

Reconciliation and Preparation

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[0 : 00] Well, if we turn to the chapter which we read in Colossians, chapter 1, words we find in verse 21 and 23, and you who were once alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

And as we consider these words this morning, that they may be a comfort to us and a reassurance as regards to our own Christian faith.

For in this chapter, he sets forth the preeminence of Christ and the glorious work of Christ.

To remind the church of Colossae, which was sadly in danger of falling into gross error.

Colossae was a place in Turkey, and we all know that Turkey is now predominantly Islam. And there was a mixture of Judaism and Gnosticism creeping into the church, threatening the doctrine, and threatening the preeminence of Christ in the life of the believer.

[2 : 10] That they were possible to attain to a higher life in the Christian faith other than Christ. They were also denying the deity of Christ.

That's set forth to us in this chapter. It is eschatological in its theme, pointing to the last things, pointing to when Christ shall present to himself the church, you who are here this morning, we pray, those of you who believe in your own hearts and minds, that Christ has begun a good work in you, and that work is continuing.

And the church, this epistle was written by the apostle. It's called one of the prison epistles. He was in prison in Rome.

He found time to write to us. Especially when you consider the last words of the chapter. For this he says, I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works in me to persuade you, the church.

You wonder sometimes how much energy really we put into our themes when we preach.

Sometimes in our preaching we just talk.

[3 : 52] And talking sometimes is not what you might call very persuasive. When you think of this man toiling with all the powers of his energy.

He was energized to present the church complete in Christ Jesus. And that is what we have here. This epistle sets forth the deity and the divinity of Christ. And especially Christ's work as regards to his death on the cross.

And he reminds us of what we were before. So let's consider this great doctrine. Perhaps a doctrine which sometimes we forget.

But there is no other doctrine like it. And that is the doctrine of reconciliation. Being reconciled to God by the death of his son.

[4 : 59] Surely there is no other greater theme that we can proclaim or meditate on than this. And then we consider the purpose of this reconciliation.

And then we can see, look to the condition as regards to our lives. How we are to continue. So the reconciliation reconciliation is not a word we often mention in our vocabulary to be reconciled.

What does it really mean that I may grasp this word for myself without being able to explain it? Well it means there has to be a change.

There has to be a radical change. A great change. It means there has to be a change as regards to my life. My whole life has to be changed.

It has to be turned around. And I cannot do that for myself. It has to be done by someone else for me.

[6 : 22] And it applies to persons to you and I that this change has to occur in our lives.

And it is an incredible change because he speaks of those who have been changed that there were enemies in their minds through wicked works.

that there were aliens as regards to God. Now you couldn't get any worse than that could you?

Aliens and enemies in their minds through wicked works.

How far away from God could anyone be than to be accused of being wicked and to be alienated?

And yet these are the ones he has reconciled to himself.

Could you this morning think of a greater theme of encouragement than this? And when we consider this reconciliation to whom have we been reconciled?

[7 : 48] Where have we been reconciled? To God. To God. We have also been reconciled to each other we pray.

You know how he speaks about the middle wall of partition that was demolished between Jew and Gentile and he made of twain one new man so making peace.

And the one thing that Christians should show in their lives is that they have been reconciled. If you and I profess to have been reconciled to God then the great mark of reconciliation is seen in and be reconciled to one another.

Isn't that the great mark of the church? Behold by this shall all men know that you are mine because you love one another and this love responds to the love of God and reconciliation in that he had poured his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us and this love reflects itself in expressing itself in reconciliation to one another but the great theme is that we have been reconciled to God.

Not God to us. He's unchangeable. We need to change and he has changed us. And we couldn't change ourselves. We couldn't.

[9 : 16] We cannot change the spots. The leopard cannot change its spots. not the sea bread stripes. So its reconciliation is what God accomplishes for us.

And in regeneration it's what God accomplishes in us. There is a change. There is a wonderful, wonderful change. There is a change and a translation from darkness to light.

From deadness to life. life. And he accomplishes this for us. It is when God ignites his own flame in the altar of our souls.

There is friends a change in reconciliation. It's not just a fireside chat. light. And that change should be seen in our lives because you cannot possibly come from one place of darkness to a place of light.

In fact, it's not just a place of light, but to his marvelous light. More or less, this light is marvelous. is that you are taken out of a dark room, having never, ever seen a light before, and all of a sudden you have come into this blazing sun, and you say it's marvelous.

[10 : 43] I've never realized it was so wonderful. That's what conversion is all about. And all, it's all to do with God's grace, God's exercising grace to those who are alienated and enemies in their minds through wicked works.

That's what he says, you, on your part, you are an enemy, and enemies don't often think of making peace, do they?

They're always warring enemies, aren't they? That's why they're called enemies, because they're actually warring people. But he subdues the enemy's heart, and he brings the enemy into close relationship with himself.

That, friends, is the message of the gospel, the gospel of reconciliation. How does he do this? Well, who would ever have thought that he would have reconciled us to himself death by the death of his son?

Was there any other way? I remember once reading a review of a book written by a man called Mackenzie King.

[12 : 26] He was the Prime Minister of Canada after the First World War, the Second World War. and he was sitting with Churchill in 1946.

Mackenzie King asked Churchill, what will you say to God when he asked you, why did you drop the bomb? And Churchill's answer to that was, I will say to him there was no other way.

way. It's the same here. God, why did you have to choose this way of reconciliation to bring us into close proximity to yourself?

Because there's no other way. There was no other way. It was God's chosen way and he did this by imputing all our guilt and sins upon him, his son.

His son. You see, when we consider Christ's work on the cross, it is God's way of removing the condemnation.

[13 : 56] reconciliation, there was no other way. It's the way he chose in order that you and I would receive this reconciliation to bring us to himself.

And that reminds us of how serious our condition is, friends. If you're out of Christ this morning, consider your condition very, very serious.

because if reconciliation could only come by Christ's death, woe is me. If I leave this message of the gospel as just something else, it reminds us of how serious our fallen nature is.

God's righteous mercy is made known to us, as he says to the church at Ephesus, God who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us.

It's as God is saying to us, when you consider our sins, he is saying to us, I want to meet with you.

[15 : 23] I want to deal with your problem. And you say to him, where will I meet with you? I will meet you, he says, at the place of death.

I will meet you at the cross. At the cross, yes, what's going to happen on the cross?

You will see my son, you will see the son of my love crucified. It just shows you how abhorrent sin is in the eyes of God, if it had to be his own son that had to die in order that you and I might be reconciled.

Surely, is there any other way? No way. There is no other way. No other way.

And this is the crowning proof of God's love. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. He gave.

[16 : 32] The word gave is the same word that is used in sacrificial giving. As if you spun the sacrifice on the altar, it was the altar of God, the cross.

And as one of the Puritans predicted, it was the pulpit of Christ. And that's where Christ preaches from today, friends, from the cross.

As Martin Luther would say, all roads begin and end at the cross. because of her enmity, you see, serious busyness.

And you will have to say, like the prodigal, I will arise and go to my father. It's when the prodigal came to himself, it's when we come to ourselves and realize how alien we are in conviction of sin.

I will arise. And that is the Spirit, friends, convincing you and convicting you. And in your confession, you're agreeing with the Spirit, yes, Lord, I'm an enemy, and I am full of wicked works.

[17 : 56] here is the great dynamic in bringing about the change. So you see, we cannot change ourselves just as well.

It's wonderful, wonderful, friends, that salvation is the work of God. That's our assurance this morning. God word and man word had to meet in the same place.

I will meet you at the cross, nowhere else. And the cross of Christ is where the reconciling power is. Not in being religious and being attentive in the means of grace. that follows on. There has to be a starting point, friends.

There has to be a beginning. In the beginning, you and I can say in our conversion, in the beginning, I met with him at the cross.

[19 : 07] It is God's action, the activity of God. It is God's loving kindness. It is God, if he were opening his own heart, and releasing the son of his love, to be exposed to the wrath of man, and to his own condemnation, because sin was imputed to him, in order that you and I may be reconciled to God.

This is how he commends his love to us. God commends his love to us, as he says in Romans 5, Christ died for us.

What we witness here is the immensity of Christ's humiliation. We cannot enter into the thoughts of the Lord. But we must look as we consider his humiliation, how immense it was.

We will also look at the end which it accomplished. That's what we must focus on, as well as focusing on how it actually took place.

He opened for sinful man a pathway. He calls it in Hebrews a new and living way, consecrated through the veil of his flesh.

[20 : 37] grace. And he enables man to ascend to the highest possible glory. We were with him on the cross and we shall be with him in the highest possible place where the writer puts it and God for

the washing of water by the word to present her to himself the angels look forward to this day the departed saints who have passed from this life as spirits now made perfect they're waiting anticipating in this day Edwards makes a beautiful picture of the departed spirits that they are like the bride before the wedding night having a quiet sweet sleep waiting for that wonderful day the marriage supper of the lamb you see he came he came to bring us that's what the writer of the Hebrews says that he made the captain of our salvation perfect in bringing bringing many sons to glory as if he came and he took us by the hands to lead us because he's so attentive and jealous for us he will make sure that we'll make it because man you see of himself is unwilling you can see how the apostle is writing to this church it was in danger of their own teaching that there was another way to God other than Christ no no no no no he says in all things he must have the preeminence and he is gripping us to a state of holiness because without holiness no man shall see the Lord friends no one don't think you can barge into his presence as some unholy thing because unholy thing unholiness belongs to your alienation and your wickedness no no no that we may be holy some people are ashamed to mention the word holy there's nothing like it friends he shall beautify his saints with holiness holiness and unblameable nobody can point the finger at them and blame them unapprovable you see he is to bring them to the highest possible place where he himself

Christ being the brightness of his father's glory there is no place like it because in heaven you see it's all God's glory is visible in heaven and this is where he's going to bring us and heaven is the home of the son of God incarnate it's the place of angels it's angelic country friends it's where they veil their faces because of the holiness of the place he's going to bring us there isn't that wonderful friends this morning isn't it isn't that encouraging you see he is advanced to the highest possible glory where he himself has been crowned it's unimaginable to think that God crowned him with glory and with honour for his good work which he hath done and it is in that exalted state that he is to present the church to himself friends what a message we have this morning you see where Christ is now is the most glorious place and do you know something where we are now on this earth of wickedness and war there is no other place so beautiful as where the church of Christ meet together under the preaching of the gospel and it is the most beautiful of all creation he speaks in verse 16 of creation this is the new creation it is there he is to present the church to himself glorious like a bride ordained or adorned passing through the purifying waters where he will fashion our vile bodies and shape them to be like his own glorious bodies what really is our comfort this morning what really is our encouragement in the day in which we live as we see so much chaos in the world so much wickedness when we consider our own weakness when we consider our own shortcomings when we consider our surrounding enmity and some when we see the sinfulness of our own hearts what is our encouragement when we see all the things that can be a hindrance to our

Christian walk hope well he says we are to give all diligence our comfort and encouragement this morning is that Christ had undertaken to present us to himself that is our hope and that he has actually made the promise that he will bring us to himself what else can we say friends when we consider where he had taken us from and where he has taken us to but there is a condition there is a condition if you continue in the faith grounded and settled and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which means that you and I have to fulfill our own responsibility he grants us faith to continue he doesn't ask us to do the impossible he gives us by his grace the graces of the spirit to enable us to continue regardless of the trials you might say to yourself

I'm making very little progress you're making great progress friend because you are being kept by the power of God through faith and to salvation and by continuing you are proving God's preservation by you persevering in the faith through all the trials and tribulation and the loneliness and the losses in your life you're still here you look around you and you see the little flock there's not many following Christ but you ought to take your eyes off him never mind the little flock for it was the father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom him but he himself brought the little flock down to two or three gathered together in my name I'm as much in the midst of these two or three as I am in the two or three thousand numbers mean nothing to me says Jesus you follow me you follow me friend continue in the faith not in your own strength but in weakness that's when the apostle says I am strong and it's

[39 : 35] God's enabling grace from beginning to end continuing our faith not looking to our faith whether it's strong or weak trying to measure our faith faith in him faith in a person the Lord Jesus

Christ to fill our hearts and minds with him when we consider the things that we are to think of we are to add to our faith his virtue to virtue knowledge to knowledge temperance to temperance patience to patience godliness and to godliness brotherly kindness of charity if he do those things he says he shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the work of the

Lord but he who lacketh these things is blind and he has forgotten that he was once delivered from his sins but he says give all diligence work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for if you do these things he says you will never fall our assurance is god's promise we persevere nobody else does it for us we do it ourselves the apostle says the life that I know live I live by the faith of the son of god who loved me and gave himself for me if I live continue he says in the faith and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel stay near the gospel friends this is where god speaks to us the gospel of redeeming grace the hope of the gospel we have it in verse 5 of this chapter the hope which has been laid up in heaven for you the apostle in chapter 4 of 2nd timothy his last words to the church there

I waited for me he says a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge had promised to gave me on that day and not to me only but to all those who love his appearance because you see he's one in his church at Colossae there was a danger of relapsing there was a danger of falling back to the past to the vileness and the life that they had been delivered from a danger of falling away we live in a dangerous age friends a age where there's so much corruption poured into our homes and filth what things you see and what things you watch do they belong to the past from what we've been delivered from but to gorge ourselves with the filth of the past surely there's a sure sign that something is radically wrong you see the sanctifying work of the spirit is promoting holiness of life you know dear friends it's a battle it's a wonderful battle because we live in the place of victory and we are going on to possess but the road is narrow the gospel way is so narrow because you see it's a narrow way that's what he says and we cannot dare broaden it it's the way that makes us narrow it's the way that makes us cheerful and joyful it's good it's good to greet one another with blessings that we've enjoyed we live in a dangerous age and so do the church at Colossae it's the same age the age of fallen man and it is this future hope that enables the believer to live without despair through all the trials and afflictions and in verse 27 in conclusion we have it Christ in you the hope of glory all gracious God enable us by grace to our thankful hearts that he who has begun the good work in us has promised that he shall bring it to fruition so bless each one of us this morning it's a new morning that has dawned in each one's life oh God bring the new things into our lives the new things which are old and yet so fresh grant unto us then that we would truly acknowledge

Christ work in our own lives and as we have shared these thoughts together may they fill our hearts and minds with pleasant things Christ in us the hope of glory and we pray for the food that is we prepared after this service that thou oh Lord would bless it to each and everyone for Jesus sake amen we shall conclude by singing to God's peace Scottish Psalter chapter 24 that charm 24 the same psalm has been chosen for this evening so it's good that both of us are thinking of the same thoughts the Lord bless this evening's service

[46 : 55] Psalm 24 ye gates lift up your heads on high ye doors that last for aye be lifted up that so the King of glory enter me to God's praise he gets lifted up your heads on high ye doors that last for aye he lifted up that soul the King of glory enter me but through all glory is the King the mighty Lord is his in that sin

Lord that great in might and strong him but to this he hits him of pure hands he doors towards that do last for him he lifted up But so the King of glory enter me.

But who is he that is the King of glory?

Who is this? The Lord of hosts and the mighty, the King of glory is.

Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another. Agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.

[49 : 25] Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Amen.