasis on blood in the Bible? It is not that blood is some kind of magic substance – even the blood of Jesus. I have heard people treat the blood of Christ like something magic. For instance, people "pleading the blood" over their house, car, family, etc. There is no basis for this in Scripture. Blood is the life of our flesh.

Leviticus 17:11: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement."

Hebrews 9:22b: "...without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

When we speak of Jesus' blood, we are talking about His literal blood that was shed, but that shed blood was His poured out life. He gave His life for us. Reconciliation did not come through Jesus' teaching as important as that was; it did not come through His example as helpful as that example is. Salvation came through His blood shed on the cross – His poured out life for our sins. We see these two side by side in Romans 5:9 and 5:10.

Romans 5:9-10: Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 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 price of our reconciliation is the poured out life of the Savior as a satisfaction of the sin debt we owed.

Romans 6:23a: "For the wages of sin is death..."

II. The Problem Calling for Reconciliation (v 21)

I alluded to this problem in the previous point of this message, but let's go a little deeper. Verse 21 is a great summary of the real reasons that we need reconciliation. It is good to often go back and meditate on our condition before we came to Christ. This remembering gives us an even greater appreciation of our great salvation.

A. We Were Alienated (v 21a)

The word “alienated” means estranged, cut off, or separated. Before they repented and savingly believed on Christ, they were (and we were) estranged from God, separated from Him with no hope of being able to do anything in our power to remedy it. All mankind apart from Christ are cut off, alienated from God. No one is worthy of salvation.

B. We Were Hostile in Mind (v 21b)

Being alienated refers to our condition; being hostile in mind refers to our attitude. Those separated from God are oftentimes hostile in mind. That is why Christians are often persecuted. Those who are alienated from God become hostile in their mind toward Him and often take it out on those who love God.

C. We Were Engaged in Evil Deeds (v 21c)

Those who are not reconciled to God are engaged in evil deeds. The most evil deed is to continue in unbelief. To simply live for ourselves and ignore God is unspeakably evil. Someone may say, “I may not be a Christian, but I’m not a bad person.” That’s not God’s assessment. Unbelief is bad, as bad as one can get.

III. The Presentation of the Reconciled (v 22)

Why were we reconciled to God? Was it just so that we could go to Heaven? Let’s examine the real reason Christ has reconciled us to God. The verse starts with “yet.” That means “in spite of.” He says that in spite of the fact that we were alienated from God, hostile in mind, and engaged in evil deeds, he has reconciled us to God through His substitutionary death on our behalf. The phrase “in order to” tells us why He would lavish such grace on sinners. It was in order to present us before the Father in a condition that is pleasing to Him. We glorify Him by being trophies of His grace! Jude talked about this presentation in Jude 1:24: “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy.” Paul expressed a similar desire for the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 11:2: “For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you *as a pure virgin.*” He gives a three-fold description of those who are reconciled.

A. Those Who Are Reconciled to God Are Holy (v 22a)

To be holy is to be set apart to God and His purposes. Holiness is more than just not having unconfessed sin. It includes that, but it is more. A holy person is one who lives a life that is set apart from the rest of the world and its sins, its motives, its futile way of life. This was God’s plan for us before we were ever born. Ephesians 1:4: “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.”

B. Those Who Are Reconciled to God Are Blameless (v 22b)

This word literally means “without blemish.” It means that others have nothing to legitimately charge us with. Oh think of the power of Jesus blood, His poured out life! He takes a sinner who is anything but blameless and cleanses us, saves us, and presents us holy and blameless before the Lord.

C. Those Who Are Reconciled to God Are Beyond Reproach (v 22c)

That word is very similar to blameless. It is translated “free from accusation” in the NIV. One of the names or descriptions of the devil is “the accuser of the brethren.” In Christ, we are presented to the Father in such a condition that the devil has no grounds to accuse.

Think what our Lord Jesus has done for us. He reconciled us to God by making peace between us and God through His blood that was shed on the cross. He took sinners who were alienated from God, hostile in mind and engaged in evil deeds and He presents us before the Father holy, blameless, and beyond reproach. Hallelujah, what a Savior! What more do we need? Jesus is enough!

IV. The Proof of Being Reconciled (v 23)

This is not a condition that we must keep to stay reconciled to God; this is the evidence, the proof that we have been reconciled. This verse is about evidence, not earning. Truly reconciled people continue! To put it yet another way, we are not saved by continuing in the faith, but our continuing in the faith is the evidence that we are saved. As someone said, "The faith that falters before the finish was faulty from the first." Truly reconciled people continue in the faith, and they are not moved away from hope of the Gospel.

Conclusion

Have you been reconciled to God? There is only one way. It is through Jesus Christ who shed His blood to deal with the sin that was the barrier between you and God. If you profess to be reconciled to God, does your lifestyle evidence it? By the way, if we are reconciled to God, then we have solid ground to stand on as we seek reconciliation with others.