

Being Reconciled to God, and the Ministry of Reconciliation

2 Cor. 5:18-20 - And all things are of God, **who hath reconciled us unto himself** by Jesus Christ, and **hath given unto 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**. 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 unto God**.

How do we use the word reconcile?

- "He reconciled his bank account."
- "She and her mother were finally reconciled after all these years"
- "They divorced for 'irreconcilable differences'."
- "The House and Senate bills are now in the reconciliation stage."
- "I have become reconciled to the loss."

What does reconciliation mean?

1. That there are two parties or objects, in a state of fundamental disagreement
2. That the two are brought into agreement by some process
3. It may be that one side is right and one is wrong (e.g. an error in your check register)
4. Or that both sides are somehow "at fault" and that there is a middle ground where they can come to some agreement.

So what is the reconciliation of 2 Cor. 5?

- Man and God are in conflict
 - God is utterly holy, righteous, and just. Isa. 6:3, Ps. 145:17, Prov. 21:3
 - Man is created in God's image, but has become "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4:18-19). He is "depraved", with a darkened understanding; ignorant, blind. Jer. 17:9.
- What is the "depravity of man"
 - It means that man is utterly bereft of genuine goodness before God - Isa. 64:6
 - It does not mean that we could not choose sins that are even more evil than we have. Some sins ARE worse than others, and will have a greater judgment
 - Nor that we are as wicked as is possible (men can descend into greater depths of wickedness, and pile more sin upon more sin. In time it will all come due.)
 - It means that we are ALL guilty before God. There is not one single person (apart from Christ) who could or has lived a sinless life. (If it was even possible, then Christ's death would not have been necessary.)
- In short, it means that man is spiritually DEAD, and completely incapable of reforming himself.
- But God's justice demands punishment. Ex. 34:6-7, Rom. 1:18 He cannot just overlook sin. We don't WANT God to be just with us, or we would be doomed. We really do deserve His eternal punishment. We need His mercy.
- This is a dilemma. God and man are totally at odds, and man is incapable of "fixing it". Sin cannot be undone.
- The solution, if there could be one, therefore can only come from God. How can God show mercy on undeserving sinners, and yet satisfy His justice? How could he justly bring man back into a state of pure relationship with himself? It came by the VICARIOUS SUFFERING AND BLOOD ATONEMENT OF CHRIST THROUGH DEATH, AS A HOLY SUBSTITUTE. HE BORE, NOT THE GUILT, BUT THE PENALTY OF OUR GUILT. He was the perfect fulfillment of all the Old Testament sacrificial types. e.g. Jn. 1:29, 1 Cor. 5:7, 2 Cor. 5:21 (where KJV "sin" means "sin offering"). GOD reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ. God was "IN Christ on the cross, reconciling the world to Himself". He sent His Son to become a man, a perfect and sinless man, who could and would give himself as a perfect, spotless substitutionary sacrifice. Our sins were covered and washed away by his blood. 1 P. 1:18-19

So what is the ministry of reconciliation?

Being able to minister unto others the same reconciliation we have received, by preaching and witnessing, by prayers and intercessions. To let people know that they too can be at peace with God and become His sons by faith, not through self-improvement or religious activity, but by a free reception of God's good gift.

John 1: 12-13 – But as many as RECEIVED HIM, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but of God.

What is our response? What is YOUR response?

2 Cor. 5:20 – Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in God's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Rom. 5:6-11 – if you cannot honestly say you have turned from your sins, and “I am a Christian”, then you are an enemy of God. Yet his love towards you is (in verse 10):

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.

NOW is the day of your salvation! Turn from your sins, receive Christ, and LIVE.