

## Sermon Notes

# WORSHIP SERVICE - 7.2.2023

## AN EPIC TRANSFORMATION

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### Colossians 1:21-23

**21** And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, **22** he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, **23** if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation [g] under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

### II. REMOVED FROM CHRIST

- **“And you, who once were alienated”**
- Alienated means to be separated or estranged. And it's not a friendly separation. It's a hostile separation.
- When Paul says 'you who were once alienated', he's saying that we were once separated, estranged, from God. It is in the past tense.
- In verse 20, we see that there was a great, and victorious reconciliation of all things, both in heaven, and earth, that took place when Jesus Christ made peace by the blood of his cross, thus reconciling all things to himself.
- He won the victory over all who were in rebellion against him. He secured the salvation of all who trust in Christ.

#### *We Were Born in Sin*

- Before we trusted Christ we were alienated. We were estranged from God. That is the condition we were born in.
- Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—[ESV]
- From Adam, sin and death have been the condition passed down to us, generation after generation, the condition in which we were born. All men have sinned, none of us are exempt.
- And it is sin which incurs this alienation. Sin separates us from God. Why?

#### *Our Sin Separates Us From a Holy God*

- Our sin is an offense against a holy and righteous God! When the standard is God's perfection, which is no sin, then we've all fallen short.
- We all were born in darkness, slaves to sin, with evil intents and thoughts proceeding from wicked hearts. Do you see the alienation here?

Do you see that separation between a holy and perfect God and lost sinful creatures?

### *We Were Completely Lost in Sin*

- Ephesians 4:18–19 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. (ESV)
- This is the condition we were born into. This is the condition of those who have not been reconciled to God.
- This alienation was not one we could overcome on our own.
  
- **“Hostile in mind”**
- And Paul says that those who are alienated are hostile in mind. Hostile is a strong word. It's not just unfriendly, it's antagonistic. It's an enemy, someone in direct opposition against you.
- Romans 1:21–32 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. 26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. 28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. 29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (ESV)
- This is what it means to be hostile in mind. Not giving honor or thanks to God; futile in their thinking; not wise, but foolish; not acknowledging God; debased minds filled with all manner of evil
- This is descriptive of the “good” people in our society just as much as it is of those sitting in prisons across our country.
- These mindsets are hostile! Because they are not rooted in truth, they are not of Christ.
- Romans 8:7 The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law.
- And what do hostile minds lead to?
  
- **“Doing evil deeds”**
- Hostile, debased, evil minds, and evil thoughts and intents, lead to evil actions.
- It's the natural cause and effect. A mind hostile to God thinks evil which leads to evil actions.
- In Colossians 1:21, those who are alienated and hostile in mind are caught in a loop.
- Ephesians 2:1-4 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the

prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience - among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

- This is the loop we were born into. Dead in trespasses in sin. Following the course of this world, living according to the passions of the flesh, the desires of hostile minds.
- Many people have tried to escape this loop on their own. They try to improve their actions.
- Some people try to just avoid the “really bad sins.”
- Some turn to organized religion.
- All these things address the actions though, not the root cause. And they ultimately will always come up short.

### III. RECONCILED BY CHRIST

- **“And you...he has now reconciled”**
- Before we were alienated, hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, but now he has reconciled us!
- In verses 15-20, we see the big picture reconciliation, the restoration of all things!
- And now here we zoom in, from the macro, to the micro, from the reconciliation of all things, to the reconciliation needed in our own lives.
- Verse 21 is about us - we were once alienated. But verse 22 is about Him! He has now reconciled us!
- Reconciliation is difficult. When two parties are at odds, it can be tough to come to terms and difficult to resolve the blockage in the relationship.
- Reconciliation requires humility. We need humility to accept our need for a savior; humility to accept that we can't get to heaven on our own. We need humility to submit to the authority of the Lord and come to faith.
- But the humility of Christ to achieve our reconciliation was far far greater.
- **“in his body of flesh by his death,”**
- Christ, the king of glory, came to earth as a man. Took on flesh.
- And that death, that sinless perfect sacrifice is what brought us reconciliation. It's through the blood of Christ alone that our sins were paid for, by the one who had no sins of his own.
- 2 Corinthians 5:17–21 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 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. (ESV)
- God, through Christ, through the death of his body of flesh, reconciled us to himself!
- In Christ, God reconciled the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them!
- And now we are tasked, as ambassadors for Christ, to appeal to others: "Be reconciled to God!"
- We can be tasked with their message of reconciliation because of the power of the gospel: Vs 21 there: For our sake he (God) made him (Christ) to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God!
- You can't stop doing evil deeds on your own.

- You can't get to heaven by doing more good than bad.
  - You can't search until you have found enlightenment to stop being hostile in mind.
  - Hear the message of reconciliation: God has reconciled us to himself. He brought restoration to our broken, severed relationship with Him, because the one who knew no sin, took on our sins, paid for them in his body on the cross, so that we might become the righteousness of God.
  - Now we who are in Christ are in a state of reconciliation. The relationship between God and man is restored.
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- And now we are presentable to God and will be presented to God:
  - **“in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,”**
  - What an epic transformation!
  - From alienated, hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, to holy, blameless, and above reproach before Him.
  - We will be presented to God one day, and on that day, he won't see our sins. He won't see our previous hostility.
  - He'll see us covered by the blood of the lamb, and we will be presented as holy, blameless, and above reproach because of Christ.
  - Because of Christ we are holy; we are now positionally holy - we have been designated for good, selected as vessels for honorable use.
  - We are now found in Christ, and no longer slaves to sin and to live out selfish desires. We are set apart.
  - And ultimately our holiness will be complete when we reach glory, but we are to daily increase in holiness as well as we mature in our faith.
  - If you have accepted Christ, do you know that you are holy?
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- Why is it important that we are holy? What are the implications?
  - Hebrews 12:14 Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. (ESV)
  - Without holiness, no one will see the Lord.
  - 1 Peter 1:14–16 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” (ESV)
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- Because of Christ we are blameless and above reproach, Our sins have been removed as far as the east is from the west. We are now found to be without disgrace, without fault. And this is how we will be presented to the Father.
  - This truly is an epic transformation. It's important that we remember how lost we really were, and how far Christ had to go for our reconciliation, and what now awaits us in glory ahead.
  - Doesn't it just make you marvel at the mercy of God?
  - Ephesians 2:1–7 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (ESV)

## IV. ROOTED IN CHRIST

- **“if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.”**

- It seems Paul is qualifying the reconciliation with the condition of continuing in the faith.
- So if they don't continue in the faith, does this mean they can lose their salvation?
- Let's be clear: the bible doesn't teach that we can lose our salvation. You cannot lose your salvation! It is secured by the blood of Christ!
- He has saved all who have come to him in faith. He has reconciled us to the Father.
- Hebrews 7:25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him
- John 10:27–30 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one.” (ESV)
- Who could ever steal away our salvation from the one who is the greatest? No one. Praise God!
- So what is Paul saying here then with this “if indeed”?
- He's saying that the evidence of their salvation, of their reconciliation, is the steadfast clinging to the gospel, to their faith.

- **“you continue in the faith”**

- Continuing on in your faith, remaining committed to it, clinging to it - these are indicators of genuine faith. Proof that your conversion was real!
- Many people make professions for Christ. But over time, it will show through whether we are continuing in the faith, stable, and steadfast, holding to it, or if we're holding onto a false profession, a pretense, and in time the continuation in the faith is no longer there.
- Sometimes it comes out after time that the profession isn't based on the finished work of Christ, complete and powerful enough to save the lost, but rather on their own works. Their own good deeds.
- That isn't the good news of the gospel, of the faith to which we hold.
- Sometimes it comes out after time that the profession is based on emotion. But later on, over time, that emotional high comes down. And it's evident then that no heart change ever took place.
- Matthew 7:21-23 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ 23 And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’ (ESV)

- Be **“stable and steadfast”** in the faith.

- Our faith should be stable. It's rooted, steadfast, grounded, in the finished, completed, victorious work of Christ.
- This is just one of many admonitions in the new testament to remain stable, to be steadfast, to stand strong in our faith. Why do you think that is?
- Because we're susceptible to not remaining steadfast and so we are encouraged to do so.
- 1 Corinthians 16:13 Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. (ESV)
- Philippians 4:1 Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. (ESV)
- 1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. (ESV)

- **“not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard”**
- Paul tells us that genuine faith is not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard!
- Don't ever move from that! Don't shift from that! The gospel is our core, central, belief! It is what we are firmly rooted to!
- It's the only message that gives us any hope! That while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us! Redeeming the lost, the broken, reconciling us to himself!
- 1 Corinthians 15:3–4 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, (ESV)
- The gospel is of first importance! It is the foundation of everything we believe!
- There is also a warning to be careful that we don't shift from the gospel, that we do not allow ourselves to be persuaded by other messages that dilute the gospel or add or remove from the gospel.
- There are many teachers, preachers, podcasts, sermons, and books that will present all manner of teachings and not all align with the gospel. We need to be careful. We need to know our bibles.
- We need to be careful that we don't allow society, politics, shifting morality, or social agendas to be the lens through which we see gospel truth. We must instead view those things through the lens of the gospel and then we will remain stable and steadfast.
- Cling to the gospel!

## CONCLUSION

- Are you still removed from Christ? Are you still alienated from him?
- Have you trusted in the complete and finished work of the sacrifice of Christ as the only way by which we can be saved?
- If you haven't, the bible says that today is the day of salvation.
- Romans 10:9–10 ... if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. (ESV)
- If you have been reconciled to Christ, are you marveling at the great reconciliation that has taken place to secure your salvation? Are you filled with gratitude and worship for that?
- Be encouraged, you will be presented holy and blameless before the Lord. And this should fill you with great hope and great peace.
- I exhort you to strive for holiness and to be growing in holiness.
- Are you rooted in Christ?
- Are you continuing in your faith? Are you wavering in it, are you as dedicated and committed to Christ as you once were?
- Your faith in him is so important! Hebrews reminds us that without faith it is impossible to please him! He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him!
- Are you steadfast, grounded, and rooted in your faith? Don't give in to other teachings, agendas, worldly ideology that saturates our communities.
- Be grounded in your faith! Read the Word so that you might hold firm to the hope we have in the gospel! It's of first importance!
- The gospel is good news!

## APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?