

Reconciliation

Introduction

A Phrase That Leaps Off the Page

Have you ever been reading along in scripture, in your devotion times, your meditation times before the Lord, and all of a sudden, something the Word of God says, it just leaps off the page. But this one thing, one phrase that I will be sharing on today, was a phrase that when I read it, I said, “No way. I must have read this wrong.” And as I was studying it, researching it before the Lord, I think a brother asked me to share a while back, and I said, no, I cannot share it, because I did not tell him why. This thing was something too big for me to share. And it is still too big to share. But it is something I probably should have known a long time ago. But the Lord really spoke it to my heart and brought so many things in focus for me personally. So, I just praise the Lord for it.

Introduction from I Corinthians 2

It brought to mind—this is not our scripture today—but I Corinthians 2. And I would love for you to turn, if you have a Bible, to the scriptures that I mentioned. That would be great. It is good to hear the sound of the pages rustling. It is just great.

I Corinthians 2. We will read 9-12. This is just by way of introduction, “But just as it is written, “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.””

The thing we are going to share on today is just this verse describes so wonderfully: “For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.” The Spirit is the one who searches all things, even the depths of God.

“For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.” The thoughts of God none of us can know, but the Spirit of God knows.

And in verse 12, what a wonderful verse. “Now we have received, ...the Spirit who is from God.” That Spirit, who searches the deep things of God and knows the very thoughts of the Godhead; we have received Him, so that, “we may know the things freely given to us by God.” What a wonderful scripture. That is not what we will be sharing on, but may the Lord, may the Spirit of God reveal deep things of God today to us. That is my prayer. That should be all of our prayers.

The Text in Colossians and a Summary of Salvation

Scripture Reading

The text today is in Colossians 1:13-23. Really, this is the context of the phrase that is upon my heart, which is in verse 22. But we will start in verse 13 and read through verse 23.

Well, John, where are you? Would you mind just reading that for us? Would you stand up for us and read really loudly?

“For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. And 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.”

Thank you, brother. The verse I want to concentrate on is a phrase that so spoke to me is in verse 22: “In order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.” Holy, blameless, and beyond reproach.

Summary of Salvation and Focus on Reconciliation

But before we do that, I came across a good summarization of our salvation from a pastor that I really like. And just as a background to redemption and reconciliation, I would like to read these. These are five terms that summarize our salvation. I think it is said in such a way it is easy for us to remember.

“Justification: A sinner stands before God as accused and is declared righteous. Redemption: A sinner stands before God as a slave, and he is granted freedom by ransom. Forgiveness: A sinner stands before God as a debtor, and the debt is paid and forgotten. Reconciliation: A sinner stands before God as an enemy and becomes a friend, and then peace is made with God.”

Is that not a wonderful summation of what salvation is. There also is, “a sinner stands before God, and God makes him a son, brings him into His family.” So that is just a little summation of what the gospel is. But today we will be considering reconciliation.

Our Former State: Alienated and Hostile

So let us start in Colossians 1:21, “And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds.” This is akin to in verse 13, where He says you were in, “the domain of darkness.” And Paul is telling these Colossians, and we were in the same boat, that you were once alienated and hostile in mind, and you engaged in

evil deeds. This alienated word means, “being shut out, cut off from, estranged, completely alienated, estranged from God.” And the word hostile means, “you were an enemy, actively opposed.” And this word hostile has a sense of anger and hatred. So, you were once hostile in mind. In other words, your very being was hostile toward God and full of anger and hatred for God. And as I was thinking about this, it seems that lately in the world you see this hostility and anger toward God and toward His people just coming to the surface. It is always there, but it seems lately it is so visible and out front and up front. It is a terrible thing to be in that situation where you are angry at God, full of hatred for God and His people, and you once were in that boat.

Romans 8:7 says, “The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God.” This hostility toward God is not only to God, but it is hostility to His authority, to His holiness, to His justice, to everything that He stands for. And Paul is telling these Colossians, that is the way you once were. The next verse gives us the comparison, but you are starting here. You are alienated, you are hostile toward God, and because of this alienation and hostility, your life was full of evil deeds. So that is a pretty sad place to be. But God wants to change that.

Reconciliation: God Turning Toward Us

Reconciliation Through Christ's Death

So, the next phrase, the next verse in verse 22, it says, “Yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death.” W.E. Vine describes reconciliation as, “to change from one condition to another, so as to remove all enmity and leave no impediment to unity and peace.”

We will look at some verses about that, but I really like what one theologian said. It really helps me understand what reconciliation is. Reconciliation is a turning. So God is turned away from man, man is over here, God is turned away from him, from man. He cannot turn around because there is this great sin, great impediment to Him turning. Man is turned away from God because he sinned and is hostile toward God. So, the two are opposing, pointing in opposing directions.

And reconciliation is when God is able to turn. I will put man here. God is able to turn and face man with open arms. But what can make God turn and face man with open arms? Only the Lord Jesus. And that is where He says He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death.

And I was so grateful this morning that the worship time was about His fleshly body. Often- we think of—well, we do not think of His fleshly body, what His body went through, but He was pierced for us. He suffered great anguish and pain for us. And the Scripture here wants to point out specifically that it is through His fleshly body, His death on the cross.

Scriptural Witness and the Purpose of Reconciliation

Look at Romans 5:10. John, would you read that for me? Is he still here? Yeah. Everybody turn to Romans 5:10, “For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” So, when we were enemies, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.

II Corinthians 5:18-19, Brothers and sisters, I know you know all these things, but let us just look at them together shall we. “Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

And then this passage we are in today, in Colossians 1:22, it says, “Yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death.” Before you turned toward Him, He had already turned toward you. Christ, in your stead, settled all accounts with the Father, removed all obstacles, all issues that the Father’s holiness and justice required; they were fulfilled by and in the Son.

Up to this point, I think we would all say, I understand and have known that for quite a while. And I would say the same: basic, wonderful! Being saved and being reconciled is a wonderful, wonderful thing. Can you imagine what it would be like if there had been no reconciliation, no sacrifice by the Son by which the Father could turn and face the world with love and compassion? Without the Son and His death, it could not have happened. A world like that, it is just impossible to consider. How wonderful reconciliation is. And yet there is this: these three words, “in order to, in order to.” In other words, “for this purpose.” Reconciliation itself is a grand thing. But there is something else, in order to do something else. Did you know that there is something else beyond reconciliation that reconciliation leads to? I did not. But here we see that there was a purpose for this great reconciliation.

The Presenting: Christ Introduces Us to the Father

So, the next words. In order to what? “Present you.” In order to present you. I wonder who I can pick on. Isaiah, who is presenting here in this verse? Who is the one presenting? The Lord Jesus is, right? Yes. And who is He presenting us to? He is presenting us to God the Father. Perfect. Yes, thank you. Under pressure, that was great.

The Meaning of “Presents”

This word presents, carries the thought of introduction, to stand by and to exhibit, or to exhibit the person or the thing being introduced. The Son introduces us, presents us, to the Father. Did you catch that? I mean, I know you heard it, but did you know that you have been introduced by the Son of God to the Heavenly Father. Now, immediately,

I will address this later, you theologians among us are saying, no, let us be careful here. And that is what I said: be careful, Roger. See, because I took it to be literally now.

Now, think of the introductions in your life that really meant a lot to you. And I talked to my wife, Sarah, about when I was introduced to her extended family. They have a country home in North Carolina, big house, and a lot of aunts and uncles were there, and her cousins' husbands were there. I had not met them yet. And it is right near Roanoke Rapids. So, this was going to be... We were engaged at that time, right, Sarah? Sure, we were engaged at that time. For me, this was the biggest introduction I had in my life up to that point. I did not know about this passage, but anyway, this ranks pretty high up there.

On the way down, I was pretty nervous about this introduction. How would they perceive me? Sarah's father and her uncles were World War II vets. Her father fought in the Battle of the Bulge. One was in the Pacific, one of the gunners underneath the bombers. He worked at that time, I think, with the NSA. One of the cousin's husbands was a colonel or a major in the Army, and the other one was a pretty successful businessman. And I am a painter. I paint houses. But I was Sarah's fiancé.

So, I get out of the car, and I do not know why this came to me, but it did. Thinking about this, the two big men, who were big, were throwing a football. I am talking about a real football, not the ones you kick with your foot, but the real ones. Although, I do not know, for some reason, I remember this, and I will remember it to my dying days.

I step out of the car. What do you think they did? They threw that ball. And this is a big guy that threw it to me, Mike. Pretty good distance away. And I can see that ball. It had a beautiful spiral. It was a little high. And I did a Beckham catch. Do you know what a Beckham catch is? Behind your back? Boom. I did not fall on the ground, but I caught that thing. Man, inside, I was saying, "that could not have been better, I am not a wuss, I am a real man, I can catch the football, and I am worthy to be Sarah's fiancé." Went into a great dinner, and it was a wonderful dinner, and met all the aunts and the uncles, and it was a great introduction, great time of introduction that was welcomed.

The Greatest Introduction

Can you think of an introduction that would be the greatest introduction on earth? I was thinking this morning, what if William... I do not know their last name. The Prince William. Yeah. What is their last name? Jerry? I do not have that. Yeah. See, we got like three different answers here, so. All right, what if they called you up? He called you up. "Hey, Roger, I want to introduce you to King Charles. What about next week? I will fly you down over. You can have dinner with Catherine and me, and I will take you over and I will let you meet the king." Man, you would be... what an honor that privilege would be.

Do you know you have been introduced personally by the Son of God to the Father? Now, I know some are thinking, no, that is later, much later. And indeed there is an aspect of that. But let me read you four quotes because I know you would not believe

me if I said it was for now. And I do not blame you at all. F.B. Meyer, in considering this very passage, says, "Do not put off this presentation to some distant future. Today Christ presents you to the Father as an object of His supreme delight." Today, do not put it off for the future. Today He has presented you to the Father. He has introduced you to the Father.

Sinclair Ferguson: I love this. "Christ presents us to the Father now in the courts of heaven, bearing our names on His heart. Our present acceptance is just as secure as our future glory because both rest entirely on the present ministry of Jesus at the right hand of God."

Watchman Nee: "We do not wait until we die to be presented to the Father. Christ is our presenter. Christ is our presentation as He stands before the Father today, so we stand perfectly accepted, perfectly loved, and completely near."

John MacArthur, who I really like. Some do not, but I do. "Although the ultimate presentation will occur when we stand before God, there is a sense in which Christ presents us to the Father now. The moment you were saved was the moment you were presented."

So, when you were saved, let us take these gentlemen as pretty accurate. When you were saved, you did not know it, I am sure you did not; I did not know it until a little while ago. I had been presented when I was saved by the Son of God to the Father. What a scene that must be in heaven. Time after time, millions of times, the Son escorts that saint, that newborn child, into the presence of the Father. And this has happened to you. It says, "You were presented before Him, before the Father." He is the One you were presented to.

This has great importance to us because this is our position in Christ as seen by the Father. This really is a declaration by God that you are in Christ forever. Your stance is in Christ. Union with Christ is so magnificent, so real, that in this verse the Spirit of God is given to us to let you know in the heavenlies you have been presented, and I believe by name, in the heavens.

In Revelation it talks about the worship that is going on around the throne. Do not think you just, Madhu, just traipsed in there, nice and quiet and alone in a separate little place. That is what I would think. "Lord, introduce me to the Father. Not with all this worship going on and the exaltation and the glory and the majesty of it." No, it says before Him, we are taken and introduced before Him. And all of heaven watches. There is this declaration: "This child, this one is Ours. It belongs to Me." The Lord Jesus says, "They are Mine."

Union with Christ and Our Heavenly Status

Our union with His Son. There are some verses, some phrases, and some verses. I know you know them, but they have to do with Christ in you and you are in Christ. Romans 8:10 says, "Christ is in you." Galatians 2:20 says, "Christ lives in me." II

Corinthians 13:5 says, “Do you not recognize this about yourselves?” I love the way Paul writes this. “Do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?” Christ Jesus is in you.

You are in Christ. I Corinthians 1:30: “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.” II Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature.” In Christ. Even Colossians 3:3 says, “For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” So, you see at this presentation, God the Father has seen you in Christ, Christ in you.

How else, brothers and sisters, could it be that when He presents you and me, there is this proclamation of three things: “that child of Mine, that is a saint, he is holy.” All of heaven says and agrees you are holy. All of heaven agrees and says, “that child of God is blameless, that child of God is beyond reproach.” So, at this presentation there is this declaration upon each one of us that you are holy, that you are blameless, and that you are beyond reproach, all because of Christ.

To me this presentation thought, reality, brings into sharper focus being in Christ. What a wonderful thing. You are presented and seen as holy. I Corinthians 6:11: “But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” You see, sanctification means to be set apart and to be made holy. To sanctify a person is to make holy that person.

Turn to Hebrews, chapter 10. We will read verses 10 and 14. Verse 10: “By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Praise the Lord for that. Verse 14: “For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.” So, we have been sanctified once for all by the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus and perfected by Him. Those who are sanctified are perfected. Praise the Lord.

You all know that we are called saints. You know that we were actually chosen before the foundation of the world. You know that verse in Ephesians, chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be—what is the next word? Holy. What is the next word after that? Blameless. What is the next word after that? You did really well—before Him. Those words sound really familiar, do they not? You are chosen before the foundation of the world, even before this great presentation, that you would be holy and blameless before Him. Praise the Lord.

This word blameless literally means unblemished, without spot, faultless. Remember, this is God the Son declaring this about you because your record has been completely washed clean by Jesus. There is no fault or defect left to find in you. Christ Jesus presents you to the Father, and when the Father looks at you, His eyes see holiness, purity, and a life free of defects. Indeed, Romans 8:1 says, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” None. Is that because you acted well today, or your life is full of good things that God could look upon and say, “Oh, that is wonderful, you are holy today?” No, it is only based upon Christ and His holiness.

Beyond reproach means no one can bring a charge against you in court. You are blameless in Christ, so the righteous Judge has no accusation, hears no accusation against you. The Greek word means, “unable to be called into account or free from accusation.” What a wonderful proclamation that rang out through the heavens for each one of us: holy, unblamable, and beyond reproach. That is the way you started as a new believer, and that is the way you continue on through your life. And that is the way, when you meet the Lord, that is going to be said of you. That is in Christ. That is the heavenly vision of you. Now we have a horizontal vision, and we have a hard time even believing this. Lord, me? holy? blameless? beyond reproach? I mean, I could bring ten things to blame myself, but the Lord Jesus took us by the hand, with our names written on His heart, into the presence of the Father and presented us as holy, blameless, and beyond reproach.

Welcome, Joy, and the Father’s Open Arms

This reconciliation was a complete and full turning of God toward His people. Complete and full. And now the picture is, having been reconciled, having been presented, I believe the picture is His arms are out full towards you and I. What a wonderful picture. He now can lift up His face upon His people. He has wanted to do that all along, that the countenance of His face would be lifted up toward His people whom He loves, even as that came up many times this morning in prayer.

Before we get to that last point I have, there is a welcoming. There is a welcoming at this presentation. We are not received grudgingly, not presented in their sadness in heaven. No, there is great rejoicing. In Luke, I think it is Luke 15, when there is great rejoicing in heaven when a sinner repents. That same rejoicing is in heaven when we are presented. Because once we repent and come to the Lord, immediately we are presented before the Lord, and there is this joy in the heavens. The angels are rejoicing, the Father is rejoicing, the Son is rejoicing. There is a great spirit of rejoicing. There is just an active delight and fellowship now between the Father and us because you have been reconciled. Praise the Lord for that.

Our Elder Brother and His Singing in the Congregation

We read in Colossians some great, majestic things about our Lord: He is head of the body; in Him all things are created; He is the beginning, the firstborn of the dead. All the fullness dwells in Him. He is the Alpha, He is the Omega, He is the beginning and the end. He is the King of Kings; He is the Lord of Lords. On and on we could go about our magnificent Lord Jesus.

But I think the way the Lord Jesus presents us is as our elder brother, not being ashamed of us, as it says in Hebrews. Look at Hebrews chapter two. I will turn it for you. Hebrews chapter 2, verse 11: “For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

He is our older brother, and He brings us and introduces us to the Father as One who understands us, who is intimately knowledgeable about our frailties, all of our weaknesses, everything about us. He understands because He took on a body, and He was made in our likeness as the likeness of men. And He went through life, and He is intimately knowledgeable about us.

And yet He presents us as our elder brother. It is almost as if He takes us by the hand in this introduction and says, "This is My brother. These are My brethren. They are holy, they are blameless, and beyond reproach." But He does it with an understanding of who we really are, which I find amazing.

I love Hebrews 2 verse 12. I do not know if it has too much to do with what we are sharing, but I am going to share it again anyway. Verse 12 says, "saying, 'I will proclaim your name to my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.'" Do you know that there is a singing of Jesus in the midst of the congregation? When true worship happens, God Himself is present and singing with us. Sometimes I think you can hear it, especially during the conference and the worship time. It is almost like you could hear the singing of God in our midst. It is the Spirit of God singing in our midst. This is what the Lord wants, is such great intimacy and fellowship with us.

The Light of His Countenance and the Warning Not to Drift

Turn to Numbers chapter six. As I was considering reconciliation, it seems like the end of reconciliation is that God can lift up His face, lift up His countenance upon us, and there are some wonderful things that happen when He does that. Verses 24, 25, and 26: "The Lord bless you, and keep you; The Lord make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace." Think of this verse: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." "The Lord bless you and keep you." You see, because we have been presented before the Father by the Son, the Father then turns with openness and pours out upon you and I the great blessings from His Son upon us. Everything, every blessing that is in the heavens for us, He pours out upon us.

The Lord make His face to shine upon you. Reminds me of verse of Psalm 27:8. What a wonderful verse this is, "When You said, 'Seek My face,' my heart said to You, 'Your face, O LORD, I shall seek.'" When the Lord Jesus, when the Father turns full upon you, when God turns full face to you, He says, "Now will you seek My face?" And there is a response in the Spirit: "Yes, Lord, Your face I want to seek."

Verse 26. "The Lord lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace." Psalm 44:3, what a wonderful verse this is. "For by their own sword they did not possess the land; And their own arm did not save them; But Your right hand, and Your arm, and the light of Your presence, For You favored them." It is the light of the Lord's countenance. When it is lifted up upon us, it is showing that He is favoring us. And that "favoring us" is the same word used in, I believe, in Isaiah 42:1, where "My chosen one in whom My

soul delights,” so this is saying, the delight of God is upon you, because His face is shining on you.

So, praise the Lord, we have been reconciled, we have been declared holy, blameless, beyond reproach before Him. The full face of God is completely now toward us, and we can have fellowship with Him in a wonderful, wonderful way.

Colossians 1:23, we will close with this verse. “If indeed you continue in the faith,” so all these wonderful things. And Paul seems to say, well, “If indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast,” this “if indeed,” I think from what my understanding is, this is like “and you will,” this is not “if you might not.” This is “and of course you will.” And you can see from the Colossians, they were full of faith. They had stable faith. They were really mature in their faith. It seemed like the real warning is this next phrase: “and not moved away from the hope of the gospel.” If there is any warning for us today, after all the marvelous things that we have seen that God has done for us: the Son presenting us before the Father, chosen before the foundation of the world; Paul is saying, I believe the Spirit of God is saying, “do not be moved away from Christ.” Christ is our only hope. Do not be moved away from the assembly of God, from God's people. Do not be moved away. Because once you do, you become prey to the enemy. Even in Colossians, it talks about a vision some people were having about something, and they were being drawn away by other things.

Conclusion

Brothers and sisters, what a wonderful Lord we have. He has done such wonderful things for us. Do not let our hearts—do not let your hearts—be drawn away. It happens slowly, inch by inch, bit by bit; you find your heart drawn away from Him. And this is the real warning: do not be moved away from the hope of the gospel, which is Christ Himself. Let us pray.

Lord, I want to thank You for this great presentation. Lord, I think in Jude 24-25. Think of that benediction. I want to read in Your presence now: “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever.” Lord, we do say You are the one able to keep us, keep us from stumbling. We praise You for it. Thank You for Your great love for us. Amen.

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