

Jesus as Reconciler

1. Over the last few weeks we have listened to Paul make the argument for Christ's sufficiency...His sufficiency to save and redeem His people and to exercise His sovereignty and rule over a restored universe. In doing so, Paul draws his readers to consider and reflect on Jesus.
 - a. His deity
 - b. His power
 - c. His authority
 - d. His love
 - e. His provision
 - f. His ongoing sustaining work
2. When scripture presents, or unpacks, the idea or nature of salvation, it describes it from a number of different viewpoints... different facets of the same gem if you will.
 - a. Salvation emphasizes our rescue from peril
 - b. Redemption emphasizes our purchase out of slavery
 - c. Justification emphasizes a judicial declaration of our innocence; freedom from accusation and guilt
 - d. Forgiveness emphasizes settlement or payment of our debt
 - e. Adoption as sons emphasizes our position in God's family
 - f. Reconciliation emphasizes restoration of our condition.
3. Leads us to our text for this morning;
 - a. Col 1:17ff. *"For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, 20 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. 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 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"*
4. As stated, reconciliation speaks to a restoration of condition... of relationship
5. Scripture speaks about reconciliation between man and man in various ways
 - a. Matt 5:23ff *"if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering."*
 - i. It seeks to restore and heal a relationship

- b. Acts 7:26 (Stephen, making reference to Moses speaking) *“On the following day he appeared to them as they were fighting together, and he tried to reconcile them in peace, saying, ‘Men, you are brethren, why do you injure one another?’”*
 - i. Moses makes an appeal to these men to stop fighting and arguing; to reconcile on the basis of their common bonds and heritage
- c. 1 Cor 7:11 *“But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband 11 (but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband)”*
 - i. Speaks to a fractured relationship leading to separation between husband and wife. Reconciliation in this case would be coming back together in relationship and role.
- d. Eph 2:11ff. *“Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands— 12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.”*
 - i. “Breaking down the dividing wall”, “making the two into one”
 - 1. Restoration to God’s intended plan and place
 - 2. NOT social reconciliation... merely learning to get along
- e. These all speak about reconciliation on a human level, between people. But the most important act of reconciliation is between God and His creation. And here, it might be wise to point out a difference in terms used. Normal word for “reconcile” is katalasso. to reconcile (those who are at variance);return to favour with, But in our passage, a slightly different word is used; apokatalasso. Speaks to a complete reconciliation; a reconciliation that is final and sufficient. Again, Paul is continuing his argument for the sufficiency of Jesus.

6. Scripture also speaks about reconciliation between God and Man

- a. Rom 5:9ff. *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His*

blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 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. 11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

b. 2 Cor 5:17ff. “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 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. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

i. Reconciled to God... How?

1. Through the sacrifice of Christ

2. To a new creation

a. From enemy to friend. We see it in 2 Cor...we also see it in our text this morning

i. Col 1:21ff “although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 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”

b. From living “out of self” to living “out of God”

i. Gal 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

3. God does not change to accommodate us... we are changed to accommodate Him. Only through His transforming and sacrificial work do we stand before Him... reconciled in relationship; holy, blameless, and beyond reproach. Only through Him do we return to our proper place... Sons of God and joint heirs with Christ.

7. Between God and His creation. Back to Col 1: 19,20

a. “For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, 20 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.” “All things to Himself” What does this mean? We need some background...

- i. Gen 1:31 *“God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.”*
 1. One difference between the earlier declarations. “Good” vs “very good”; exceedingly good
- ii. A place of satisfaction, joy and peace
 1. Gen 2:2ff. *“By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work”*
- iii. And then it wasn’t
 1. Gen 3: 8-10 *“They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” 10 He said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.”*
 2. Gen 3:16ff. *“To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; And your desire will be for your husband, But he will rule over you.” 17 Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. 18 “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; 19 By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.”*
 - a. Death, pain, fear, shame, toil, lust, contention... what was “very good” has become something broken, shattered, ruined. There is now a desperate need for reconciliation... for restoration.
- b. We find this clearly described elsewhere in God’s word...
 - i. Rom 8:19ff. *“For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility,*

not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.”

1. There is a sense of yearning... of anxiously awaiting that cleansing moment of restoration to glory... and removal of the curse upon the earth.
- ii. The same truth is touched upon in Eph 1:10ff. talking about *“an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.”*
 1. Reconciling all things to Himself...bringing them back under His authority and influence... to the way God intended them to be.
- c. This sense of yearning...of anxiously waiting... makes sense as we see what God’s reconciliation of creation looks like.
 - i. Is 11:1ff. *“Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him,... 3 And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. 5 Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist. 6 And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. 7 Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper’s den. 9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.”*
 - ii. Note, it is not a cleaning up of the old... a remodel if you will. It is complete “teardown” and reconstruction. We saw that last week in 2 Peter 3:12, speaking of “the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”

- iii. And how can we not go once again to Rev 21 *"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."*
- d. And as part of God reconciling all things to Himself, we shall be changed as well.
 - i. 1 Cor 15:50ff. *"Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality."*
 - 1. Or to put it another way, (as Paul does in our text) we are made to be "holy and blameless and beyond reproach"
- e. One final thought
 - 1. Not only are we granted the gift of reconciliation with God, we are granted the responsibility and privilege of bearing that precious gift to others. Look again at 2 Cor 5 *"He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ,"*
 - 2. We are even given the message and method
 - a. *that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them...*
 - b. *as though God were making an appeal through us we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."*

Let us pray