

GOD WAS IN CHRIST

2 CORINTHIANS 5:18-21 • TV209B

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By
HENRY T. MAHAN

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2 Corinthians 5:18-21

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

I am happy for the privilege of coming your way this morning with a message from God’s Word. What an awesome, awesome, responsibility.

We are not playing games and we are not building a kingdom. We are not entertaining sinners on the way to hell. We have the awesome responsibility of preaching the Gospel of God’s glory and God’s grace as it is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

You have the awesome responsibility of hearing, receiving, and responding to that Gospel. I pray that God will be pleased to give me His spirit of power, wisdom, and liberty, not to just speak to your ears but to your heart.

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I pray that the Lord of glory may be pleased to give you a hearing ear, an ear that hears Him who speaks from heaven, not just the voice of a man. Somebody said a long time ago; “If my voice is the only voice you hear, nothing of any spiritual value will be accomplished.”

You have to hear Him who speaks from heaven. You have to hear Him who speaks by the power of the Spirit. You have to hear Him who speaks through His Word; may God give you eyes to see.

Our Lord said, *“He that seeth the Son.”* That is not a vision, a dream, or seeing a picture; but with the eyes of faith, seeing Christ as He is revealed in the Word. It is seeing Christ as the great Surety, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and the Redeemer of sinners.

It is seeing Christ; *“He that seeth the Son and believeth on Him.”* May God give you a hearing ear and a seeing eye and a heart that is illuminated and enlightened by His grace, to lay hold on and to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ.

I hope you will take your responsibility with the seriousness with which I take mine. I am preaching for the glory of God and I hope you are hearing for the same reason, for the glory of God, that the glory of God might be accomplished, that the glory of God might be done in your life.

This morning we are turning to **2nd Corinthians 5, verses 18 through 21**. Do you have a Bible? If you do, open it. Salvation is to be found in the Word of God, *“of His own will begat he us with the Word of truth; faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”*

There was a little lady who said this a few weeks ago; “I don’t know much about the Bible but I know what I think;” that is the worst position you can be in, trying to subject God’s Word to your thoughts. It won’t work. *“Your thoughts are not his thoughts; your ways are not his ways.”*

“As the heaven is high above the earth, so are his thoughts above your thoughts.” We do not trust our thoughts. What man thinks to be the right way is wrong. What man thinks to be the wrong way is right. So, we do not trust our thoughts.

I want you to look into the Word. In **2nd Corinthians 5 verses 18 through 21**. Here is my text in **verse 19**; *“God was in Christ.”* That is my subject; **“God Was in Christ;”** *God was reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses (or sins) unto them.”* Think about that! He was not charging their sins to them and *“hath given to us this word of reconciliation.”*

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If you will go back to **verse 18**, will you? Right away this glorious apostle Paul sets forth four monumental truths, beginning with **verse 18**, four facts that need to be heard and settled once for all.

First of all: I have settled them and I hope you have or will. In **verse 18** and Paul says, "*All things are of God.*" I am satisfied with that; "*all things are of God,*" (without question).

He is Lord of heaven and earth. He is sovereign and almighty in creation, in providence and salvation, and that takes in all of it; He, the Lord God, "*doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of this earth.*"

He worketh all things; all things are of God. "*He worketh all things after the council of His own will. None can stay his hand or say unto him, what doest Thou?*"

Read Hannah's prayer in **1 Samuel 2**, sometime, **verses 1 through 10**. She says what I would like to say, "*The Lord killeth and the Lord maketh alive. The Lord bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich. The Lord bringeth low and lifteth up. All things are of God.*"

The Bible starts out that way; "*in the beginning God.*" Everything came from God and everything is sustained by God and contained in God. He says, "*I am alpha and omega.*" That is the beginning and the end. "*I am alpha and omega;*" all things are of God.

That is where you better start. You better get your head on straight as to who God is; now that's the thing. An idol can't help you. You have to know the "*true and living God.*" You see, eternal life is to know the true and living God, not just any God. All things are of God.

Second: The monumental truth He sets forth is this; "*who hath reconciled us.*"

Do you know what the word reconciled means? It means to make peace, to provide a sufficient atonement, to reconcile or make right; "*who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.*" Here is the Gospel in a sentence. Here is salvation in nine words, "*who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.*"

Who? Who are we talking about when we say, "*who?*" We are talking about God, this God of who are all things, this same God. "*All things are of God.*" Who? God Himself, "*reconciled us,*" yes sir, "*us,*" fallen sons of Adam, "*us.*"

We are sinners by birth, choice, and nature, "*us,*" children of darkness and wrath, "*who hath reconciled us.*" Reconciled, provided atonement and made peace for us; "*God has accepted us in the beloved,*" to Himself.

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He hasn't changed Himself. He is Holy, "*to Himself*," to His law, unchangeable holy law, to His infinite, strict justice, to His righteousness, His perfect holiness, "*God who hath reconciled us to Himself*," not to a little higher than we are now or a little short of heaven, but all the way to Himself.

He has lifted us out of dunghill to the throne. There is no in between. You are either on the dunghill or on the throne. There are no degrees of glory. You are either glorified in Christ or you are condemned forever.

Christ Jesus did it; "*who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ*." That is how He did it. It is not by what you and I do but by Jesus Christ. It is not by what church we belong to but by Jesus Christ.

It is not by how many times you have been down to the altar and prayed through, been baptized, and all of these other things, but by Jesus Christ. What an awesome message!

Third: Another monumental truth about God; "*all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself*." That is where I want to be, by Jesus Christ and God "*and hath given unto us this ministry of reconciliation*." He has made us the messengers of this good news. That's right! He hath made us ambassadors of the King.

I can hardly comprehend that. He has given us the awesome responsibility of telling our friends about this glorious Gospel of grace. He has sent us to proclaim this good news.

He didn't give it to the angels to preach; they would not understand it because they have never partaken of it. He has given it to fallen men and He has said to us, "Now you go with this word of reconciliation and preach it to every creature on earth."

Paul said, "*God put me in the ministry*." God put this treasure, (and what a treasure it is); God hath reconciled to us all the way to Himself, (all the way), and He has put this treasure in an "*earthen vessel*," in a vessel of clay.

There's not much to the vessel but oh what a message. There's not much to the messenger but oh what glad tidings.

Yes sir, there are plenty of false preachers, the woods are full of them and always have been. I will tell you this; there are some men, somewhere, to whom God has given the message of truth, "*the ministry of reconciliation*" as it is in Jesus Christ.

Now then; there are three of those facts and here is the fourth:

Fourth: Are you with me? "*All things are of God*." Remember that; who, by His sovereign will "*hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ*" and actually given to us this message and ministry of reconciliation.

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Now; *“To wit;”* do you see those two little words, *“to wit?”* That means namely, or that is to say or here is the message. Here it is; read that next verse, *“God was in Christ.”* God Himself, who reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, was in Jesus Christ.

God was in Jesus Christ *“reconciling the world unto himself,”* not charging our sins to us, but laying them on Christ. God was in Christ. If you can get hold of this you will learn the Gospel. There is no reason why you can’t get hold of it either. *“God was in Christ.”*

Jesus Christ is the man. Pilate said, *“Behold the man.”* He is a man but He is more than a man. He is the God-man. He said, *“I and My Father are one.”* Phillip said, *“Show us the Father and we will be satisfied.”* He said, *“You are looking at the Father.”*

“He that hath seen me hath seen my Father; I and my Father are one. Being in the form of God he thought it not robbery to be equal with God and yet, he made himself of no reputation; took upon himself the form of a servant and being found in fashion as a man (the nature of flesh), he became obedient unto death even the death of the cross.”

Do you hear what I am saying? *“God was in Christ.”* You just forget the Bible, forget preaching, forget salvation, forget heaven, forget eternal life and forget everything else until you learn those four things; *“all things are of God.”*

That is where you have to start. That is the starting point. That is first base. There is no use running to second or third base if you have missed first base; that is first base. *“All things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself.”*

Jesus Christ said this; *“God reconciled us to himself.”* He did it; *“salvation is of the Lord.”* It is not of a church or of a man it is of the Lord.

He has given this ministry of reconciliation to men. Do you know what it is? This message is that *“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself,”* not charging our sins to us, but laying them on Christ. And again, He says; *“and he hath given us this word of reconciliation.”*

Here are seven things that I want you to see. I am going to give them to you briefly, one at a time.

First of all: God was in Christ and God in Christ is at peace with us.

Now, I know that there are a lot of people running around hollering, *“Peace, peace, when there is no peace.”* There is peace with God in Christ because God in Christ reconciled us to Himself.

Contrary to what most folks believe, the holy God of heaven is *“angry with the wicked.”* We are called the *“children of wrath, even as others.”* Isn’t that what the Bible says?

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Also, it says; *“He that hath not the Son of God the wrath of God abideth on Him.”* Do you know what the wrath of God is?

It is demonstrated in the Garden of Eden when almighty God threw man out. It is demonstrated in the flood when almighty God destroyed a world. It is demonstrated in the cities on the plains when God sent fire and brimstone to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.

It is demonstrated at Calvary when God *“spared not his own Son.”* God is angry with sin. *“God hateth the workers of iniquity. God is angry with the wicked every day.”*

God announces peace. Where is this peace? Well, the angels came down here and they said to some shepherds on a Judean hillside; *“glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill, toward men.”*

“We bring you glad tidings. Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, Christ the Lord.” There is where peace is; it is in that Saviour, Christ the Lord. Peace with God; it isn't anywhere else; it is in Christ the Lord.

God in Christ is at peace with us; *“therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God,”* no where else except justification by faith in Christ. That is where peace is. You can't claim it anywhere else.

If you are not in Christ, you are not at peace with God, God is at war with you and you are at war with God. He is going to win. He is going to visit you. God will surely visit you; that's just so.

I am not being cruel; I am just being kind and straight-forward. God in Christ is at peace. He is reconciled.

Secondly: God in Christ promises all things, benefits, blessings, and gifts.

Listen to **2nd Corinthians 1:20**; *“For all the promises of God in Christ are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God.”* That isn't hard to understand is it? Can you misinterpret that verse? *“For all the promises of God in Christ are yes, and in Christ are amen, to the glory of God.”*

You see my friend; God considered in His holiness, God considered in His immutable righteousness and justice is not a promising God, He is a threatening God.

God threatened; God said, *“I will repay him to his face; their feet will slide in due time.”* God is a revenging God. He is a God of pure justice. *“Shall not the judge of the earth do right?”*

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He will do right, but in Christ God promises something; He promises forgiveness; *“in whom we have forgiveness.”* He promises redemption; *“in whom we have redemption through his blood.”*

He promises blessings because Christ fulfills all the conditions of the promise. Do you see that? God in Christ is a promising God. God can make good on His promises in Christ because the Lord Jesus Christ has fulfilled the conditions of the promise.

God said, *“walk before me in holiness, and I will bless you;”* we did in Christ. So, we have the promise.

Thirdly: God in Christ sits on a throne of grace.

Now, this is so important, God in Christ sits on a throne of grace. Our God has a three-fold throne. I know it is one throne but it is revealed in a three-fold manner: Listen to me; God’s throne is a throne of holiness and none of this can be compromised at the expense of the other. It cannot be.

You see, God’s throne is a throne of holiness. You don’t doubt that do you? Its holiness is so bright and awesome that it dazzles. It dazzles even the eyes and the minds of the heavenly creatures.

Isaiah said, *“I saw the Lord high and lifted up and His train filled the temple. Around His throne, the cherubims cried; holy, holy, holy, and they covered their eyes and they covered their mouths and they covered their feet”* in the presence of God’s holiness.

God’s throne is a holy throne. They covered their faces. Holiness, I can’t even think of it, let alone, describe it. I know that His throne is a holy throne.

Second: His throne is a throne of justice.

The complete righteousness and judgment, clothed in the robes of justice, authority and vengeance, the most favored of men have trembled and quaked. One of them said, *“Lord; if you should mark iniquity, who would stand?”*

“God will by no means clear the guilty.” There is no compromise before the throne of God’s judgment and justice. He will do right by every man.

Third: God’s throne is a throne of grace.

It says in **Hebrews 4**; *“Seeing then, that we have a great, high priest, (that is Christ) who has passed into the heavens (was a man who fulfilled the law, died on the cross, and went into the heavens; Jesus the Son of God, that’s our great high priest); let us come boldly unto the throne of grace.”*

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I can't come to a throne of holiness alone. I can't come to a throne of justice. I can't look upon the holiness of that throne. I can't stand before the justice of that throne.

But, being empty handed; I can come for grace. Being naked I can come for grace. Being a sinner I can come for grace. Being guilty I can come for grace.

So; *"Let us come to the throne of grace;"* to find what; justice, no sir, reward, no sir? *"That we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."* I am coming to the throne of grace.

You might say, "What is to keep God's justice from dealing with you?" It dealt with Christ my Substitute.

What is to keep God's throne of holiness from turning your back? *"No man can look on God and live."* In Christ I am perfectly holy. Do you see what I am saying? God in Christ sits on the throne of grace.

Let me tell you something; If you don't have that high priest, if you don't have Christ, then you have one alternative, a throne of holiness and a throne of justice. Even Moses had to be hidden from the presence of God *"lest he look upon God and die."*

That's clear as a bell and that is as clear as I can make it. It is as clear as you need to hear it too, if you can hear.

Fourthly: God in Christ identifies Himself with us.

If God was pleased to tolerate us and let us live our years out on this earth and then annihilate us, if God was even pleased to come down here in His glory for a moment and show off His majesty, that would be mercy.

But, God has actually condescended to become one with us. He took our nature. God became a man. God was in Jesus Christ. *"The Word was made flesh;"* do you hear me? *"He was in the world and the world was made by Him. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."*

The exact image of God, the divine person Himself, became a man, *"I in them and thou in me. It behooved Him to be made just like His brethren. He was numbered with the transgressors."*

More than that; listen to me: If God just condescended to tolerate this outfit and to annihilate it that would be mercy for a while. If God just came down and passed through and showed us Himself, His glory; it says that He came down here and *"dwelt among us and became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh."*

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More than that; He married us. It says in **Isaiah 54:5**; *“Thy maker is thy husband.”* He married us and became one with us. He gave us His name; He assumed our debts and He said, *“I will never forsake you;”* I will never divorce you; you are my bride forever.” God in Christ identified Himself with us.

Fifthly: God in Christ pardons our sins.

In **Colossians 1:14** you can call this the “old time Gospel” or whatever kind of Gospel you want to talk about; this is the only Gospel. There is no old time Gospel, there is just the Gospel; it is the Gospel.

You might say that it is the “fundamental Gospel.” No, it is just the Gospel. It has no other name, it is just the Gospel. Paul said, *“Preach any other and be cursed: In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin, who is the image of the invisible God, in Him.”*

This is in **Colossians 1: 14 and 15**, *“In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins, who is the image of the invisible God.”*

I don’t deny my sins, do you? I don’t dare approach God in my sins do you? But, in Christ He said; “I have forgiveness; I have righteousness and I am justified.” *“Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom God will not charge sin.”* So, God in Christ puts away sin; that is the only way he can.

Sixthly: This is good news! God in Christ invites sinners, entreats a sinner to come to Him and live.

He said, *“Come, let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow.”*

Isn’t that mercy that God should invite you and me to come and reason with Him, listen to Him? He said, *“Hear and your soul shall live. Incline your ear and you will live. Ho, everyone that thirsteth come to the water.”* Don’t bring anything just bring an appetite.

“All the fitness He requires is to feel your need of Him.” *“He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him.”*

You don’t have to come; you can stay away. God will not lose a thing. He is perfectly holy, independent of all creatures. His holiness will go on.

But, I tell you for your good, you ought to come. Christ said, *“Come to me and drink. Out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water.”* Paul said, *“Be ye reconciled to God.”*

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Lay down your shotgun. Lay down your weapons of warfare. Stack your arms; surrender and look to Christ and be made whole.

Last of all; God in Christ will crown every believer.

We are going to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. Listen to **Ephesians 2:** *“But God who is rich in mercy for his great love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us together with Christ and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in his kindness toward us through Jesus Christ.”*

My God is not a beggar; you are the beggar. You have got the cart before the horse. You have the shoes on the wrong feet. My God is not a beggar, He is a King.

He has offered the beggars free food. He has offered the beggars a robe of righteousness, a naked beggar. He has offered to those who are without mother or father, He has offered to them to adopt them into His family. That’s right; almighty God in Christ *“reconciled this world unto himself.”*

I say; will you believe? Will you receive Him? This is not some kind of fleshly altar call. I am telling you not to write to me; I can’t help you; look to God and call upon the Lord. Look to Him and receive Him. Do business with God!