

Reconciliation

“All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.”

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 (ESV)

1. We are first and foremost reconciled with God.
2. What is reconciliation?
 - a. Reconciliation is personal.
 - b. Reconciliation is two parties, once hostile, coming together in a bond of peace.
 - c. Reconciliation is central to the gospel.
 - d. True reconciliation only comes with a change of heart.
3. There was once a time when we regarded Jesus “according to the flesh” (2 Cor. 5:16)

“For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.” Romans 8:7 (ESV)

4. The effects of reconciliation between us and God:
 - a. We are new creations (2 Cor. 5:17).
 - b. We have peace with God (Romans 5:1).
 - i. Peace in the Old Testament is the idea of shalom (Numbers 6:24-26).
 - ii. It is a covenant of peace (Isaiah 55; Jeremiah 31; Ezekiel 36-37).
5. Reconciliation with God happens through Christ (2 Cor. 5:18).
 - a. Christ took upon himself our sin (2 Cor. 5:21).
 - b. Christ gave us his righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21).

- c. This great exchange is called imputation.
6. We are now ambassadors of reconciliation.
- a. Two effects of our “ambassadorship”:
 - i. Familial reconciliation.
 - ii. Cultural reconciliation.
7. The church is the “household of God, a pillar and buttress of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15).
8. Exercise: Take a few minutes and comb through Matthew 5:21-26. What is Jesus saying here? Write down your notes and will discuss as a group.
- a. Some conclusions from Matthew 5:21-26:
 - i. External acts of obedience or disobedience begins internally in the heart.

“Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.” 1 John 3:15 (ESV)

- ii. Lack of reconciliation between one another affects your worship of God.
- iii. Reconciliation is an urgent matter.

“How seldom do we heed Christ’s call for immediacy of action! If murder is a horrible crime, malicious anger and insult are horrible too. And so is every deed, word, look or thought by which we hurt or offend a fellow human being. We need to be more sensitive about these evils. We must never allow an estrangement to remain, still less to grow. We must not delay to put it right. We must not even allow the sun to set on our anger. But immediately, as soon as we are conscious of a broken relationship, we must take the initiative to mend it, to apologize for the grievance we have caused, to pay the debt we have left unpaid, to make amends... . If we want to avoid committing murder in God’s sight, we must take every possible positive step to live in peace and love with all men.”

John Stott

9. Cultural reconciliation is brokenness/strife/hostility between races, ethnicities and people groups.

10. The starting point to addressing the issue of cultural strife is seeing everyone as made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27).
 - a. Being made in the image of God means every human being has dignity, value and worth.
 - b. Exercise: Take a few minutes and work through Ephesians 2:11-22. What is Paul saying here? Write down your notes and will discuss as a group.
 - i. Conclusions from Ephesians 2:11-22:
 1. Remember what you were (vv. 11-13).
 2. Your identity is now one reconciled (vv. 14-18).
 3. We are members of a new household (vv. 19-22).
 - a. Gospel community and reconciliation will require inconvenience and sacrifice from everyone involved.
 - b. As Christ-followers and members of the same household, we lay down our lives for one another.