

You, He Reconciled to Himself

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[0 : 00] All right, let's go to Colossians chapter 1. We're back in Colossians here for a good while. Colossians chapter 1, we're going to read verse 21 through 23 this morning.

And you'll remember Paul has written this to a particular church that is suffering under false teachers. Two different kinds of false teachers have invaded the church and the pastor has come to Paul to ask questions about things.

And Paul's written this letter to kind of help them fight against these false teachings. And the false teachings can kind of be summed up with this sort of thought that yes, you trust in Jesus, that's good, but that's not enough.

It's okay that you've trusted Jesus, but you need more. We have the secret knowledge for you. You need to listen to us so that you can understand truly how things are.

And so in this first part, he's dealt with verses 15 through 20, basically taking this Christian hymn and giving it to us and showing us the theology of who Christ is.

[1 : 14] And he comes into these verses because what Paul's going to do is he's going to make a turn towards how to live or how to do ministry and what his goal is in ministry. And with that, he's going to talk about what it is for us to be reconciled.

And that's where these verses pick up. So beginning in verse 21, although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet he has now reconciled you in his fleshly body through death in order to present you before him holy and blameless and beyond reproach. If indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

Let's pray. Father, thank you. Thank you for the privilege it is to stand and to preach your word. Thank you for the privilege it is that we have this opportunity together freely in our country to be able to come and to listen to the word preached.

I pray, Father, that every word that is spoken is right in line with your word that we might see and hear and know you. And we pray this in Christ's name.

[2 : 41] Amen. Amen. So I want to just I really want to dive in.

There's there's a good bit to cover, but I want to just start by just saying an introduction to a sermon should be a couple of things. Number one, it should be short. And number two, it should tell you why we're getting into this and why you ought to listen.

So here's the introduction. Why should you listen to this? Because you will not understand how to live the Christian life. If you don't understand the basis of the Christian life.

So this is the basis of the Christian life. This is the foundation. This is the most basic level that we can get to right here. And if you get this, you will understand better how to live your Christian life.

So we're going to ask four questions, four questions to help us to know how to live this Christian life by understanding our foundation.

[3 : 42] And that foundation is in what we call reconciliation. So here's my four questions. First of all, why did we need reconciliation? Why did we need reconciliation?

You'll notice in verse 21, it says that you were once alienated. Alienated. This word alienated is the idea of being estranged or separated from God.

It goes all the way back to Genesis 3 as Adam and Eve listened to the word of the serpent instead of the word of God. And it brought a division in their relationship.

As a matter of fact, Paul uses this same word in Ephesians 4, verse 18. As he's talking about the Gentiles, he says that they are darkened in their understanding and excluded from the life of God.

Excluded from the life of God. This is where every lost person is. They're alienated from God. They're excluded from the life of God. We are naturally excluded from God.

[4 : 51] We are naturally, we were born without, we are alienated from God as sinners and as lost people. This is where everyone once was or they now are.

Right? If you're a Christian, you once were this way. If you're not a Christian, you are this way.

Excluded from the life of God. The second thing he says in verse 21 is that we were once hostile in mind.

Hostile in mind. The word hostile or hostility is the idea of being an enemy of God. It's this idea that we sort of are pushing back away from God.

I don't want you near me. Go away from me. Right? So we are growing in this idea as sinners. But the word mind here is the word not just about the thoughts, but it's like the word literally means with the mind or through the mind.

And so the idea is that it's not just what we think, but it's all the things that come with our thinking. So it becomes, a better word would be the word disposition.

[6 : 02] Disposition. You understand the word disposition, right? If you meet somebody with a sour disposition. Disposition. And there's nobody like that here. You understand that as you encounter this person of sour disposition, there are things that they're thinking that you may not hear, but you can watch the things they're thinking come along with their actions and their attitudes.

So they would be somebody that complains about everything or something like that. And so those go together. Well, Paul is saying, you don't have a sour disposition. What you have is you have a hostile disposition.

That's who you once were as a sinner, as someone lost, as someone without God, excluded from the life of God. You are increasing in antagonistic attitude towards God.

And then he says, in doing evil deeds or engaged in evil deeds. What he's meaning here is that the evil deeds are not the cause of the alienation and the evil mind, but instead he's saying the proof of the alienation and the hostile mind is the evil deeds.

Now, let me just pause there so you can take that in because that may be a little tough for you. It's a little bit of gristle.

[7 : 34] You've got to chew on it for just a second. It's not that our actions make us sinners. It's that our actions prove that we're sinners.

And so he's saying you're engaged in these evil deeds, which again, I will go back and pull back from a sermon that I preached recently. Evil does not mean being as disgustingly terrible as you possibly can be, but it means being complete opposite of Christ.

Anything that he says, anything that he says in his law, opposing God and opposing his law, is evil. Even if it doesn't look terribly bad.

That's why we would say, sometimes we classify things like this. We call it, well, it's just a little white lie. Because we're trying to soften the idea, but listen, if it's a lie, then it is evil.

It doesn't matter how small it is. Right? This is what Paul is saying. His summary statement is the reason we need reconciliation is because this is where we were.

[8 : 43] We were people who were thoroughly biased against God. We're totally disabled towards anything good. Totally antagonistic towards all that is righteous.

Completely inclined toward all evil. And if you have never trusted Christ, if you've never become a Christian, then this describes you.

It is your disposition. And you might want to argue with me saying, well, you know, that's not me, but I just have one simple question for you.

One simple question to say whether or not this is really you and it's this question. Would you right now? You say, no, it's not me. I'm not this person. Okay, then will you right now turn your life completely and entirely over to Jesus Christ for him to be your boss and your master?

Will you stop trying to call the shots in your own life and let Jesus rule you? And if you say, no, then absolutely this is who you are. And Christians, those who have been saved, those who have been reconciled, this describes who you were.

[10 : 03] The truth of the matter is, is that this sinful nature remains in us even after we're saved. And it's something we have to fight against. As a matter of fact, we are both sinners and saints at the same time.

You know this is true. You know, if I were to ask you, do you know for sure if you were to die today, you're going to go to be with the Lord in heaven forever? You would say yes. And I'd say, when's the last time you sinned?

And you'd go like, this morning. You know what I'm saying? Because we're both sinners and saints at the same time. We have a corruption that's still in us that he is working out of us.

And the problem is, is that as Christians, the more that we ignore that truth about us, the more it's likely that we're going to eventually forget that he even purchased us with his blood.

There's a very disturbing verse in 2 Peter 1. 2 Peter 1, verse 9. He's talked about all these qualities that we need to add into our life.

[11 : 04] These things that are basically like spiritual disciplines or the work of the Spirit. And he says in verse 9, whoever lacks these qualities is blind. He's talking about Christians.

And they're short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. A Christian can get to a place where they have forgotten that they have been purchased by the blood of Christ, that their sins have been forgiven because they're not serious about trying to fight against the sin in their life today.

They think that because they have a ticket to go to heaven, they're done. I got my ticket. I'm in. I don't have to do anything else. There's nothing else for me to do.

And so because of that, they live lives that are not honoring to God. And because of that, they can begin to forget that they were even purchased by the blood of Christ to begin with. So we have a need to be reconciled.

And I hope you feel that. Even as a Christian, I hope you feel the need of this reconciliation.

Because even as a Christian, even though I am reconciled, I need to come back to that place of seeing that and experiencing and understanding and feeling that again so that that truth washes over my mind and colors my world.

[12 : 22] I need that. So that's why. Second question is how do we have reconciliation? How do we have reconciliation?

This is found there in verse 22, I think. Where's my... Yes, verse 22.

He is now reconciled. In verse 22, it talks about and it uses these pronouns, right? And this first pronoun, it's trying to figure out who this is.

And this is my understanding of it. It is that the Father, the Father is the one who's reconciling us.

Much like verse 20, the Father is the one who's reconciling sinners to himself through his Son.

That's why we had the verse a while ago, 2 Corinthians 5.18. All these things are from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ. Reconciliation is the Father's idea.

[13 : 36] Reconciliation is the Father's idea. It's the Father's work through his Son. And that's the second thing. God the Son, so not only does God the Father work in reconciliation, but so does God the Son.

And God the Son is working in reconciliation through the fleshly body. His fleshly body. Now, it's just like, why in the world, Paul, why are you talking about his fleshly body? That just sounds weird, doesn't it?

Like, is a body a body a body? I mean, it's fleshly. Like, what are you saying? Fleshly body. Doesn't that sound like redundant? Well, here's why he's doing it.

Remember, the false teachers, they have trouble with anything that's made of matter. Anything made of matter is evil. It has to be rejected.

So these false teachers teach about Jesus that he didn't have a real human body. Or that he just appeared to have a human body. Or he might have had a human body for a while, but at some point, the Christ separated from that human body.

[14 : 44] And so what Paul wants to accentuate is that the fleshly human body of Jesus was not sinful, but necessary. He had to be like us in every respect.

He had to take on flesh and be human like us. Otherwise, his sacrifice was useless. It was a man who sinned. Therefore, a man had to die.

And so it's by his fleshly body and through his death. Through his death. His death was a sacrifice that paid the penalty price for our sin.

So the Father reconciles us to himself. Remember, reconciliation is about bringing two things back together, right? So the Father reconciles us to himself through the sacrifice, the penalty price of the death of his son.

Now, I thought maybe I needed to sort of illustrate this. If you know anything about, and I don't know a lot about this, and I may get some of this wrong, so you just have to, you know, bear with me.

[15:47] But I think I've got this right. The idea of restitution. Now, restitution is this idea that sometimes when a criminal commits a crime against a person, that person has a loss.

Sometimes that loss can be physical damages. It can be property damages. It could be even emotional damages. And restitution is paid in order to give back to that person that which they lost. If someone breaks into your house, they break some of your stuff, they take some of your stuff, restitution would restore that. If someone physically attacks you, then the bodily damages, the insurance, the time off work, the fear that comes up because maybe somebody's going to do this again, restitution is paid in order to try to repair some of that.

Now, obviously, it's not perfect in being able to repair that. So a criminal is required to pay the restitution to the victim of his crime so that the victim gets back what the victim lost.

Forgiveness of sin. Forgiveness of sin. The forgiveness of your sin. God was the victim in your sin. [17:17] God's glory is the victim in your sin. We are criminals and we have violated God's law and there is a loss to God that has to be paid back.

It is a loss of infinite value because what was damaged of God is of infinite worth. And in reconciliation, God himself paid the restitution to himself on your behalf.

That is the gospel. That is good news. That is the basis of the Christian life.

For some, they need to hear this good news because without it, they will never, never be restored to God. But you see, that's only the first half of this sermon, right?

And that's a great place. But we need to see more because in his death and in this reconciliation, more is going on. Typically, that would be like the first and second point of the sermon, the first and last, and that would be it.

[18:35] We need it. Here's the reconciliation. God gives it. But there's more. And I'm going to tell you something. I'm so overwhelmed by what God has done for us.

The third question is, what's the goal of the reconciliation? What's the goal? The goal, he says, is to present you before him.

To present you before him. It's this idea of being presented before God. You're brought in. You're shown to God. You have to be presented to him.

It's very much what happens, or what Paul says in Ephesians 5.27. That he might present to himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she would be holy and blameless.

Hang on. Evil cedar. We're to be presented before God.

[19:41] Brought into him. This is at the judgment day. That's what this is talking about. That as we're presented before God at judgment day, he's going to present us to himself because he has confidence in his work.

He has confidence in the work of Christ so that it's going to fulfill and be something as he presents it to himself.

And there's three words to describe what that work's going to look like. The first word is the word holy. Now, we don't know exactly what the word holy means. Throughout both Old and New Testament, this word is used so many times, yet to nail down sort of its origin and meaning is difficult because it is used in several ways.

But the nuances of this word, we kind of have a handle on. It's this idea of spiritual purity. It's this idea of otherness.

It's this terrifying reality of God's presence. It is something that has been set apart and set apart for a purpose.

[20:53] We know that God is holy, holy, holy. And he says one day, he's going to present us to himself holy, fully, completely, entirely, actually holy.

But then he uses another word. He uses the word unblemished. Unblemished. You've got to think about the Old Testament sacrifices, right? What kind of lamb could you bring? One without spot. So if you've got a lamb or you've got an animal that on the skin it's got a little spot of disease, you cannot offer that lamb to God. It has to be without spot.

There can't be a single solitary blemish or spot in it. And I just want you to understand as you think about that for your own heart and mind, so the Lord has reconciled you.

He's reconciled you so he can present you to himself as holy, but he can present you to himself as unblemished. You will not have a single spot.

[21 : 59] Not a single solitary spot. Christian, that sin that so easily besets you, that sin that you do that nobody in the world knows about, that secret sin that you have kept hidden for years, that you hate and you fight against and you wished it would go away and you wished you could leave it alone and you think to yourself that sometimes that sin that I'm doing, I just want to be done with this.

I just want to be done with this. And you don't think you can ever be done with this. He is going to present you spotless, unblemished. There's a third word.

It's a legal word. I call this unaccusable. That is a word, I promise. I didn't make it up. Unaccusable. Let's think on a couple of things. if you have a crime you've committed, you are legally guilty, although the law's got to find that.

It can be there and just nobody catch you, but it's there. And accusations can be made against people about things. You can have accusations against people who turn out to be innocent and you can have accusations against people who turn out to be guilty.

[23 : 30] And so as we think about accusing someone, it's difficult for us to think that there could be an opportunity for somebody to be unaccusable. Because in our world, you can accuse anybody of anything that you want to.

You just got to prove it. But this word means that we are unaccusable. That as he reconciles us, he does so in order to present us to himself wholly, unblemished, and unaccusable.

When we stand before God and he presents us to himself, think of the sins that you've committed. Think of your life before Christ and all the evil that you did. Think how many times you have failed to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind. Think of all the times that you were given over to other gods instead of God.

Think of all the times that you took God's name in vain. Think of all the sins and stacked them up one on top of another. And on the day of Christ Jesus, at the last judgment, when he presents you to himself, he will present you unaccusable of anything.

[24 : 48] Now, there's a lot of people who are going to hear this and they're going to respond one of two ways. The first person's going to hear this and they're going to say, well, Brady, if that's true, then I can do anything I want to in this life.

I can do all kinds of evil and wickedness and I can give my heart to do whatever I want to do since God's reconciling me to himself and is going to count me holy, spotless, and unaccusable.

And I would say that a person who really truly believes that in their heart, they've never been saved. Because it's treating the grace of God as though it's a cheap get-out-of-jail-free card.

And that is just not the way this works. Secondly, though, some people, they're going to hear this and be overwhelmed because how can someone who knows them fully turn them into someone who's holy, spotless, and unaccusable?

You see, Christians, this is the basis of your Christian life. You need to remember who you are and what Christ has done.

[26 : 14] Your reconciliation, your salvation is the foundation of the house of your life. And built upon that is your obedience to God.

You frame up and you put your roof on your foundation of your life. In other words, if you start trying to frame the walls and build a roof not on a foundation, what's going to happen to it?

It's going to crash. And so many people, they want to do all the obedience things and hope that God accepts that. And so they live their life constantly trying to do this, but there's no foundation of salvation and reconciliation.

You have to lay the right foundation. The right foundation is the undeserved, unmerited, unearned, gracious, audacious love of God the Father reconciling sinners to himself.

And as Christians, if you're going to live out the Christian life, you must start with this thought first. Romans 8.1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

[27 : 28] You don't start by saying, I've got to earn something, I've got to earn something, I've got to earn something. You start by saying, He's given me everything. And upon that, I need to build.

So it just leaves last question. The last question of this, and that is, how do you know that you have reconciliation? reconciliation? How do you know you have it?

Well, let me tell you a little bit about verse 23 for just a second because it's a little weird the way it's written. Not because it's weird in the way it's written, but because of the way we read it.

Does that make sense? I just contradicted myself, but you'll get over it, okay? Because it starts with an if statement. Right?

He's going to present you wholly, blameless, unaccusable, if indeed you continue in the faith. And that almost makes it sound like the continuing in the faith is the cause.

[28 : 33] But it's not. Let's just say that I borrow your car, but your gas gauge is broken, and I ask you, I say, well, how am I going to know when it needs more gas? And you say, well, if it runs out. It running out that isn't the cause, right?

It's the fact that you have a way to know. If it stops running, we know that it's out of gas. Paul is saying, you will know you will be presented as wholly blameless and beyond reproach because you will continue in the faith.

In other words, you can look at your life at the end of your life and see how you've continued in the faith, and that will give you the hope of knowing that you have this opportunity to be presented as wholly blameless and beyond reproach.

In other words, how do you know you're a Christian? And so many Christians say that what you need to do is look backwards to something you did one time about what Jesus had done that might be written in the front of your Bible, and that's how you know that you know that you know.

And Paul is saying, no. The way you know is that what you believed there, you still believe today and you'll still be believing it then. Holding on to the truth.

[29 : 48] And so I want to put this in the form of two questions and say, well, how do you know? And the first question is this. Do you still believe the truth of the gospel? Do you still believe the truth of the gospel?

Paul says, if indeed you hold firmly to the faith, the faith that is established, the faith that is there. Now the NIV says, your faith, and the word your is nowhere in the Greek.

It's the faith. It's not my personal experience, but it is the doctrine and the truths about who Jesus is. Paul says that a person who maintains belief in the faith, the established, the foundational doctrines of the Christian life, has this assurance.

Because listen, if you do not believe that there is a God, if you do not believe that there is the Son of God, if you do not believe the Son of God died for sins, if you do not believe the Son of God rose from the dead, then no, you can't be a Christian.

These are foundational truths that you have to believe, not just like sort of believe, but fully believe, fully committed to. And not just something that maybe you might have believed one time, but something you still believe today.

[31 : 00] The most important question for you today is today, do you believe these things? Do you hold on to the truth of the gospel today?

That's the most important question for you about you today. You have to believe what Paul preached. He says there in the end of verse 23 that he was made a minister of this gospel. You have to believe this same gospel. It is the faith. But the second question is this. Do you count on something besides Jesus to be okay with God?

Do you count on something besides Jesus to be okay with God? It says in verse 23, established, steadfast, and then it says, not moved away from the hope of the gospel.

In other words, your hope is no longer on the gospel if it's been moved away from that hope. If it's been shifted. You know, if you're building a house and you've got the foundation set and you go to lay a wall and this is where you're supposed to lay the wall and you move it over like this, that's not going to work.

[32 : 13] You can't shift from that hope. The hope was Jesus and as the older you get, the more that you learn from the Bible, you find yourself saying, well, you know, really, my hope is over here.

Well, no. Your hope needs to be in Christ. Your hope needs to be in Christ. It needs to be set on Him. It can't be set on something else. Think of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus.

He said, what must I do to have eternal life? And what did Jesus tell this man? He says, obey the law. Obey the commandments. The man says, well, I've obeyed every one of them since birth.

And so Jesus tells them, well, then, go sell all that you have and give to the poor. Is that because giving to the poor is the path to God?

No. But it's because this man loved his money. It gave him hope hope and happiness, significance, and security.

[33 : 28] It's what he thought proved he was okay with God. It's what he thought made him okay with God. And so he just wanted to kind of get himself sort of ready that this is going to be okay, but he walks away sad because he's unwilling to give up what he loves most.

Just imagine for a moment, and this may require you to have more imagination than normal, but just imagine for a moment that outside those double doors there's a massive fire-breathing dragon. It's what I would call the dragon of God's wrath. And every one of you will have to take a step outside that door right into the face of that dragon.

What would you put between you and that dragon to keep that dragon from completely and entirely destroying you?

It's the dragon of God's wrath. What are you going to put between you and the dragon?

[34 : 47] Are you going to put I was baptized? Are you going to put I go to church all the time? Are you going to put I read the Bible?

Are you going to put I give to the poor? Are you going to put your kindness to strangers?

Are you going to put your prayers, your singing? My dad was a deacon.

I haven't murdered anybody. I've never stolen anything. What are you going to put? I take responsibility for myself?

I vote a certain way? there is one and only one correct answer to this question for every single person throughout all of history.

[36 : 06] And the only correct answer is Jesus' blood and righteousness. That's it. how do you know that you're reconciled and will be presented as holy and blameless and beyond reproach because your life is characterized by a full commitment and conviction about the truths of the gospel and a full wholehearted commitment to the Christ of the gospel?

Anything else you answer means that your hope is not on Christ. And if it's not maybe maybe you've never been saved and today you need to shift your hope to the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you look back over the course of your life and you can see well I've never really hoped in Jesus and I'm not really hoping in him now I was hoping in some other things and now I see I need to hope in Jesus then today should be a day that you turn to him and you say then my hope needs to be in Jesus Christ his blood and righteousness and nothing else.

And right where you're sitting you can just say that you can just say Lord I hope in Jesus. whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The one final thing that I want to say is that sometimes Christians who yes you could say my hope is in Jesus Christ but sometimes there's still that remaining sin in us there's still that remaining corruption we sometimes still struggle people because sometimes there's this competition in our hearts between God and things that we love things that become idle in our heart and I just want to close the sermon by just challenging you as Christians to examine that because if you're being presented as holy and blameless and unaccusable before the Lord then he wants you to remain steadfast and he wants your hope to be in Christ and if your hope shifts off of that as a Christian to something else that's a problem and you need to get that corrected it's the same discussion we've had about having idols in the heart and I don't know if you remember this but let me just remind you to think about this and think about how many times have you gotten angry or let me ask this in a more subdued fashion how many times have you been irritated or frustrated that is a symptom of idolatry

[39 : 13] I'm sorry to tell you that sort of that's really hard I don't think I make it through a day without being irritated and that means that I'm looking at something that's supposed to bring me some sort of hope and happiness and I've gotten my eyes off of Jesus and I need to put them back on him or ask yourself this Christian teenager what would you be willing to disobey your parents for I mean you got this thing you want you want to go after this thing you want this thing so much you'd be willing to disobey your parents there's an idol in there somewhere Christian what's one thing that you would be willing to do something unethical for somewhere there's an idol and you need to shift your hope back to

Christ Christians you need nothing but the blood of Jesus righteousness of Jesus do you know to be okay with God to be reconciled with God to be at peace with God to be in a place of joy and delight and happiness and in a relationship with God that is fruitful joyful fulfilling and everything

else do you know you need nothing but the blood of Jesus and his righteousness and you don't you don't need your spouse to have that and you don't need your kids to be obedient to you to have that all you need is Christ and frankly that's all we have is Christ may God help us to have full full devotion to him because he has reconciled us let's pray together