

World Reconciliation

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All things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit [know], 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 (II Corinthians 5:18-19).

What absolutely amazing words from Paul, God's apostle to the nations! What a divine revelation was committed to his trust. Oh, for the faith to fully believe the disclosure of the divine plan. Oh, for the courage to embrace God's full accomplishments in the reconciliatory work of the Lord Jesus Christ!

II Corinthians Chapter 5 is a glorious revelation of what God consummated in His Son. It is an exceedingly rich presentation by God's apostle of grace. Here we learn of the full scope of reconciliation.

WORLDWIDE RECONCILIATION

Reconciling the world unto Himself (:19).

What was the revelation given to Paul, about God's work in Christ? What did he reveal that God actually accomplished in Christ?

Reconciliation!

Hear that word. God procured "reconciliation" through His Son.

Just what is "reconciliation"? It is the restoration to divine favor.¹ The enmity, division and estrangement of man towards God have been removed by the Father Himself – "reconciling the world unto Himself."

1. *Strong's Greek Lexicon* #2643 "katallage," meaning "restoration to (the divine) favor."

Noah Webster defines the root of reconciliation (conciliate) as, "to unite." (*American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828)

It was indeed true that,

*When we were enemies, we were **reconciled to God** by the death of His Son (Romans 5:10).*

The same word that Paul uses for “reconciliation” (:18-19), is translated in the very next verse in the *King James Version* as “atonement” (the old English “at-one-ment”):

*We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the **atonement** [at-one-ment] (Romans 5:11).²*

What a work of reconciliation – atonement – restoration. Nothing stands between the Father and His creation.

For whom did God accomplish this work in Christ?

The World!

*Reconciling **the world** (:19).*

*The reconciling of **the world** (Romans 11:15).*

***Reconcile all things** unto Himself (Colossians 1:20).*

Reconciliation was not just for a few – it was not just believers who were restored to God – the scope of Christ’s atoning work was revealed by Paul to be *worldwide!*

The far-reaching, triumphant cross-work of Jesus Christ was not limited to those who currently believe. He was not partial in His work and accomplishments. He was all-inclusive. Christ did His wonderful work for the whole world.

DIVINE RECONCILIATION

*Reconciling the world **unto Himself** (:19).*

*Reconcile all things **unto Himself** (Colossians 1:20).*

This reconciliation is not man’s work in any sense. Man is not restoring himself to God; man is not coming to God; but God is coming to man, in Christ: “*that God was in Christ, reconciling the world **unto Himself**”*

The world did not reconcile *itself* to God. Instead, it was the Father Who reconciled the world to Himself. He did so without any effort or merit on man’s part, for He did the work of

2. Or, as other translations have, “received the **reconciliation**” (American Standard Version, J.N. Darby’s Translation, Young’s Literal Translation).

reconciliation while the world was still His “*enemy*.” He reconciled the world to Himself by the death of His dear Son.

Reconciliation – the restoration to divine favor – is purely a divine work. It does not take place by *any* effort whatsoever on man’s part. The Father “*Himself*” did the work through the *at-one-ment* of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The world has now been made at-one with the Father.

NON-IMPUTATION OF SIN

Not imputing their trespasses unto them (:19).

Just what does this worldwide reconciliation involve? It involves the trespasses of the world against Him; and that He is not imputing them. This is an amazing revelation of truth committed to Paul; a revolutionary doctrine in contrast to record-keeping orthodoxy.

Most of Christendom could not even fathom that the believer’s sins are not being “*imputed*” (Romans 4:8); let alone that the work of Christ has obtained something on a far grander scale. When Paul says, “*Not imputing their trespasses unto them*,” the “*them*” is a reference to the “*the world*.” Paul taught that God was not imputing the world’s trespasses!

Just what is “*imputation*”? It is record-keeping. It is the bookkeeping process of accounting, or numbering.³

Paul is telling us that God does not tally man’s trespasses against him. He does not record them. He does not keep an account of them. He does not charge them to one’s record. This is because,

Christ died for our sins (I Corinthians 15:3);

and,

Because ... if One died for all, then were all dead (II Corinthians 5:14).⁴

MINISTRY AND WORD OF RECONCILIATION

*Hath given to us the **ministry of reconciliation** ... Hath committed unto us the **word of reconciliation*** (:18-19).

3. *Strong’s Greek Lexicon* #3049, “*logizomai*,” meaning “to take an inventory.” Some of the other ways that it is translated in the *King James Version* are: count, account, number, and reckon.

Noah Webster defines “*impute*” as, “to charge; to attribute; to set to the account of ... we impute crimes, sins, trespasses, faults, blame, &c., to the guilty persons.” (*American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828)

4. Or, as other translations have:

“*that One died for all, therefore all died*” (*The Holy Bible in Modern English*, 1903, Ferrar Fenton)

“*that if one for all died, then the whole died*” (*Young’s Literal Translation*, 1863, Robert Young).

What a change of attitude reconciliation is from the religious mindset and worldview.

We, as *first-trusters*,⁵ have the privilege of enjoying this reconciliation, living in the realization of divine favor, that nothing stands between us and the Father.

God has given the *first-trusters* a ministry. We are the Father's "*vessels of mercy*" (Romans 9:23); we are to see all men in their relationship to this all-inclusive reconciliation of God. Our ministry is not institutional, nor organizational; it is simply to share with those around us the Father's love and acceptance of them through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. We only entreat them,

*in Christ's stead, **Be ye reconciled to God*** (II Corinthians 5:20).

We are not encouraging them to "do" anything; but to simply "*be*" what the Father has already made them: "*reconciled to God.*"

That which is committed to us is not the "ministry of condemnation," nor the "ministry of retribution," nor the "ministry of judgment" – rather, it is the "*ministry of reconciliation.*"

Ours is not the "word of wrath," nor the "word of punishment," nor the "word of damnation" – rather, it is the "*word of reconciliation.*"

Our very lives – even down to the nature and intent of what proceeds out of our mouths – are to be the embodiment of the Father's reconciliation work in Christ Jesus.

Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man (Colossians 4:6).⁶

5. *That we should be to the praise of His glory, who **first trusted** in Christ* (Ephesians 1:12).

Do not be discouraged as you look around you. What you see is not the end of God's plan and purpose. Granted, the world is filled with sin and unbelief – that "*the whole world lieth in wickedness*" (I John 5:19) – but God is not yet done. Don't judge the final outcome by the current state of things. This is not the finished product of God.

God has not saved us simply to abandon the rest of mankind in eternal torment. We are just the *first-trusters*, the *firstfruits* of Christ's glorious redemptive work. Ultimately God's plan includes *all* of His creation. None will be permanently lost. Divine love never fails to reach its goal.

Those of us who now trust the Lord Jesus Christ are but the beginning of God's glorious work. We are but the *first-trusters* in His glorious design.

In every harvest there is that small portion of the crop that matures early, before the vast majority of the rest. The *firstfruits* are a token of that which is to come – the full harvest.

Under the Old Testament economy the *firstfruits* belonged to God, and were holy unto Him.

In every generation, and in every place, God has had His *firstfruits*; those that come to harvest earlier than the rest. What a blessed privilege to be the *firstfruits* of the Lord, and just as God has brought us to faith, He too will bring the rest of His creation.

What a joy to be in on God's *early* plans! As a part of the *firstfruits* of the harvest we have so much to be thankful for. We are especially thrilled when we think how our Father has made us co-laborers with Him in His sovereign plan to include all of His creation in His full harvest.

6. Note that Paul does not say "**what** ye ought to answer" – but "**how** ye ought to answer." How? "*always with grace!*" ... "*That it may minister grace unto the hearers*" (Ephesians 4:29).

ULTIMATE REALIZATION

The world has been *united* with the Father. He has removed all enmity, division, and estrangement. Through Christ the world has been brought into the fullness of divine favor.

Not all the world has this knowledge at this time. They are still “*alienated and enemies*,” but this condition exists *ONLY* in **their** minds (Colossians 1:21).⁷ This is not how things *really* are now. The world only needs to be brought to the realization of their reconciliation, and this *will* come in due course.

The Father has already *made* all men reconciled to Himself. Now, men only need to “*be*” what He has made them – “*reconciled to God*.” In our Father’s own good course of time, all will indeed “**be** *reconciled to God*.”

Until that time, ours is truly a *good news* ministry; and we are privileged to live in the spirit of divine reconciliation – allowing it to permeate our attitudes, hearts and lives. In the spirit of our Father, we are free to live in personal reconciliation among ourselves and with others.

7. *And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled.*

Interestingly the word that is translated “*reconciled*” here is *Strong’s Greek Lexicon* #604 “*apokatalasso*” which is a compound word from #575 and #2644, meaning “to reconcile fully.”

This is the word that is used in Colossians 1:20:

And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

By Paul’s use of the word here, we can see that “*all things*” will indeed one day be “*fully reconciled*” unto Him. This “*full reconciliation*” takes place when the *mental alienation* is finally removed in all creation.

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10-11).

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