# The Ministry of Reconciliation

**2 Corinthians 5:18-21**

4/10/2011

***Take encouragement from God's revealed truth about his ministry of reconciliation!***

*Six truths regarding reconciliation:*

**1. Reconciliation is a <u>changed relationship</u> between <u>two separated parties</u>** (v. 18a)

**2. Reconciliation is <u>initiated</u> by <u>God in His unconditional love</u>** (v. 18a)

**3. Reconciliation is <u>accomplished</u> (made possible) by <u>Christ's sacrifice</u>** (v.18b, 19a)

**4 Reconciliation is <u>accompanied</u> by <u>spiritual blessings</u>**

*3 spiritual blessings made possible by reconciliation with God:*

**a. Newness of <u>life</u>** (v.17)

**b. Forgiveness of <u>sin</u>** (v.19)

**c. Imputation of <u>righteousness</u>** (v.21)

**5. Reconciliation is <u>announced and promoted</u> by <u>Christian witnesses</u>** (v.18c, 19c, 20)

**6. Reconciliation is <u>available</u> upon <u>repentance and faith</u> in Christ** (v.20b-21)

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12-9-2020

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*Six truths regarding reconciliation:*

**1. Reconciliation is a _____ between _____** (v. 18a)

**2. Reconciliation is _____ by _____**(v. 18a)

**3. Reconciliation is _____ (made possible) by _____** (v.18b, 19a)

**4 Reconciliation is _____ by _____**

*3 spiritual blessings made possible by reconciliation with God:*

**a. Newness of _____** (v.17)

**b. Forgiveness of _____** (v.19)

**c. Imputation of _____** (v.21)

**5. Reconciliation is _____ by _____** (v.18c, 19c, 20)

**6. Reconciliation is _____ upon _____ in Christ** (v.20b-21)

# The Ministry of Reconciliation

**2 Corinthians 5:18-21**
4/10/2011

Introduction:

ILLUS: Enemies become friends.

The reason for most of man's problems are people's alienation (distance and separation) from God.

***Take encouragement from God's revealed truth about his ministry of reconciliation!***

*Six truths regarding reconciliation:*

**1. Reconciliation is a <u>changed relationship</u> between <u>two separated parties</u>** (v. 18a)

"Reconciled" – *katallasso* = To change back. When used of relationships, the word means to effect a change so that two parties who previously have been estranged from each other can be brought back together again. Reconciliation means to change from enmity to friendship; from hostility to favor; from separation and distance between two persons to closeness and peace.

The word "reconciled" is used in Matthew 5:24 of a person being reconciled before bringing his gift to the altar –

*Matthew 5:24*
Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

The word "reconciled" is used in 1 Cor. 7:11 of a woman returning to her husband whom she had left.
*1 Corinthians 7:11*
But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife.

**"Hath reconciled"** – This changed (restored) relationship to God is one that never needs repenting. The aorist tense of the participle indicates a past completed work of God.

*Romans 5:10*
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.

## Reconciliation

A change from enmity to friendship. It is mutual, i.e., it is a change wrought in both parties who have been at enmity.

1. In #Col 1:21,22 the word there used refers to a change wrought in the personal character of the sinner who ceases to be an enemy to God by wicked works, and yields up to him his full confidence and love. In #2Co 5:20 the apostle beseeches the Corinthians to be "reconciled to God," i.e., to lay aside their enmity.
2. #Ro 5:10 refers not to any change in our disposition toward God, but to God himself, as the party reconciled. #Ro 5:11 teaches the same truth. From God we have received "the reconciliation" (R.V.), i.e., he has conferred on us the token of his friendship. So also #2Co 5:18,19 speaks of a reconciliation originating with God, and consisting in the removal of his merited wrath. In #Eph 2:16 it is clear that the apostle does not refer to the winning back of the sinner in love and loyalty to God, but to the restoration of God's forfeited favour. This is effected by his justice being satisfied, so that he can, in consistency with his own nature, be favourable toward sinners. Justice demands the punishment of sinners. The death of Christ satisfies justice, and so reconciles God to us. This reconciliation makes God our friend, and enables him to pardon and save us.

*(Easton's Revised Bible Dictionary)*

**2. Reconciliation is <u>initiated</u> by <u>God in His unconditional love</u>** (v. 18a)

**"All thing are of God"** – This immediately refers to the "all things" that have "become new" in Christ (v. 17). Every blessing you have has come from God! He is the source from which all spiritual blessings flow.

**"Us to Himself" -** Note: God is not reconciled to us, rather we are reconciled to Him. He made reconciliation possible, but it is up to us to "<u>be</u> reconciled to God" (v. 20).

He provided reconciliation, but we must make the move to be brought to Him and have our fatally-damaged relationship with Him restored.

***A Permanent Relationship!***

*Romans 5:10-11*
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. And not only *so*, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Arguing from the greater to the lesser, Paul is saying, If God could save us when we were <u>enemies</u>, can't He keep us saved now that we are <u>friends</u>? Yes!

If Christ's <u>death</u> brought us into a friendship relationship, can't His <u>life</u> keep us in such a relationship? Yes!

"If the death of Christ was the means of our reconciliation, the life of Christ will be the means of our preservation" (Griffith Thomas, p. 150).

The surrendered believer can rejoice in God because he is no longer at war with Him. God is no longer our enemy (v. 10). We are not at odds with God anymore.

Rather, He is our friend! We have been reconciled (v. 10), and through Christ we have received such a reconciliation (KJV - "atonement").

The believer does not dread God, but has joy when he thinks about such a God as ours is.

The believer has a feeling of joy because he has been liberated from the shackles of sin; he has been released from the prospects of hell; he has been promised the bliss of Heaven!

**3. Reconciliation is accomplished (made possible) by Christ's sacrifice** (v.18b, 19a)

**"By Jesus Christ" -** Jesus is the means by which reconciliation is provided (v. 21).

His death on Cavalry's cross fully satisfied God's holy demands regarding sin, so that reconciliation could be made possible.

**"To wit" -** namely; that is. Paul restates v. 18.

**"God was in Christ" -** a hint at the deity of Christ; but primarily showing God's purpose and plan in reconciling us through the person of Christ as His only means of reconciliation.

Note: In order to reconcile sinful man to a holy God, Christ had to bear the nature of the two parties being brought together. He had to be both God and man; both full deity and full humanity (howbeit without sin or sinful nature [v. 21]).

*Hebrews 2:17*
Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

SEE: v. 21

Christ took our sin and paid for it, and we took His righteousness and retain it.

Both practical (1 Peter 2:24) and positional righteousness (here) are found in Christ.

**4 Reconciliation is <u>accompanied</u> by <u>spiritual blessings</u>**

*3 spiritual blessings made possible by reconciliation with God:*

**a. Newness of <u>life</u>** (v.17)

**b. Forgiveness of <u>sin</u>** (v.19)

**"Reconciling the world" -** obviously the entire world will not be reconciled to God. But it is God's desire that they are and that none perish (2 Peter 3:9). And God is reconciling a remnant of people from all over the earth.

*Revelation 5:9*
And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

**"Not imputing their trespasses unto them" -** Not crediting to their account their own overstepping of God's boundaries. Sin is what came in between us and God. Unless that sin is paid for, forgiven and removed from our account, we could never have a friendship relationship with God. But praise His name, those transgressions have been paid for!

**"Trespasses" -** transgressions; a false step over a restricted boundary. Sin is any violation of God's moral law in thought, word, or action.

*Isaiah 59:2*
But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.

C.H. Spurgeon said, "You and your sins must separate or you and God will never come together" (cited by MacArthur, p. 205).

**c. Imputation of <u>righteousness</u>** (v.21)

**"The righteousness of God" -** How righteous is God? Perfect!

You have God's perfection credited to your spiritual bank account if you are "in Him" (in relationship with Christ).

Reconciliation is possible because we have the righteousness of Christ wrapped around us.

ILLUS: The man who tried to get into Heaven without a wedding garment (Matthew 22:11f).

*Ezekiel 33:13*
When I shall say to the righteous, *that* he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.

*Romans 10:3*
For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

*Philippians 3:9*
And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

**5. Reconciliation is <u>announced and promoted</u> by <u>Christian witnesses</u>** (v.18c, 19c, 20)

**v. 20**

While no one (pope or otherwise) has the authority to be the vicar (substitute) of Christ on earth, it can be said that every believer stands in His stead and speaks for Him when we share the Gospel.

**"We are ambassadors for Christ" -** An ambassador is one who fulfills the task and speaks and carries out the wishes for the one who sent him. He speaks on behalf of the sender (who might be an emperor or king).

**"<u>For</u> Christ" –** (*huper*) on behalf of Christ. When we witness, we do so on behalf of our King, Jesus.

"What is an ambassador? Think about that question for a minute. Ambassadors spend their lives on foreign soil. They speak a different language than the people. They have different traditions, customs, cultures and lifestyles. They always feel somewhat like a stranger. They speak on behalf of their country, conveying its ideals, its policies, its decisions. And. . . the reputation of their country rests in their hands. For good or for bad, their country is judged by their words and by their actions." (Swindoll, p. 80).

"We need to fulfill the role of a good ambassador. Not to speak on our behalf but on the behalf of Christ. Not to act on our own authority but on the authority of Christ. Not to further our own little kingdom but the kingdom of Christ." (Swindoll, p. 81).

**"Christ. . . God" –** Note how the words are used interchangeably. To be an ambassador for Christ is to be an ambassador for God, because Christ is God.

God makes His appeal to lost sinners through His saved saints. Just as Jesus preached through Noah in His day (1 Peter. 3:19-20), so He speaks through His children today!

**6. Reconciliation is <u>available</u> upon <u>repentance and faith</u> in Christ** (v.20b-21)

**v. 18**
Although God does the work of reconciling sinful people to Himself, He has given us a part in the reconciliation process.

We have the privilege of sharing God's gracious truth with others.

**v. 19**
**"The word of reconciliation" –** We don't reconcile man to God; we simply speak God's message and leave the reconciling to God. Ours is the ministry of the <u>Word</u>.

**v. 20**
**"Beseech you" –** we urge you; we entreat you.

**"We pray you" -** to repeatedly ask.

There ought to be some persuasive strong appeal in our witness.

When was the last time you strongly urged someone to be reconciled to God through Christ?

The very fact that we need to be reconciled implies that we are not automatically born reconciled to God. Rather, we are at enmity with God.

**"Be ye reconciled to God" –**

1) The <u>imperative</u> mood shows the <u>urgency</u> of reconciliation. It is no little matter; your entire eternal destiny hinges on whether or not you are reconciled to God.

   No reconciliation = No Heaven (no eternal life).

2) The <u>passive</u> voice shows the sovereign work of God in reconciliation. He does the work, we receive it.

"Reconciliation is not something man does but what he receives; it is not what he accomplishes but what he embraces" (John MacArthur, p. 200).

We must yield and trust Christ and He will do the instantaneous miracle of reconciling us to Himself.