

## Message #6

## Colossians 1:19-23

Colossians 1:19 says that in Christ “all the fullness” dwells. From the context, that means two things—the fullness of deity and the fullness of salvation. No human, in and of himself, can ever meet the full demands that are required by God to establish a relationship with Him. Those full demands are met in Jesus Christ for “all the fullness” dwells in Him.

Happiness and contentment will never be found until one is in a right relationship with God. It doesn't matter what you have or who you are; until one is in a right relationship with God, one will sense a real lack in love, in forgiveness, in security, and in future hope. No other sinful person can possibly fill the void that has been created by our sin—except for Jesus Christ. In Him is found the fullness of life.

**A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY WAY A SINNER CAN BE RECONCILED TO THE HOLY GOD AND THE ONLY WAY A SINNER CAN HAVE FULLNESS OF LIFE IN THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE.**

Until one's relationship with God is changed, there will be no sense of full love, full forgiveness and full security.

**QUESTION #1** – What is reconciliation?

There are three words in Greek translated “reconciliation” or “reconcile” and all three carry with it the idea of change. The particular word used in Colossians **1:20** and **22** and Ephesians 2:16 is the most intensive form of the word which means to change completely.

Soteriologically, the term reconciliation refers to the full and finished work of God found in the cross work of Jesus Christ, that changes completely the position of sinful man from one of hostility in his relationship with God, to one of harmony in his relationship with God.

There are, as Dr. Scofield observed, two phases of reconciliation: 1) The sinful world was changed and made savable by the work of Christ on the cross; 2) The sinful person is changed and is saved by the work of Christ on the cross, when he believes on Jesus Christ (C.I. Scofield, *Reference Bible*, footnote 13, pg. 1681).

**QUESTION #2** – Who needs to be reconciled to God? II Cor. 5:19

Everyone needs to be reconciled to God; the entire universe and the people in it. Paul says in Romans that all creation groans because the curse of sin has brought pain and suffering and disharmony to the whole world (Romans 8:22).

**QUESTION #3** – What makes reconciliation possible? **1:20, 22**

Mark this and mark it well; reconciliation is only possible through the cross work of Jesus Christ!

**Colossians 1:20** says that reconciliation is only possible because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross, and **Colossians 1:22** says it is only possible because of what happened to Christ's fleshly body on the cross; He died.

Anything in heaven and anything on earth that has been reconciled to God has been reconciled because of the cross work of Jesus Christ. There is no other work, or no other person that can reconcile you with God.

Notice carefully what this context says about Jesus Christ—He is fully God (**1:19**) and He was fleshly human (**1:22**). The only blood, the only death that will change man's relationship with God is the shed blood and physical death of Jesus Christ.

**QUESTION #4** – What makes reconciliation personal? Col. 1:4

There is only one way that any sinful human being can be reconciled to God—that is by faith in Jesus Christ (II Cor. 5:17-21). Christ, who knew no sin, became sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

When a person personally invites Jesus Christ into his life, his relationship with the Holy God is instantly and completely changed. He is no longer a child of darkness, but a child of light. He is no longer in a hostile relationship with God, but a harmonious relationship with God. He is no longer at enmity with God, but in amity with God.

**QUESTION #5** – Why do we need to be reconciled to God? **1:21**

**Reality #1** - Apart from Christ, we are alienated from God. **1:21a**

The word “alienated” means that apart from Jesus Christ, God deems us as continually estranged from Him. In God's calculation we are not his friend, we are continually His enemy.

**Reality #2** - Apart from Christ, we are hostile in our minds. **1:21b**

Apart from Christ, we not only have a positional problem being alienated from God, but we have a mental problem being hostile toward God. You do not have to commit some huge sin to be alienated from God; apart from Christ, you are already in hostile war in your mind.

**Reality #3** - Apart from Christ, we are evil in our deeds. **1:21c**

We not only have a positional problem that is alienated from God, we not only have a mental problem that is hostile toward God, but we have a practical problem in that we have all done evil. There is a clear connection between our hostile minds and our practical behavior.

You don't need to be cleaned up to be reconciled to God, because God offers reconciliation to you in all of your filth. He offers reconciliation to you when you are alienated, hostile and evil.

**QUESTION #6 – Why would Jesus Christ reconcile us with God? 1:22**

I want to point out something extremely important—reconciliation did require that Jesus Christ be fully God and fully human. He had to have a real, literal fleshly body in order to make reconciliation possible for real sinful humans.

Gnosticism denies both His true humanity and true deity. Christian Science denies Christ's real humanity and Mormonism denies Christ's real deity. But the Word of God is very clear and very specific; in order for sinful man to be reconciled to God, Jesus Christ had to die as fully God and fully man.

Now Christ paid the supreme price to reconcile us so that He could someday present us to His Father.

There is debate among commentators as to whether or not these three terms refer to our position or our condition. In other words, do these three terms describe what judicially happened to us when we trusted Christ or do they describe what should spiritually happen to us after we trust Christ?

I agree with Bishop Moule, who simply said “both” (Moule, p. 87).

**Way #1** - Christ's desire is to present us before the Father as holy. **1:22a**

Christ has positionally set us apart as God's children and He desires that we be practically set apart from sin.

The verb tense of the word “has now reconciled” (aorist) indicates that reconciliation takes place at one specific moment or point in time, the moment one believes on Christ. At that precise moment there is an instant positional holiness that is, in effect, which declares one righteous (justification). However, there is also a progressive holiness and a practical holiness in which one who has been reconciled to God should develop in holiness.

**Way #2** - Christ's desire is to present us before the Father as blameless. **1:22b**

The word “blameless” is a word that means without blemish, without fault. (A similar word is used in I Tim. 3:2.) Once a person comes to faith in Christ, it is possible to develop in one's spiritual life so that the life develops and ends without blemish or fault. This does not mean one is sinlessly perfect, it means that one's life was a life of proper spiritual and ethical focus and development.

In spite of past failures and sins, once one is reconciled to God, it is possible to develop in such an unblemished way that Jesus Christ will present us to the Father as blameless.

**Way #3** - Christ's desire is to present us before the Father beyond reproach. **1:22c**

The words “beyond reproach” literally mean above or beyond accusation or charge. This is a specific qualification for an elder (Titus 1:7) and deacon (I Tim. 3:10). What this means is when one is reconciled to God, it is possible to develop in his or her spiritual life so that no valid, legal accusation or charge can be leveled against the believer.

Now keep in mind what we all formerly were—clearly and graphically described in **verse 21!**

- 1) Have I been reconciled to God from my previous alienated, hostile and evil condition? **1:21**
- 2) Could Jesus Christ present me right now as one who is living a holy life?
- 3) Could Jesus Christ present me right now as one who is blemish free?
- 4) Could anyone right now bring a valid accusation of charge against me because my life is not being lived as one who has been reconciled to God?

**QUESTION #7** – What happens if we don't develop in holy, blameless and beyond reproach lives? **1:23**

**View #1** - Some suggest this verse refers to a loss of reconciliation.

The false idea of this view is if one does not continue in the faith, he may forfeit his reconciliation or lose his salvation. Reconciliation is conditioned upon faithfulness.

This is the easiest to refute because the context clearly says that reconciliation has nothing to do with the way we were or are, but is solely through the cross work of Jesus Christ (**1:20, 22**). Being reconciled to God is not something we do; it is something Christ did for us.

**View #2** - Some suggest this verse refers to a proof of reconciliation.

The “if” clause of **verse 23** is first-class conditional, meaning reality is assumed. This interpretation suggests that Paul assumes the reality that all that have been reconciled will continue in the faith and will be steadfast. Thus the proof that one has been reconciled to God is in the assumed reality that they will continue and if they don't, they were not really reconciled to God in the first place.

There is theological merit to this point; however, the weakness is in the grammatical construction (to which the word “continue” is connected) and the fact that other passages suggest some believers will lose rewards and be ashamed (I Cor. 3:14-15; 9:27; I John 2:28).

**View #3** - Some suggest this verse refers to a conditional, positive presentation.

This is the view that is most grammatically correct for the verb “continue” is connected to the word present, not to the word reconcile. In other words, Paul is saying Christ desires to present the believers as holy, as blameless and as beyond reproach and there are three specific keys to having Christ present you this way:

**(Key #1)** - Continue to remain in the faith foundationally. **1:23a**

By continuing to believe in the established foundation is one key way to guarantee Christ will positively present us to the Father. The established foundation is Jesus Christ (I Cor. 3:11).

**(Key #2)** - Continue to remain in the faith steadfastly. **1:23b**

The word “steadfast” speaks of being firmly seated in something. We need to be firmly seated in the work of Jesus Christ and the Word of God.

**(Key #3)** – Continue to remain in the faith unmovedly. **1:23c**

We will assure a positive presentation when we refuse to move from the hope that we have in the Gospel which declares the good news that sinful man can have a relationship with the Holy God through the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Stand your ground and don't back down. Believers who refuse to buckle to various religious heresies, to humanistic reasoning, to philosophical speculations, and hold to the truth that sinful man can only be reconciled to the Holy God through the precious, finished work of Jesus Christ on Calvary, are guaranteeing a positive presentation someday by Jesus Christ to His own Father!