

Message Five

(Saturday—Second Morning Session)

Being Fully Reconciled to God to Be Enlarged in Our Heart for Shepherding

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 5:20, 14-15; 6:11-13; John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28

I. The ministry of reconciliation is to bring us back to God fully, thoroughly, completely, and entirely—2 Cor. 5:18:

- A. The ministry of reconciliation is not merely to bring sinners back to God but, even the more, to bring believers absolutely into God.
- B. Until we are wholly one with the Lord, being in Him and allowing Him to be in us absolutely, we will need the ministry of reconciliation.
- C. Two steps are required for us to be fully reconciled to God:
 - 1. In 2 Corinthians 5:19 it is the world that is reconciled to God, but in verse 20 it is the believers, who have already been reconciled to God and are to be reconciled further to God.
 - 2. The first step of reconciliation is to reconcile sinners to God from sin—v. 19:
 - a. For this purpose Christ died for our sins that they might be forgiven by God—1 Cor. 15:3; Luke 24:46-47; 1 John 2:12.
 - b. This is the objective aspect of Christ's death; in this aspect He bore our sins upon Himself on the cross that they might be judged by God for us—1 Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:11-12; Heb. 9:28; Col. 1:22; Rom. 8:3.
 - 3. The second step of reconciliation is to reconcile believers living in the natural life to God from the flesh—2 Cor. 5:20:
 - a. For this purpose Christ died for us—the persons—that we might live to Him in the resurrection life—vv. 14-15.
 - b. This is the subjective aspect of Christ's death; in this aspect He was made sin for us to be judged and done away with by God that we might become the righteousness of God in Him—v. 21.
 - c. In the objective aspect of His death, Christ bore our sins; in the subjective aspect, He became sin—1 Pet. 2:24; Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21.
 - d. Because we are still separated from God and because we are not fully one with God and altogether in harmony with Him, we need the second step of reconciliation.
 - e. The subjective aspect of the death of Christ needs to be applied to our situation and to our natural life—Rom. 6:6; 8:13; Gal. 5:24; Matt. 16:24:
 - (1) In order that we may be reconciled to God in full, the Father exposes our natural life and unveils our real situation to us—1 John 1:5, 7:
 - (a) As a result, we condemn our natural being and apply the cross subjectively, and this application of the death of Christ crucifies our natural life.
 - (b) As our natural man is crossed out, we experience the second step of reconciliation; in this step the veil of our natural man is rent so that we may live in God's presence.

(2) Instead of taking place once for all, the second step of reconciliation is continuous.

4. By the two aspects of His death, Christ fully reconciles God's chosen people to God—Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:19-20.

II. To be fully reconciled to God will cause us to be enlarged in our heart for shepherding—v. 20; 6:11-13; John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28:

- A. How large our heart is depends on the degree of our reconciliation to God.
- B. Narrowness of heart is a strong indication that we have been reconciled to God only partially and that the percentage of our salvation is quite low—2 Cor. 6:2; Rom. 5:10.
- C. If we are able to forgive an offense and then forget it, that is a sign that we have become an enlarged person, a person with a large heart—Matt. 18:21-35; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13.
- D. In order to be strict with ourselves and not with others, we need to be enlarged; those who are constricted are usually narrow as well, and thus they need to have their hearts enlarged—2 Cor. 6:12-13.
- E. “Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand that is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing...God gave Solomon wisdom and very much understanding and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore”—1 Kings 4:20, 29:
 - 1. Wisdom and largeness of heart are two aspects of one thing; the secret of wisdom is to have a large heart.
 - 2. Those who are wise have a large heart, but those who have a narrow heart are foolish.
 - 3. When a person is narrow and his heart is narrow, it is easy for him to be proud; pride is the expression of the narrowness of a person.
- F. We need to be impressed with the contrast between narrowness of heart and largeness of heart:
 - 1. Narrowness of heart—not forgiving another party unless and until he repents; largeness of heart—having the loving and forgiving heart of our Father God—Luke 15:20-24; 23:34a; Acts 7:59-60; Mark 11:25.
 - 2. Narrowness of heart—caring for our own things; largeness of heart—caring for the things of Christ Jesus—Phil. 2:19-21.
 - 3. Narrowness of heart—caring for individual spirituality; largeness of heart—caring for the church—1 Cor. 14:3-4, 12, 18-19.
 - 4. Narrowness of heart—having a heart only for certain believers and churches; largeness of heart—having a heart for all believers and all churches, no matter what their condition may be—Phil. 1:8; 2:1-4; 2 Cor. 11:28.
 - 5. Narrowness of heart—caring for our local church more than for the Body of Christ; largeness of heart—caring more for the Body of Christ than for our local church—Eph. 1:22-23.
 - 6. Narrowness of heart—caring for our own work; largeness of heart—caring for the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem—4:16; Col. 2:19; Rev. 21:2.