



# Reconciled By the Cross

[1:21-23]

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*“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 . . .” (1:21-23).*

Let us remember that we are children of the King! A crown is laid up for us in heaven! We are qualified for God’s inheritance! Let us also remember who Jesus is. He is the Creator, the image of the invisible God, the head of the church, the One who has reconciled us to God.

Through His blood, Christ has made peace with God for us. To be reconciled means to be brought back together, to be made friends again. Why was this reconciliation necessary? In Colossians 1:21-23, this question is answered.

## **OUR PAST: “ALIENATED” (1:21)**

Reconciliation was necessary because we were “alienated” or separated from God!

Behold, the Lord’s hand is not so short that it cannot save; neither is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear (Isaiah 59:1, 2).

The element that separated us from God was sin.

We were “hostile” to God because we acted in opposition to God. When Paul was preaching in the synagogue in Corinth in Acts 18:6, his listeners “resisted and blasphemed.” Paul, consequently, had to go elsewhere with the gospel. God is on our side! He is for us! However, to go contrary to His law, His wishes, His hopes is to oppose oneself. It places us on one side and God on the other. We become enemies of God.

Paul said they were hostile in “mind.” This word “mind” is elsewhere translated “heart.” It describes the total disposition of a person—intellect, will, and emotions. In other words, a way of life that is hostile to God is depicted. Those who live in sin are in opposition to God.

The hostile mind is evidenced by “evil deeds.” Jesus set the standard in Matthew 7. He said, “So then, you will know them by their fruits” (Matthew 7:20). By the deeds done in the body we are to be judged (2 Corinthians 5:10). In Matthew 25 Jesus pictured the great judgment scene of all nations being gathered before Him on the last day. The surprising truth about the judgment scene is the standard used. It will not be some doctrinal question. It will be what they have done. It will be their deeds. They had not fed the hungry, clothed the naked, or visited those who were sick or in prison. In Revelation 20:12, John said he saw the books opened and the dead were “judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.” Why were they characterized as enemies of God? Because of the pattern of their lives.

Sinners need to be reconciled to God. He will not tolerate sin; His holiness will not allow Him to wink at evil.

### **OUR PRESENT: "RECONCILED" (1:22)**

Paul was writing to brethren, people who had obeyed the gospel! They were facing problems, but they were God's children. Obedience to the gospel does not eliminate all problems, but it does imply that we possess a way to handle our problems.

Now we are *reconciled*. We have been made friends with God. It was not our doing, but Christ's. By the death of His physical body we were reconciled. I must accept that death and its merits to be saved. However, my actions do not earn that reconciliation.

A young couple had become separated. They were hostile, angry, and defiant toward each other. Their little daughter became seriously ill and was hospitalized. In the hospital they stood on each side of her hospital bed, anxiously watching their daughter, when she reached up and took a hand of each parent and joined them over the bed. What they could not accomplish by themselves, a little child did. They were reconciled!

Now we are *righteous*. In order to be presented to God, we had to be cleaned up, washed by the blood of Jesus. Thus, we are made holy! We are not holy in and of ourselves. But through Jesus we are made holy.

Now we are *without blemish*. Every sacrifice of the Old Testament was to be perfect. But we have blemishes. We have sinned. We were "alienated," "hostile in mind," and "engaged in evil deeds," but we were covered with the blood of Jesus, washed and made clean, and have been reconciled to God.

Now we are *beyond reproach*. The devil is referred to as the "accuser of our brethren" in Revelation 12:10. Job is a perfect picture of what the devil does in accusing us. But the devil has been cast down. He is restricted in his action. Our guilt is gone, and no legitimate accusation can be brought against us. The blood of Jesus took care of our guilt. Thus, with the devil subdued, with the guilt of our sins gone, washed away by the blood of Jesus, we can have confidence.

Jesus now sits at God's right hand as our mediator and intercessor. We may have an enemy who accuses us of evil, but we also have an intercessor who pleads our case before God.

What a marvelous present! We are "holy and blameless and beyond reproach" in God's eyes! We have been set apart for God's use in His service. We are no longer alienated or wicked. We have been washed with the blood of Jesus and reconciled. Think of what you were, and compare your past with your present condition! Are you not grateful for what Christ has done for you?

### **OUR PERMANENCE: "IF . . ." (1:23)**

Our possession has been described for us. We possess justification before God. Although we enjoy this relationship with God, we must maintain the relationship. Please notice that big, little word "if." Our present condition is not a permanent possession regardless of our actions. I can turn from God. I can become entangled in the world again and be overcome! I can lose that precious possession!

What must I do to maintain my possession? "Continue in the faith," Paul said. "The faith" is the whole of Christian doctrine; it is all that Jesus taught. Jesus said,

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:19, 20).

It is not passive action; I must continue in the faith. Positive action is required on my part.

I must be "firmly established" and remain "steadfast" in that faith. A building is only as good as the foundation. Our faith can only be as good as the foundation upon which it rests. This describes something firm, unmoving, settled, and deeply rooted.

Let us not be "moved away from the hope of the gospel." The hope of the gospel is eternal life with God in heaven. Not everyone will be saved. The only real possibility of my going to heaven is offered by Jesus Christ! It is through obedient faith! The gospel is the good news; if I continue in it I can live with God in heaven.

### **CONCLUSION**

Do you have that hope? Are you grounded and settled in that hope of the gospel? Are you firm in the faith?