



# Our Ministry of RECONCILIATION

By Matt Knapp

IN 2 CORINTHIANS 5:18, we are told that God has “given unto us the ministry of reconciliation.” In the next verse, Paul reinforces that statement by saying that God has “committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” So clearly, this is an important charge to the church. Do we fully understand it? Let’s take a deeper look and then consider how we might apply it as an Apostolic Christian Church.

Paul has stated previously in this chapter that all men are either identified with Christ or not identified with Christ. Those that have been identified with Christ are new creatures that have died with Christ, are risen with Christ, live with Christ, and are no longer who they once were. And because of this, we do not identify them first and foremost by their flesh (skin color, social status, language they speak, etc.) but by being Christ’s!

We could ask, how does something this drastic happen? This question is answered in verses 18 & 19. God has done the following:

- **Reconciled us to Himself** – Reconciliation assumes that there has been a broken relationship. An example would be a married couple that has had strife and contention, has moved out on each other, and are seeking legal counsel for a divorce. They need to be reconciled. This is true of our relationship with God. Man’s relationship

with God has been broken since the first sin in the Garden of Eden. The scripture states that the reason that we have a broken relationship with God is because we by nature are at war with God – his enemies (Colossians 1:21; Romans 5:10). We need to be reconciled to God and GOD HAS RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF.

- **By Jesus Christ** – God tells us exactly how he reconciles us! Through the death of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:22a; Romans 5:10). We cannot be reconciled to God through trying harder, doing better things, fitting a certain social class, or etc. We can only be reconciled through Jesus! He is the only way (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).
- **And has given us the ministry of reconciliation** – God not only reconciles and saves us; he also sends us! Since we have come to realize that our primary identification in life is either being in a relationship with Christ or not in a relationship with Christ, we are called to be working to reconcile others to God through Jesus Christ! We want others to be one with Christ!

Paul continues in verse 20 and states that those of us that have been reconciled to God are ambassadors for God and that God is making his appeal through us. An ambassador is one that represents the power and dignity of his sovereign. God is using us as his people to appeal

to those that are not reconciled. Paul then says, I pray you in Christ stand to be reconciled to God. This word pray means to implore or to petition with urgency. We as believers are called to petition others with urgency to be reconciled to God!

Finally, Paul gives the summary in verse 21 –

- Jesus lived on this earth and did not sin at all – words, thoughts, or actions
- However, He became the penalty of sin for us! Our sin was judged by Him at the Cross!
- Why – so that we could be made the righteousness of God in Him

Men can be reconciled to God because God has poured out His wrath on His Son and place His righteousness on us! PRAISE GOD FOR HIS GOODNESS!

## How does this relate to us a brotherhood?

It means that we understand the primary need of ALL people is to be reconciled to God. Of course, people also need food, clothing, shelter, and etc. – these are real needs. However, the deepest need of a person is to be reconciled to God. When a person is reconciled to God the gifts and talents that God has created them with can be used in a way that God is honored. This understanding should direct both our personal outreach and that done by individual congregations. It is also a strategic focus of HarvestCall, as the church’s missions agency. Looking forward, HarvestCall’s goal is that we will have highly relational ministries that are focused on people

over projects, and God will be glorified through the faithful proclamation of the gospel.



## What should this look like in the future if we as a church are faithful to this focus area?

We believe that a faithful fulfillment in this focus area will result in the following, both in local ministries and HarvestCall ministries:

- Ministries that are focused on evangelism and discipleship over projects and “fixing” others.
- Consistent assessments in all of our ministries as to where we are at with our focus on people and relationships.
- Extensive preparation for missionaries in the gospel, cultural awareness, sensitivity to others and a primary focus of evangelism and discipleship.
- All members seeking ways to engage in the Great Commission.
- In the countries where we minister, indigenous people will be reconciled to God, churches will be planted, and when ready, the local people will be given the responsibility of church leadership as well as becoming a part of HarvestCall Boards and Committees.

Spend time today contemplating the gift you have been given by being reconciled to God and your calling to urge others to do the same. Pray that we as a church — and particularly the HarvestCall organization — will make the ministry of reconciliation a primary focus in our personal lives and in our ministries! *Matt Knapp serves as Executive Director for HarvestCall.*

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