

The Ministry of Reconciliation

Creflo Dollar

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Scripture References

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Isaiah 61:10

Philippians 2:6

Galatians 3:28

Acts 17:26

Ephesians 1:20-22, MSG

1 Peter 4:17

Matthew 5:13-16, NLT

Matthew 5:13-16, MSG

Ephesians 2:13

Summary

Because of what Jesus Christ did on the cross, the broken relationship between God and mankind that resulted from Adam and Eve's sin has been restored. Everything about the restoration of this friendship revolves around Christ, because reconciliation would not have been possible without Him. This means that not only can we be reconciled to God, but we can also be reconciled to each other. God has called the reconciled to be involved in a ministry of reconciliation; therefore, if we have been born again, we have a calling on our lives. Reconciliation begins with acknowledging equality among all people, no matter who they are. Achieving equity among all people takes work, and begins with the church. If we are to put all races and ethnic groups on equal footing, the church, as the body of Christ, needs to set the example and lead the way.

A. Jesus Christ has reconciled God and man so that we can be reconciled to each other.

1. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And 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, 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. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).
 - a. The words "any man" are all-inclusive. This promise is for anyone, regardless of who they are.
 - b. Previously, there was enmity between God and man. To reconcile is to restore to friendship; Jesus restored the friendship that existed between God and man before sin destroyed that relationship.
 - c. Jesus offered forgiveness of sin, for the purpose of reconciling the world to Himself.
 - d. An ambassador is an authorized representative. God has given *us* the ministry of reconciliation.
 - e. There is a Savior in reconciliation; God was in Christ, and Christ is our Savior. Jesus is the only reason our friendship with God was able to be restored.

- f. Sanctification takes place in reconciliation. Sanctification is equated to holiness, and pertains to being whole. The reconciliation of our relationship with God makes us whole.
- g. Reconciliation could not have taken place unless sin was removed from man, first. Jesus was the substitute for sin when He died on the cross; *He* was the sacrifice who removed sin.
- 2. There are three changes that take place as a result of reconciliation:
 - a. A change in devotion. Once a man is restored to friendship with God, what he is devoted to will also change. A saved person will have an interest in spiritual things.
 - b. A change in behavior. This will be a gradual change as the Holy Spirit transforms from the inside out.
 - c. A change in destiny. This is the greatest and most important change. It is the eternal destiny of the reconciled soul that will now be in heaven.

B. Jesus is equal to God. When we are in Christ, we are on equal ground with each other.

- 1. Jesus makes us as perfect as He is; God cannot reconcile us if we are not as good as He is. The only way we can be equal to God is through Christ.
 - a. ...He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness... (Isaiah 61:10).
- 2. Jesus is the great equalizer; He is righteous, sinless, and perfect. When He became man, He was able to represent mankind and make reconciliation with God possible. Jesus shed His blood so that we all could stand on equal ground.
 - a. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God (Philippians 2:6).
 - b. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).
- 3. And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation (Acts 17:26).
 - a. There is only one race—the human race. All humans have the same blood.

C. The church, not the world, should take the lead in modeling equality for everyone.

- 1. All this energy issues from Christ: God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, but *forever*. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the center of all this, Christ rules the church. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church... (Ephesians 1:20-22, MSG).
 - a. The church should not revolve around the world to see what it does, and then follow that lead. The church should instead be in the center, with the world revolving around *it*.
 - b. We need more trust in the Word. The church needs to take the lead instead of trying to be like the world.
 - c. The church should show the world how it deals with division and hatred.
 - d. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? (1 Peter 4:17).

2. The church is in a perfect position to bring the ministry of reconciliation to the world. The gospel does not just intend for us to be brought near to God, but also to be brought near to others who are different from us.
 - a. You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father (Matthew 5:13-16, *NLT*).
 - b. Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage. Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven (Matthew 5:3-16, *MSG*).
3. Through Jesus, the great equalizer, God restores relationships with people we have mistreated.
 - a. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:13).

For more on reconciliation, click on the link below for the DVD, *The Ministry of Reconciliation*.

<https://bit.ly/TheMinistryofReconciliationDVD>

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