

Wonderful Words of Eternal Life

Reconciliation

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Reconciliation

Growing up did your parents ever give you a left shoe as a present and tell you by the way if you're good, next year we'll go ahead and give you the right shoe to go with it? No, you've never experienced that. The reason you've never experienced this is because generally, one shoe without the other is worthless; they belong together, don't they?

Reconciliation is bringing two things together that are separated. Two things that belong together are not supposed to be apart. Those things are reconciled when they're brought back together. Left and right shoes aren't the only things that belong together.

Man and God belong together also. David once said, as a deer pants for water, so my soul longs for thee oh God. (Psalm 42:1) Solomon his son said God you have made us with eternity in our hearts. Man is made for fellowship with God. There has never been a time in history nor never will be a time when there will be more atheists in this world than there will be God-fearers and God-believers. Not that everybody will believe in God the way they should but God has made us so that we realize there is this infinite need for fellowship with him.

But sin has become a barrier to that fellowship. Romans 3:23 states "all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory." Romans 6:23, records "the wages of sin is death." Remember that word, death? It just means separation. It's a terrible separation. But God solved all of these problems created by our sins in one fell swoop. Ironically he solved them on an instrument of capital punishment, a Roman cross. God made it possible for us to be holy but our sin destroys that holiness leaving us with the following consequences:

1. Our separation leaves us indebted to God. God solved that at the cross by atoning for our sins. He paid a debt for us that we are unable to pay for ourselves. The concept of atonement is wrapped up in 2 Corinthians 5:21, "God made him who had no sin to be sin" for our sakes.
2. Our sin evokes God's punishment and wrath. God says, I'll take care of that! At the cross, I'm going to give you propitiation. That big word just means to turn away wrath, to deflect it. The Bible says, 1 John 2:2 that Jesus Christ is the propitiation (atoning sacrifice) for our sin, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
3. Our sin leaves us unworthy to approach God. God says I'll take care of that! "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." (Romans 5:9) Do you realize all those things occurred at the cross? Did you ever stop to think about that? The huge debt that you cannot pay is taken care of. The wrath that's coming our way from God because of our sins will be deflected by God's shield. The fact that we would have to cower as a slave, as an insect, in the presence of God has been removed. God says, I'm going to justify you, allow you proper standing in my presence. Did you realize that all of that was taken care of at the cross?

You need to understand the importance of the cross. Paul said in Galatians 6:14, "Far be it for me to glory in anything save in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ." Paul did not glory in his past, in his writings, or in his good works. He did not even glory in the other parts of Jesus' life. He did not glory in the virgin birth. He believed it, but he didn't glory in it. He didn't glory in the teachings. He didn't glory in the miracles. He didn't even say he gloried in the resurrection. He said the reason I gloried is because of the cross, because of all that was done right there.

4. Our sin destroyed our relationship with God. At the cross, God made it possible for man to reconcile himself to God through trust and obedience. He put two things back together that were separated that never should have been apart. "by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross." (Colossians 1:20) "For if when 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. Not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation." (Romans 5:10, 11)

In writing to the Christians in Corinth Paul said "Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:18) There are two very, very important applications of this reconciliation!

1. God is the reconciler and we are the reconcile. God did all the work. He reconciled us to him even though he never moved. He's not the one who sinned. He didn't get mad. He has been where he's always been. We're the ones who've wandered off. But he reconciled all things to himself by the cross of Jesus Christ. We sinned. We went away. We hardened our hearts. We made our excuses. We became callous. God is doing the calling and searching. He found us in our pitiful condition pleading with us to come home. But we must recognize him and hear his call. "And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:8) What could be more reconciling than God putting on flesh, living among us, suffering at our hands? He allowed himself to be fully tempted and fully victimized, that wasn't easy, letting that proud, pompous, self-righteous, know-it-all crowd nail him to a cross in the name of the religion that he had given them. Then while dying on that cross saying, "Father forgive them for they don't know what they're doing."

The point is, God did all the things he had to do in such a way that we would look at that cross and say, oh how much he must love us. Let's don't be guilty of looking at John 3:16 and reciting it so flippantly. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." "For God so loved the world that he gave (and he gave) his only begotten Son." We look at that and I say to myself, my how he must want me back. How the Father must want me to live in Heaven. And if you've never looked at it that way before, if you've never thought of the cross in that light, think of it that way and be drawn to that cross. That's why Jesus said, if I be lifted up, I'll draw all men to myself. That's reconciliation, God did it.

2. He's given to us the ministry of reconciliation. God is leading the reconciliation charge. God is the loving Father in Luke 15, who when he sees that boy a long way off he runs to him and embrace him. When a person does that and sees God in the person of the Son, Jesus on the cross, and believes him, turns away from the life currently living and is baptized by the authority of Jesus, their sins are washed away and the Spirit of God go to work changing them. "The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (Romans 5:5) Say to the world, look God came after you, look what he's done for you. God is patiently waiting not wanting that any should perish. Reconciliation is one of the most beautiful words. Amazing Grace, lesson # 1068 Steve Flatt, 1-5-1992

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