

**RECONCILED**  
**Colossians 1:21-23**  
**By Andy Manning**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Lydia has two aunts – sisters who are close in age, and who have been close friends ever since they were little. But when their elderly mother’s health began to decline, and she needed full-time care, they had a disagreement and stopped talking. They went from best friends to enemies, and this lasted for several years. But in 2017 when Lydia’s mother died, it deeply affected both them, and motivated them to forgive each other and reestablish their relationship. Mrs. Rita’s funeral was the first time they had seen and embraced each other in years. The reestablishment of their relationship is called reconciliation.
2. Reconciliation means making peace between enemies (NKJV Open Bible). It is the change of a relationship from enemies to friendship. It is the restoration and renewal of a relationship that has been broken by sin.
3. Reconciliation is the heart of the gospel. It is the reason Christ died on the cross. It is the central message of the entire Bible. To understand the gospel of Jesus Christ, and Christianity, and the Bible, we must understand reconciliation.

**II. TEXT**

1. **Colossians 1:21-23** “21 Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds expressed in your evil actions. 22 But now he has reconciled you by his physical body through his death, to present you holy, faultless, and blameless before him— 23 if indeed you remain grounded and steadfast in the faith and are not shifted away from the hope of the gospel that you heard. This gospel has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and I, Paul, have become a servant of it.”

**III. 6 INSIGHTS ABOUT RECONCILIATION**

**1. The need for reconciliation.**

- i. **Colossians 1:21** “Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds expressed in your evil actions.”
  1. This is a description of the state of man before salvation. It involves two things:
    - 1) Alienation: Separation from God. The word means isolation and loneliness. It means to be estranged from God; far from God.
      - i. Before we are reconciled to God, we are alienated from God; separated from far from God.
      - ii. Before they were reconciled, Lydia’s aunts were alienated from one another. They were separated. They didn’t speak; they didn’t touch; they did not look

at each other; they did not go to the same places; they avoided each other.

- iii. Whenever Lydia get in a fight, we become alienated. The time between alienation and reconciliation is the worst. We might still be in the same house, or in the same car, or in the same bed, but we are far apart. We are estranged. We don't look at each other, or talk to each other, or smile at each other; we try our best to avoid each other.
  - iv. In the same way, God is everywhere. You cannot get away from Him. But if you have not been reconciled to Him by faith in Christ, then you are alienated from Him. You do not have a relationship with Him. The relationship is broken.
  - v. Consider the horror of alienation from God:
    - 1. Alienated from His provision.
    - 2. Alienated from His protection.
    - 3. Alienated from His joy.
    - 4. Alienated from His peace.
    - 5. Alienated from His guidance.
    - 6. Alienated from His comfort.
    - 7. Alienated from His power.
    - 8. Alienated from His hope.
    - 9. Alienated from His companionship.
    - 10. Alienated from His listening ear.
  - vi. Isaiah 59:2 "But your iniquities are separating you from your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not listen."
- 2) Hostility. Before you become a Christian you are at hostility with God. We are God's enemies.
- i. The Greek word for "enemies" can also be translated "hateful."
  - ii. Non-Christians are enemies of God. They are God-haters.
  - iii. "hostile in your minds": Your desire was to do your will rather than God will; to serve yourself rather than God.
  - iv. Most unbelieves would object to being hostile to God. They would say that they aren't hostile, just indifferent. But their hostility is "expressed in your evil actions." When you disobey God's will, you show that

you are God's enemy. The GW translation says, "The evil things you did showed your hostile attitude."

- v. Either you are for God or against God. If you are not devoted to God's will, then you are living in rebellion against God. You are fighting against God. That makes you an enemy of God. A God-hater.
- vi. Consider how futile and foolish it is to be an enemy of God:
  - 1. He is omnipotent. We cannot stop Him from achieving His will.
  - 2. He is all-loving. To fight against God is to shoot ourselves in the foot.
  - 3. He is all-knowing. His plan for our lives is much better than our own.
  - 4. He is the sustainer of all things. To rebel against God is to fight against the one who is keeping you alive.
- ii. The need for reconciliation is that we are separated from God; His enemies. We were created to live forever. So if you die alienated and hostile to God, then that alienation continues for all eternity.

## **2. The benefit of reconciliation.**

- i. **Colossians 1:21-23** "21 Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds expressed in your evil actions. 22 But now he has reconciled you"
- ii. What is the benefit of reconciliation? Friendship with God. "Yet now he has brought you back as friends (TLB)."
- iii. Reconciliation is an interesting word.
  - 1. Conciliate means you are on friendly terms. Reconcile means you are re-conciliated. You are taken back to the friendly terms that you were on in the past.
  - 2. The Greek word for reconciliation is *katallasso*. *Lasso* means to change; add the word *kata* and it means to change back. So the word "reconciliation" means that a change has taken place in a person's relationship with God. You are changed back from enemies to friends.
- iv. Consider what a privilege it is to be friends with God:
  - 1. God promises to provide for you. Philippians 4:19 "And my God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."
  - 2. God promises to protect you. 1 Samuel 2:9 "He guards the steps of his faithful ones...."

3. God promises to answer your prayers. Matthew 7:7 “Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you.”
  4. God promises to give you eternal life. John 3:15 “so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”
  5. God promises to work all things together for your good. Romans 8:28 “We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.”
  6. God promises to always be with you. Psalm 23:4 “Even when I go through the darkest valley, I fear no danger, for you are with me.”
  7. God promises you joy. Psalm 16:11 “You reveal the path of life to me; in your presence is abundant joy; at your right hand are eternal pleasures.”
  8. God promises you inner peace. John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Don’t let your heart be troubled or fearful.”
  9. God promises strength to face life’s difficulties. Philippians 4:13 “I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me.”
  10. God promises to comfort you when you are down. 2 Corinthians 1:4 “He comforts us in all our affliction.”
  11. God promises to guide you along the best pathway for your life. Proverbs 3:6 (TLB) “In everything you do, put God first, and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success.”
  12. God promises to guard your salvation. John 6:39 “This is the will of him who sent me: that I should lose none of those he has given me but should raise them up on the last day.”
- v. It is good to have friends in high places. There is no one higher than almighty God, and that is the benefit of reconciliation. We get God for our friend.

### 3. The means of reconciliation.

- i. **Colossians 1:22** “But now he has reconciled you by his physical body through his death”
- ii. How did God reconcile us?
  1. We were sinners and owed the penalty of eternal separation from God in hell.
  2. Christ died on the cross and paid for our sins.
- iii. Romans 3:25 “God presented him as an atoning sacrifice in his blood, received through faith, to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his restraint God passed over the sins previously committed.”
- iv. The phrase “atoning sacrifice” means to pay the penalty of sin. When you atone for your sins, you pay for them. Christ atoned for our sins.

- v. The phrase “atoning sacrifice” is sometimes translated propitiation. It means to appease, or to satisfy God’s wrath. That is how God reconciled us to Himself. We sinned against almighty God, and our sins deserved to be punished. It would be unjust to not punish our sins. But God loves us so much that He sent His only son to die in our place, for our sins, as our substitute. Since Christ satisfied the wrath and justice of God, now we can be reconciled to God.
- vi. Consider what Christ endured for our reconciliation: “Crucifixion was a form of punishment that had been passed down from the Persians, Phoenicians, and Carthaginians. Roman crucifixion was a lingering doom -- by design. Roman executioners had perfected the art of slow torture while keeping the victim alive. Some victims even lingered until they were eaten alive by birds of prey or wild beasts. Most hung on a cross for days before dying of exhaustion, dehydration, traumatic fever, or -- most likely -- suffocation. When the legs would no longer support the weight of the body, the diaphragm was constricted in a way that made breathing impossible. That is why breaking the legs would hasten death, but this was unnecessary in Jesus' case. The hands were usually nailed through the wrists, and the feet through the instep or the Achilles tendon (sometimes using one nail for both feet). None of these wounds would be fatal, but their pain would become unbearable as the hours dragged on. The most notable feature of crucifixion was the stigma of disgrace that was attached to it. One indignity was the humiliation of carrying one's own cross, which might weight as much as 200 pounds. Normally a quaternion, four soldiers, would escort the prisoner through the crowds to the place of crucifixion. A placard bearing the indictment would be hung around the person's neck.” – MacArthur Study Bible, note on Matthew 27:31.

#### **4. The goal of reconciliation.**

- i. **Colossians 1:22** “But now he has reconciled you by his physical body through his death, to present you holy, faultless, and blameless before him”
- ii. What is the goal of reconciliation? That when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, we would be holy, faultless, and blameless before Him.
- iii. When Christ comes back, He is going to judge everyone who has ever lived. Those who rejected Him will be sent to hell. But those who have accepted Him will be given eternal life.
- iv. Matthew 25:46 “And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”
- v. Without Christ, we would be condemned and thrown into hell. But because of God’s work of reconciliation through Christ, we will not be condemned, but will stand forgiven and justified before God.

- vi. Romans 8:1 “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus”

#### 5. The condition for reconciliation.

- i. **Colossians 1:23** “if indeed you remain grounded and steadfast in the faith and are not shifted away from the hope of the gospel that you heard.”
- ii. God has done everything necessary to make reconciliation possible for us.
  - 1. He sent Christ to pay for our sins. Col 1:22
  - 2. He sent people to preach the gospel to us. Rom 10:14
  - 3. He enables us to understand and accept the gospel. John 12:32
- iii. But now the ball is in our court. God will not force us to accept His offer of reconciliation. If we want to be reconciled, there is a condition we must meet. We can choose to remain enemies of God, or be friends with God.
- iv. How do we choose to be friends with God? Faith. “if indeed you remain grounded and steadfast in the faith.” Faith.
- v. Faith is a two-sided coin:
  - 1. Deny self-righteousness and rely solely on the cross of Christ as the way to eternal life.
  - 2. Deny self-rule and rely completely upon Christ to lead us in life.
- vi. “if indeed you remain grounded and steadfast in the faith and are not shifted away from the hope of the gospel that you heard.”
  - 1. The meaning here is not that you will lose your salvation if you are shifted away from the faith. You cannot lose your salvation.
  - 2. Rather, the meaning is that if you do not remain grounded and steadfast in the faith, then you were never saved in the first place.
- vii. Theologians divide reconciliation into two phases:
  - 1. God has reconciled himself to the world through Christ, making man savable.
  - 2. Man is now to reconcile himself to God through faith in Christ.
  - 3. These phases are explained in **2 Corinthians 5:19-20** “19 That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ’s behalf: “Be reconciled to God.”

#### IV. CONCLUSION

- 1. Probably the best story in the Bible about reconciliation is the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32). It’s about a man with two grown sons. The younger son asks for his inheritance early, and then he moves far away and blows all of his money on partying. After all the money is gone, he had nothing, and so he got a job feeding pigs. He was so hungry that he longed to eat the pig food. Eventually he decides he will return to his father, ask for forgiveness, and offer to become one of

his father's servants. So, he goes home, and while he is still far off, the father sees him and runs to him threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. The son asks for forgiveness, and the father put an expensive robe on him, a ring on his finger, and sandals on his feet. And then he threw a huge celebration feast for him.

2. Even though we have run away from God, He never stopped loving us. God wants to you to be reconciled to Him. He wants that so much that He sent His Son to die for your sins.
3. Will you be reconciled to God? You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Be reconciled to God.