

# RECONCILED TO GOD

## Colossians 1:19–23

*<sup>19</sup> For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, <sup>20</sup> and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. <sup>21</sup> And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled <sup>22</sup> in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—<sup>23</sup> if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.*

—Colossians 1:19–23

### Read Colossians 1:19–23

Estrangement is heart-wrenching! One of the hardest setbacks in life is to become estranged from those you once had a relationship with. Anyone who has been sued, endured a fractured relationship, or suffered through a war can attest to the emotional, mental, social, and physical toll that estrangement produced. Remember for a moment, that was our former position with God—we were estranged! There was a huge, dark, unmanageable, gaping, and uncrossable chasm between ourselves and God. Not only was there a huge distance, but we were at enmity with God due to our constant rebellion toward Him and His ways. In Ephesians 2:1–3, Paul described our former condition as being *dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air ... among whom also we all once*

*conducted ourselves in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath.*

In this wretched condition, we had no hope of rescue—let alone the ability to broker peace with God. We desperately needed someone who could cross the great chasm from God to us. We needed a mediator. This mediator needed to be divine in order to have the power and knowledge to fulfill the requirements of God necessary for our salvation. On the other hand, our mediator needed to be human so He could empathize with our plight, understand our weaknesses, and appeal to God on our behalf. Jesus was precisely that mediator! As God incarnate, He was born into our world through a virgin. He chose to experience life on this earth, not as a rich man, but as a blue-collar worker under Roman oppression and the law. Although He became human, the fullness of God resided in Him in order that He might broker the ultimate peace agreement between God and sinners. Now through the work of Christ, anyone who desires to be reconciled to God can be by believing in and receiving Jesus!

The Colossian believers had been told by false teachers that they had to earn a right standing before God for themselves. These false teachers asserted that people follow their dictates, rituals, regulations, and observances in order to cross the vast chasm to God and His righteousness. In other words, they removed Jesus as the mediator and replaced Him with themselves. Paul strongly refuted their heretical assertions by declaring that Christ alone is the agent and agency of our reconciliation to God.

The truth is the enmity between God and man was too great to be crossed by any mere mortal. The depth, depravity, and multitude of our sins required a perfect mediator and a perfect sacrifice to pay the huge penalty our sins had amassed. All men

and women, since Adam and Eve, have sinned and therefore forfeited any possibility of mediating for humanity. Only one Man in all of history lived a sinless life. Only one sacrifice could pay the huge penalty. Only the work of one Man could transform God's enemies into God's children, benefactors, and ministers. Only one Man, and that is the Man, Christ Jesus!

Paul the apostle knew firsthand what it was to be at enmity with God. Before his encounter with Jesus (Acts 9), he was working against God and seeking to put anyone who believed in Jesus to death. However, after Paul met the Great Mediator between God and man, his life was radically changed. Paul went from a blasphemer to a proclaimer of the greatness of Jesus!

We now experience *shalom* with God because of what Jesus has accomplished. It is His work that has put us on the right side of God, under His authority, and qualified us for His service!

As you peruse your lesson this week, take a moment to ponder the great difference that Jesus has made in your status with God!

1. Paul wanted the Colossian believers to understand how fully qualified Jesus was to God. In Colossians 1:19, he used the expression, *that in Him all the fullness should dwell* to describe Jesus. This expression denotes the entirety of God's Spirit, power, and authority resting in and upon Jesus. Use Colossians 1:19–20 to answer the following questions to further grasp God's relationship to His Son.
  - a. What does the word *pleased* convey to you?
  - b. What has Jesus reconciled to God?

#### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

*All God's qualities and activities—his Spirit, word, wisdom and glory—are perfectly displayed in Christ.<sup>16</sup>*

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The word translated “reconcile” means to change thoroughly. The reconciliation accomplished at Calvary is when God broke down the barrier between sinful man and God.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

*Man was alienated from God. Man was at enmity with God. He was in rebellion against God. For sin is rebellion against God, against the law of God. But Jesus not only provided the forgiveness of our sins, but now He has made it possible for us to live at peace with God through the blood of His cross.*

—Pastor Chuck Smith

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

*Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.*

—James 1:14–15 NLT

c. How did Jesus accomplish this reconciliation?

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

*Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

—2 Corinthians 5:18–19

2. Use the following phrases from Colossians 1:21 to comment on our former condition before we were reconciled by Christ:
  - a. *Alienated*
  - b. *Enemies*
  - c. *Wicked works*
- 1) What does the phrase *in your mind* suggest to you about the root of our enmity?

3. According to Colossians 1:22:
  - a. By what means did Jesus broker our reconciliation?
  
  - b. Why did Jesus reconcile us?
  
4. From Colossians 1:23, comment on the following necessities for reconciliation:
  - a. *Continue in the faith*
  
  - b. *Grounded and steadfast*
  
  - c. *Not moved away from the hope of the gospel*
  
  - d. *Which you heard*
  
5. Take note of Paul's further commentary on the gospel and himself from Colossians 1:23. What did he say about:
  - a. The reach of the gospel

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

*In other words, we are not saved by continuing in the faith. But we continue in the faith and thus prove that we are saved. It behooves each professing Christian to test his own faith and examine his own heart to be sure he is a child of God (2 Cor. 13:5; 2 Peter 1:10).<sup>17</sup>*

—Warren Wiersbe

b. Himself

6. Take a moment to contrast the following:

a. *Alienated* versus *reconciled*

b. *Enemies* versus *holy and blameless*

c. *Wicked works* versus *above approach*

1) Write a sentence of appreciation to God for your improved condition through Christ.

7. What is your greatest takeaway from Colossians 1:19–23?