

Reconciliation to God

Text: 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

Introduction

1. Reconciliation defined.
 - a. Reconciliation: the action of reconciling; the state of being reconciled.
 - b. Reconcile: to restore friendship or harmony to settle or resolve.
2. Examples of reconciliation.
 - a. When he receives his statement from the bank each month, the responsible individual will reconcile his checkbook with that statement.
 - b. Spouses who have separated or even divorced will offer seek to reconcile by resolving their differences.
 - c. While it is important to reconcile one's checkbook and resolve differences in a marital relationship, no reconciliation is more important than reconciling with God.
3. Man's need for reconciliation.
 - a. It was made necessary by his disobedience to God.
 - b. The cause of man's alienation from God is his sin. (Isa. 59:1-2)
4. God responded to man's need, even before the foundation of the world, seeing it was possible that man would sin and be separated from Him. (Eph. 1:3-4)
5. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 reveals a great deal about God's provisions for man's reconciliation.
 - This lesson will consider those things that this text teaches about reconciliation to God.

I. The Author of Reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18)

- A. God the Father is the source of the plan for:
 1. Removing people's sins.
 2. Restoring the sinful person to a position of friendship with Him.
- B. God alone could initiate reconciliation.
 1. Though it was man who sinned, he was incapable of taking away his sins. (Isa. 64:6)
 2. Only God possesses the wisdom, resources and power necessary to effect it. (Rom. 7:22-25)

II. The One By Whom Reconciliation Comes (2 Cor. 5:18-19)

- A. The Father designated the Son as the one to accomplish His eternal purpose. (Eph. 3:8-12; John 6:38)
- B. Jesus Christ died so that sin might be removed and friendship with God restored. (Rom. 5:6-11)
- C. Reconciliation is "in Christ." (2 Cor. 5:19)
 - 1. It takes place in His body, the church. (Eph. 2:11-18; 1:22-23)
 - 2. To be "in Christ" is to be in His church. An obedient faith:
 - a. Appropriates the benefits of Christ's death. (Rom. 6:3-4)
 - b. Reconciles one to God by taking away sin. (Acts 2:38; 22:16)
 - c. Puts one into Christ where all spiritual blessings are. (Gal. 3:27; Eph. 1:3)
 - d. Adds one to and puts one in the church. (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13)

II. The Substance and Availability of Reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-19)

- A. The ministry of reconciliation. (v. 18)
 - 1. It would do man no good if God had planned to reconcile him, had designated Christ to effect it but then failed to place it within man's grasp.
 - 2. God made it completely accessible to all men by setting in motion the "ministry of reconciliation."
- B. The explanation of the "ministry of reconciliation" in verse 19 reveals the substance of reconciliation.
 - 1. "Not imputing (ASV: "reckoning") their trespasses to them."
 - 2. God, in Christ, forgives the sins of His obedient children.
 - a. They have been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb.
 - b. Their sins are not credited to their account.

II. The Word of Reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19)

- A. From the word, and it alone, does man know:
 - 1. Of God's work and plan to reconcile him.
 - 2. The means God uses to effect reconciliation.
- B. Without the "word of reconciliation," one could neither know of reconciliation nor attain it.
- C. What is the "word of reconciliation?" It is the word the apostles preached.
 - 1. The apostles were the "ambassadors for Christ," ambassadors of reconciliation. (2 Cor. 5:20)
 - a. They were authorized by Christ to preach in His name. (Matt. 16:19; 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-49a; Acts 2:42)

- b. They bore the credentials of ambassadors in the miracles they worked. (Mark 16:15-18)
2. We must preach/obey only what they preached or there is no reconciliation. (cf. Gal. 1:6-9)

Conclusion

1. The advantage of reconciliation is seen in 2 Corinthians 5:21 — we can become the righteousness of God.
2. Jesus died as a substitute for us.
 - a. The righteous died for the unrighteous.
 - b. He and the sinner changed places on the cross—He suffered the pain and agony we should have suffered.
3. Let us be thankful for and take advantage of the reconciliation God and Christ have made possible and available.