

RECONCILIATION- CHESTER McALLEY

The basic idea in the word reconciliation is very simple. It means to adjust something to a specific standard.

- As used in the Bible, man is viewed as out of harmony with God, who, through the cross work of Jesus Christ, accomplishes what is necessary to bring man back into fellowship with Himself.

The Need for Reconciliation:

- Man Is a Sinner In the early chapters of the Roman epistle, Paul argues the existence of man's sinful condition saying "...*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).*" This verse points to the universality of sinfulness, for it includes all.
- It also points to the nature of sin—*all...fall short*.
- The word means to lack what one must have.
- It is a picture of a legitimate bill that far exceeds what one can possibly pay.
- This verse finally points to the standard which man fails to meet—the glory of God.

What, then, is the glory of God?

- Our answer comes from the Old Testament in passages such as *Exodus 24:16-17* which reads, "*And the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud. And to the eyes of the sons of Israel the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire on the mountain top.*"
- The glory spoken of here refers to the person and presence of God Himself.

The need for reconciliation is further established

- *by Romans 5:5-10⁶ and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. ⁶For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. ⁸ 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.*
- where four words are used to describe man's condition. Men are said to be helpless, ungodly, sinners, and enemies.
- What, then, is the solution to this disharmony? How can the problem be solved?
 - First, can man bring himself back to God? Obviously, this is not the solution. Man's condition of sinfulness teaches that man will not and cannot pull himself up to the standards demanded by a perfectly righteous God. Even if he could, there still remains the problem of his past sins, which demand just punishment.
 - Second, can God adjust Himself to man? Here again is an unthinkable solution. The righteous God of the universe cannot and would not adjust Himself to the sinfulness of man. God is eternally and unchangeably holy.
 - Third, what then has God done? The last option expresses the doctrine of reconciliation—God must undertake to adjust man to Himself.

The Standard of Reconciliation: God Himself

- Since reconciliation involves an adjustment, we must determine the standard to which adjustment is made.

- II Corinthians 5:18 tells us that God has ***"reconciled us to Himself through Christ."*** Here we have the standard of reconciliation, to Himself, and the means of doing so, through Christ.
 - God Himself is the standard to which adjustment must be made—His character may not be compromised in any way.
 - Reconciliation is always to God. He is the constant and unchangeable one.
- The question that remains, then, is this, "How can God bring man into harmony with Himself without changing in any way and without compromise of His character?"

The Means of Reconciliation:

The Cross of Jesus Christ ***Ephesians 2:16*** ***and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.*** explains the means of reconciliation, saying that God might ***"reconcile them both (Jew and Gentile) in one body to God through the cross."*** This means of reconciliation is also taught in ***Col. 1:20*** ***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.*** and ***Romans 5:10-11 (NASB77)*** ***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. "*** ***And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.***

The cross work of Jesus Christ is the heart of salvation.

- The total solution to the problem of man's sinfulness is realized exclusively in the cross death of Jesus Christ.
- The only contribution man can make is his sinfulness; all else is solved by God in the death and resurrection of His Son.

The Basis of Reconciliation:

- Jesus Christ Became Identified with Sinners so as to Take Their Place ***II Corinthians 5:21*** tells us, ***"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."***
- Here we have the very heart of salvation: Jesus Christ died in the place of the guilty sinner. This is the biblical doctrine of substitution.

The Change of Reconciliation:

- A New Position Before God Reconciliation produces a positional change.
- Man is now made savable. There is now a basis upon which God can extend His salvation; He is now free to grant forgiveness—a provision is made.
- The work of Jesus Christ does not save men, but it makes salvation possible—it makes man savable.

Condition of Reconciliation:

- Reconciliation is objectively provided by the cross of Christ and is subjectively appropriated by faith.

The Responsibility of Reconciliation: :Our Witness

- II Corinthians 5:18, 20 contain two truths about reconciliation.
 - First, reconciliation is a finished work— ***who reconciled us to Himself through Christ.***
 - Second, this finished work is ours to proclaim— ***He gave us the ministry of reconciliation...therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God.***