

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD AND GOD'S DISPENSING FOR GOD'S ECONOMY

(Friday—Second Morning Session)

Message Two

The Ministry of Reconciliation

Scripture Reading: Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:20; 2 Cor. 5:18-20

I. It is helpful for us to have a basic understanding of reconciliation:

- A. The need of reconciliation—enmity, enemies—Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:21.
- B. The meaning of reconciliation—to make peace—v. 20; 2 Cor. 5:18.
- C. The instrument of reconciliation—Christ—Col. 1:20; 2 Cor. 5:18.
- D. The means of reconciliation—the cross—Col. 1:20; Eph. 2:16.
- E. The scope of reconciliation—all things in the heavens and on the earth—Col. 1:20.
- F. The sphere of reconciliation—in one Body—Eph. 2:16.
- G. The fact of reconciliation—our position before God based upon judicial redemption and justification by faith—Rom. 5:10.
- H. The experience of reconciliation—in one Spirit having access unto the Father—Eph. 2:18.

II. As ambassadors of Christ, the new covenant ministers carry out the ministry of reconciliation—2 Cor. 5:18-20; 6:1:

- A. An ambassador of Christ is one who represents God, the highest authority in the universe.
- B. The apostles were authorized by Christ to represent Him to do the work of reconciliation—5:18, 20.
- C. The ministry of reconciliation is not only to bring sinners back to God but also to bring believers absolutely into God and to make them absolutely one with Him.
- D. Two steps are required for men to be fully reconciled to God:
 - 1. The first step is to reconcile sinners to God from sin—v. 19:
 - a. For this purpose Christ died for our sins that we might be forgiven—1 Cor. 15:3.
 - b. Christ bore our sins on the cross that they might be judged by God—1 Pet. 2:24.
 - 2. The second step 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. Christ was made sin on our behalf that sin might be judged and done away with—v. 21; Rom. 8:3.
- E. If we are to carry out the ministry of reconciliation, we need to be identified with the crucified Christ—2 Cor. 4:10-12; 5:14; Gal. 2:20; 5:24.
- F. The Corinthians still lived in the flesh, that is, in the soul, the outer man, the natural being—1 Cor. 3:1; 2:14:
 - 1. The veil of the flesh, the natural man, separated them from God.
 - 2. Paul was working to cut asunder the separating veil of the flesh so that the believers at Corinth could enter into the Holy of Holies—Heb. 10:19-20.
- G. Only when we have been fully reconciled to God are we fully saved—2 Cor. 6:1-2; Rom. 5:10; Heb. 7:25.
- H. The extent to which we can bring others to God and into God is always measured by where we are with respect to God; the more we are in Him, the more we can reconcile others into Him—2 Cor. 12:12a; 5:20.

III. The ministry of reconciliation brings us back to God to such an extent that we become the righteousness of God in Christ—v. 21:

- A. Not only are we justified by God (Gal. 2:16)—we actually become the righteousness of God.
- B. When Christ died on the cross as our Substitute, God considered Him not only the sin bearer but sin itself; now in resurrection Christ comes into us as life, and this life lives within us to constitute us into the righteousness of God.
- C. In substitution Christ was made sin for us; now in His constitution we become the righteousness of God in Him—2 Cor. 5:21:
 - 1. The phrase *in Him* means in union with Christ, not only positionally but also organically in resurrection.
 - 2. When Christ died on the cross, God condemned Him in the flesh as sin for us (Rom. 8:3; John 3:14) so that we might be one with Him in His resurrection to be God's righteousness; therefore, in the organic union with Christ we are made the righteousness of God.
- D. To become the righteousness of God in Christ is a matter of being right with God in our being; this is to have an inner being that is transparent and crystal clear—an inner being in the mind and will of God—2 Cor. 5:21.
- E. Second Corinthians reveals the complete reconciliation of the believers to God, and Christ as the means of reconciliation.

IV. The two steps of reconciliation are clearly portrayed by the two veils of the tabernacle—Exo. 26:31-37; Heb. 9:3:

- A. Both veils signify the unique Christ—the Christ who died for our sins and also for us.
- B. The first veil is called “the screen”—Exo. 26:36-37:
 - 1. A sinner who was brought to God through the reconciliation of the propitiating blood entered into the Holy Place by passing through the screen.
 - 2. This typifies the first step of reconciliation.
- C. The second veil (vv. 31-35; Heb. 9:3) still separated the sinner from God, who was in the Holy of Holies:
 - 1. This veil needed to be rent so that the sinner might be brought to God in the Holy of Holies—Matt. 27:51; Heb. 10:19-20.
 - 2. This typifies the second step of reconciliation.

V. To be fully reconciled to God will cause us to be enlarged in our hearts—2 Cor. 5:20; 6:11-13:

- 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—v. 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. 5:21; Col. 3:13.
- D. We need to be impressed with the contrast between narrowness of heart and largeness of heart.

VI. These are the results of reconciliation:

- A. Having peace toward God:
 - 1. The first result of our reconciliation to God is that we may have peace toward God—Rom. 5:1.
 - 2. Since we have been reconciled to God and have peace toward God, we are walking on the way of peace; this is an issue of our reconciliation to God.

B. Boasting in God:

1. As a result of our reconciliation to God, we can boast in God—v. 11.
2. Since we have been reconciled to God through the Lord Jesus Christ, we boast, exult, and glory in God.
3. We also boast in the hope of the glory of God—v. 2.
4. This also is an issue of our reconciliation to God.

C. Being saved in His life:

1. As a result of our reconciliation to God, we are being saved in His life—v. 10.
2. This salvation in life also is an issue of our reconciliation to God.

VII. Through the ministry of reconciliation, we are incorporated into the processed and consummated Triune God to become, in Christ, an enlarged, universal, divine-human incorporation; as a result, we become God's sanctuary, His dwelling place, His Holy of Holies—the New Jerusalem—John 14:20, 23; Rev. 21:2, 10, 16.