

25 January 2015

We seek reconciliation with others because of Christ's example. (Pt 2 Reconciliation)

Introduction.

This is the second study on the word "reconciliation".

Three points covered in Part 1.

1. God required animal sacrifice to make reconciliation for the sins of Israel, and
2. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and
3. God reconciles those who believe Him through Christ Jesus.

Three points are established for this study (Pt 2) from the Scriptures.

1. Christ reconciled both Jew and Gentile in one body by the cross of Christ.
2. Having received reconciliation we are to take Christ's reconciliation to others.
3. Having received reconciliation we are to reconcile with our brother.

Our three points in more detail.

1. Christ reconciled both Jew and Gentile in one body by the cross of Christ.

Supporting Verse.

Eph.2: 16 "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross."

Context and meaning of our verse.

- * Chapter 1: 9 Paul is saying to the Gentile church at Rome that a mystery was disclosed to him that identified God's will, the gathering "together in one all things in Christ" (verse 10).
- * Chapter 2: 8 Paul points out that we are saved by grace, through faith...Verse 9 not of works.
- * Verse 13, the Gentiles who were far off are brought nigh by the blood of Christ.
- * Verse 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity...for to make in himself of twain one new man.
- * Now our verse "that he (Christ) might reconcile both (Jew and Gentile) in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity". This is the mystery that Paul spoke about in Eph.3: 3-6, "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men" (Verse 5), that "Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body" (verse 6), that "he might reconcile both Jew and Gentile in one body by the cross.

Other scriptural support.

1Cor.12: 12-14

Application of verse today.

- * In our previous study we established that God reconciles those who believe Him through Christ Jesus. In this point we expand on that a little and say, that the "those" are both Jew and Gentile, and **they** are reconciled in one body, the church, and it is not the Roman Catholic church, but by the cross, the blood that Christ shed on Calvary.
- * Today God reconciles the Jew when they believe that Christ bore their sin on Himself at Calvary.

Illustration.

- * This month the world remembered the 70th anniversary since the liberation of the Jews at Auschwitz where 1.3million Jews were systematically murdered. What a human tragedy for any religious group to be slaughtered like dogs for their belief in God. Especially when those doing the killing belonged to the church of Rome who profess to be the true church of God.

Learning from our Illustration.

- * Is it any wonder following the Holocaust that Jews often reject the Christian witness of Christ? Perhaps their hearts are so hardened by their forefathers' persecution at the hands of RCs.
- * Just as we each desire to know the gospel of Christ crucified today, that we proclaim Christ to the Gentile today, let us also seek to understand the Old Testament (OT) that we may bridge the gap between the Jew who has a zeal for God but without knowledge, and the cross.

Challenge & or encouragement.

* Let each one of us today remember that God reconciled **both** Jew and Gentile in the body of Christ through the cross.

* Let us all seek to understand the Jew's beliefs in the OT and ask the Lord to help us speak to the unsaved Jew as we do the unsaved Gentile, that **both** Jew and Gentile may know that Christ reconciled Jew and Gentile in His body on the cross, by the blood that Christ shed on Calvary.

2. Having received reconciliation we are to take Christ's reconciliation to others.

Supporting Verse.

2Cor.5: 18 And all things [are] of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation."

Context and meaning of our verse.

* In the beginning of this chapter Paul is talking to the Gentile believers about what happens after death and he says we have a house, "eternal in the heavens" (verse 1). We will then "appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (verse 10), from which Paul establishes that we should fear God (verse 11), and live no more after the flesh, but as new creatures in Christ, where "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (verse 17).

* Now our verse, "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (see also verse 18 & 19). And included in verse 18 is confirmation that God has reconciled the world to Himself by Jesus Christ, and it is therefore from His reconciliation that we have been given the ministry of reconciliation.

Other scriptural support.

2Cor.5: 19, 20

Application of verse today.

* 2Cor.5 18 does not say that only preachers have the ministry of reconciliation but implies that all those in the body of Christ have been given the ministry of reconciliation.

* God's purpose in sending his Son to the earth was that he might save the lost (Matt.18: 11), that He might reconcile the world to himself through the cross.

* A Christian's response to God's reconciliation is to tell others.

Illustration.

* A past alumni of BCNZ has a website "Evangelism Strategies" and he sends out emails at various times to those on his list, and he often asks why are the general church-goers in NZ (and around the world) so apathetic about proclaiming the gospel, (let us put aside what he believes this to be for now) and he then does his best to encourage evangelism in the churches in NZ.

Learning from our Illustration.

* Once we **know** that we are reconciled to God through Christ, not because a pastor, teacher or preacher tells us, then our heart will desire to share that truth with others.

But if (a) we are reconciled to God but do not have or believe the Holy Scriptures, or we sit under teachers that do not believe His Holy Writings, and (b) we are **not** reconciled to God, but sit in church pews like I did for 16 years, then in both examples **no** amount of motivation from Evangelists will get them out doing what **should** be the most natural response.

* Having been reconciled to God we then, and only then, will be motivated to take Christ's reconciliation to others.

Challenge & or encouragement.

* If you have believed the gospel of the grace of God, the gospel of Christ crucified given to Paul, then you **are** a new creature, all things will be new, you **are** reconciled to God. Being reconciled to God let us then thank Him for His reconciliation, and ask the Lord for a renewed desire to take Christ's reconciliation to others.

3. Having received reconciliation we are to reconcile with our brother.

Supporting Verse.

Mt.5: 23 & 24 "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift...and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother."

Context and meaning of our verse.

* The Lord Jesus is, according to Matt.5: 1 & 2 teaching His disciples, and the instruction applies to those who will inherit the kingdom of heaven (verse 10, 19). When it comes to our verses (23 & 24) the word "gift" and "altar" are a reference to OT sacrifices. Verse 24 says that if the person bringing the gift to the altar remembers that he has wronged his brother, he is to first go and be reconciled to his brother and then bring his gift (Verse 24).

* The term "thy brother" is often applied to those "in the faith" (Neh.5: 7 & Col.1: 1). So, when a Jew in the kingdom comes to the altar with a gift and realises he has wronged his brother in the faith he is to go and make right that which is wrong between them, before bringing his gift.

Other scriptural support.

* Given that part of reconciliation is forgiveness we bring scriptural support from a passage that speaks about forgiveness between brethren (Lk.17: 3 & 4).

Scriptural examples.

* David and Saul were not brothers by birth, yet they were both from the nation of Israel. David is a vivid example of a believer (in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) seeking reconciliation with a brother in the faith. who thought to wrong him. In this example, to kill him (1Sam24: 17).

Application of verse today.

* When we apply this verse to today we say that a man who comes to break bread, to share in the Lord's supper and remembers that a brother has ought against him, let him be reconciled with his brother.

Illustration.

* Imagine being rattled by a brother to such an extent that when you sit and partake of the elements of bread and wine, your heart and mind are wandering to what they have done against you, or what you have done against them.

* It is a bit like a marriage where we are encouraged not to go to bed with anger in our hearts towards our spouse. I remember a number of times where I have stayed awake with a burden in my heart toward my wife, and not being able to sleep and then plucking up courage 2 or 3 hours later to say something, set things right. Straight after doing so we go to sleep. Almost burden free, the issue between us resolved and we can pray together, and sleep in peace.

Learning from our Illustration.

* Whether in the church setting or in our homes we are to be reconciled to our brother. Should a wife depart from her husband it is better if she return and be reconciled. And given that we are to have no division in the church, it would be likely that there is such a preference in the church. It is better to be reconciled. And encompassed in the reconciliation is repentance, forgiveness, and subsequent peace (Col.1: 20) that arises following the reconciliation.

Challenge & or encouragement.

* Having been reconciled to God by the cross let us be ministers of reconciliation. Whether in our homes or our church families there will always be division, there will always be times when one member of the family has something against another. How will you handle such division? Be encouraged to be reconciled with your brother, repent when necessary and forgive where appropriate, whether in the church family or in our homes.

Summary of our three points.

1. Christ reconciled both Jew and Gentile in one body by the cross of Christ.
2. Having received reconciliation we are to take Christ's reconciliation to others.
3. Having received reconciliation we are to reconcile with our brother.