

BASED UPON AUGUST 23, 2020'S SERMON

THE COMMISSION



OLD MADE NEW

2 CORINTHIANS

PRAYER

The message and ministry of reconciliation is exactly what we all need to hear. Both to become Christians but also so that we are encouraged by the fact that our status before God is based on Christ reconciling us to God, not based on any merit or ritual that we have done ourselves.

In today's lesson, we will focus on both the spiritual reconciliation of humanity in God but also consider our own need to be reconciled relationally to others. Because of the nature of this content, there will be a lot of introspective questions that might not elicit as much discussion as other lessons.

However, use this time to encourage one another to live out the righteousness of God in your lives. Maybe even consider where you are lacking and confess to God and your group. When we communally confess, we are allowing the work of God to permeate our lives and continue the process of seeking faithful obedience.

As always, I am praying for you and want you to know how encouraged I am that you continue to work together toward maturity in Christ.

- JF

Benefactor of all who look to You,
Light of those who dwell in darkness,
Creator of each seed,
Gardener of every spiritual plant,
Take pity upon me, my Lord,
and make me into a pure temple.

Do not judge me according to my sins,
For if You should mark my offenses
I could not longer stand before You.

But because of Your immense
compassion and infinite mercy,
Cleanse me in the name of our Lord
Jesus Christ,
Your Only Son, who is the most sacred
Healer of our souls.

And to You, through Him, be every glory,
power, honor, and magnificence in the
endless ages of ageless ages.

Amen.

Prayer taken from a 2nd Century papyrus

READ

2 Corinthians 5:18-21 | ESV

18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.



DISCUSS

Lead your group through the following discussion questions. Help them thoughtfully reflect and respond to God's direction.

1 | Observing repetition in Scripture is vitally important as we study the Word of God. As we read today's passage, we see the word RECONCILE (in its various forms) five different times. What comes to mind when you hear the word "reconcile"? (*The answer can be reconciliation between you and God, between you and another person, a monetary reconciliation; the possibilities for what we think about when it comes to the word reconcile can be a long list.*) Why do you think your mind goes to that understanding? What would happen if there was not the opportunity to reconcile?

2 | Based on our last question, you might have considered a past personal relationship that has been reconciled. If you feel comfortable, please share how your faith in Christ compelled you to reconcile that relationship. Specifically, consider how your attitude and actions may have reflected God's reconciliation in your own life. Now, I want you to consider what relationship you currently have that needs to experience reconciliation. What is one way you can take a tangible step this week towards seeking reconciliation? Also, how can this group hold you accountable to seeking that reconciliation?

3 | In the sermon, Pastor Kevin used the illustration of two chairs to represent our relationship with God. Scripture is clear that God loves us but there is a problem with our relationship because of sin. But Jesus is the answer to that sin by taking on the punishment that we deserve so that by grace through faith we can be reconciled to God. When considering this illustration, has it helped to make our reconciliation with God any clearer to you? How might you consider using this illustration with others?

4 | Being an ambassador for Christ and having the ministry of reconciliation is not just some fancy spiritual language, but it is a holy task that we have been given. Have you considered sharing the gospel as a holy and essential task in your life? If yes, how have you come to that conclusion and where have you seen fruit? If not, how might you begin to walk in this purpose for your life?

5 | Pastor Kevin closed his sermon with two questions. The first was - "**Is your chair facing toward God or away from Him?**" The second question was "**Is there someone in your life, whose chair is facing you, but turned away from God?**" Spend a moment in reflection considering these two questions. If you are facing toward God, praise be to Him for that reality! If you are not facing Him, let us pray with you and I encourage you to talk with a pastor. Is there a person that you can think of that needs to be facing toward God? How can you help them know God's desire for their chair to be facing God's?

CONCLUSION

Prayer | O Gracious, Reconciling God,

We thank You for Your plan to seek the lost and to reconcile us to Yourself through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The fact that You desire to present us holy, blameless, and above reproach is evidence of Your gracious nature. We pray that we would think upon our reconciliation with You often and that it would begin transforming our desire to be reconciled in our relationships with others. Give to us the desire and the opportunity to be reconciled to those around us because of our faith in Christ. May we live in the reality that we are ministers of reconciliation so that we can share the Gospel with those around us this week. Amen.

Benediction | Now to you who were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, yet have now been reconciled through Jesus' death in order to present you holy, blameless, and beyond reproach, go out in joy and be led forth in peace.