

“Reconciled in God’s Love”—Romans 5:8-11

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Reconciled in God’s Love”, is Romans 5:8-11 → *God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we have now received reconciliation.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

“Now shake hands and make up!” Such words come from the mouth of a parent striving to bring reconciliation between siblings who are fighting. Of course, such an action may come only after efforts to get them to apologize to each other by telling each other they are sorry for what they did. However, such an apology may have been coerced after having to tell them, “Now say you’re sorry . . . and say it like you mean it!” In the end, you may walk away wondering if any true reconciliation ever took place with a renewed love for each other. Phew! This reconciliation business is hard work!

True reconciliation cannot happen simply by telling someone to “kiss and make up.” Oh that it would be so easy! It takes much more sacrifice and work to bring about true reconciliation. Many a couple can well attest to the practice of kissing and making up only to still feel far away from the one whom they love most in the world. True reconciliation takes a love which involves a total giving of yourself because you have undeservedly received the gift of reconciliation in God’s love.

A definition of “reconciliation” is “to re-establish a close relationship between; to settle or resolve; to make friends.” We see the need for reconciliation in our lives on a daily basis. Family members refusing to speak to one another; people purposely avoiding each other for decades based upon grudges; co-workers refusing to be “civil” with each other over political views; and yes, people who have been baptized into Christ Jesus refusing to having anything to do with the “church” or “religion.” In fact, it seems creating conflict is much easier than trying to resolve conflicts which separate people. Conflict resolution is a very difficult task within which we feel very powerless at times.

It is even more difficult to resolve the conflict between God and people. Why? In verse 10 of our text Paul, speaking about us Christians, says *we were enemies* of God because of our condition as sinners. Colossians 1:21 describes us as having once been *alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds*. People continuing to live in such a state run

from God, blame God, have no regard for His commands, are self-centered and self-absorbed, have allowed their love to grow cold (cf. Matthew 24:12), are disobedient to God's laws (cf. 1 Timothy 1:9-11), and, most importantly, refuse to confess their sins and trust in Jesus for forgiveness and life. This isn't just a case of God saying, "Let's kiss and make up!" It took something much more drastic.

Recognizing how powerless we were to bring about any reconciliation with Himself, God brought about the reconciliation by taking on our human flesh in the Person of Jesus and dying the death our sins deserved. As verses 9-10 of our text says: *Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life.*

When Christ died for us ungodly people it was the fullest expression of His self-less, unselfish and self-sacrificing love in His grace. Verse 8 of our text puts it this way: *God shows His love for us in that **while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*** He didn't asks us to "make up" with Him first before He'd be our friend. He didn't tell people to "get right with Him" first, then He'd died for them. Rather, He made us His friends **while we were still sinners.** 2 Corinthians 5:19 says *in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against*

them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

It is the conviction of the Holy Spirit within such a reconciliation under such a love which brings the sinner to his knees to cry out, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” (cf. Luke 18:13) It is the conviction of the Holy Spirit within such a reconciliation under such a love which also brings the sinner to say, “Thank You Jesus! I want to live for You!” It is the conviction of the Holy Spirit within such a reconciliation under such a love which brings you to your loving Father as He comes to you through His Word and Sacrament! And, as Paul says in verse 11 of our text: *We also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we have now received reconciliation.*

God’s unique way of bringing about reconciliation between us and Himself will affect our relationships with others as well. When sinful divisions exist between you and others it is important for you to take inventory of your actions based upon who you are in Christ. Paul says in Romans 5:5 that *God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us.* Not all conflict is sinful. Conflicts are involved in taking a stand against sin as well. Conflicts abound in the midst of striving to help someone who is hurting himself. Such conflict, tough but necessary, is meant to help this person motivated by *God’s love which has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.*

Sinful conflicts can arise when we forget that we are friends with God **totally** on the basis of His grace for us sinners. When you lose sight of God's grace in your life you will also lose sight of His grace for others. A reminder of this mutual sharing of grace happens every time you pray these words: "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Recognizing that "we are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them . . . we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us." Thus, we are reconciled **in God's love**. We don't simply "shake hands and make up" in order to pacify someone.

Sinful conflicts can also arise when we lose sight of God's grace and place expectations on others to which we ourselves could not meet up in our relationship with the LORD! It involves self-righteous judgments in an effort to manipulate others rather than be a presence of Christ to others. Being reconciled by God's love, the Holy Spirit will empower you to serve Him and express the same unconditional love in your relationships with others.

For the Christian, reconciliation is not just "giving in" to make peace with no true reconciliation taking place. It does involve "giving in" as an expression of the sacrifice which Jesus Christ made for sinners such as you and me. James 5:16 tells you to *confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed*. Thus, being

reconciled in God's love involves pronouncing the absolution of Jesus Christ to each other in order to have healed relationships. You don't say, "That's O.K." or "That's alright" or "No problem" when someone confesses their sins to you. Instead, as a child of Jesus into whose heart *God's love has been poured . . . through the Holy Spirit* you say, "I forgive you." Jesus said, *It is finished*, died, and reconciled you both to God in His forgiveness, love and grace!

As we live with others in our families; as we work with others in our jobs; as we serve with others through our congregation; as we live in relationship with the LORD we do so because we have experienced God's friendship in His unconditional love and grace in Jesus! Thus, we don't just "shake hands and make up." Rather, we kneel and give up—give up our sins to the One Who has reconciled us in His love forever! Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.