

Big Words in the Bible (Part 2): Reconciliation

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Romans 5:6-11

In this series, we are looking at some big words in the Bible. All of them are “big” in terms of importance; but for some of them, we may be unsure of what they mean. In this second lesson, we will be looking at the word reconciliation. Through His sacrifice, Jesus made it possible for us to be brought into fellowship with God.

The Meaning of the Word

- Greek word – katallagé
- Refers to a restoration to divine favor – removes the enmity that existed between man and God; KJV uses the word atonement
- Jesus’ death on the cross enables us to be reconciled to God

Understanding the Concept

- There was a separation between God and man – we were “without God” (Ephesians 2:12); this separation was due to our sin (Romans 5:8; Isaiah 59:2)
- God took the initiative in this (2 Corinthians 5:18-19) – He was the one who was sinned against; but we must be willing to be reconciled (2 Corinthians 5:20), which requires repentance (Acts 2:38; 3:19; et al.)
- This same word is used to describe the restoring of a broken marriage (1 Corinthians 7:10-11) – though Jesus gave an exception for putting away one’s spouse, the rule is that marriage is to be permanent (Matthew 19:4-6, 9); if a separation does occur, reconciliation should be the goal when possible; but this requires both parties being willing to reconcile, which includes repentance, forgiveness, and acceptance
- Thinking of this in terms of a marriage relationship is helpful – the church is the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:31-32) and we are betrothed to Him (2 Corinthians 11:2); we have been reconciled in one body (Ephesians 2:16), which is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23)

Understanding This in Context

- Paul already explained that all have sinned (Romans 3:23; cf. Galatians 3:22) – therefore, on our own, we were “helpless” (Romans 5:6); unable to remedy the situation
- Jesus died for us while we were “sinners” (Romans 5:8) – God took the initiative; this was a demonstration of His love (1 John 4:10)
- We were “enemies” of God (Romans 5:10) – there is no middle ground (Matthew 12:30); this should remind us of how terrible sin is; sin is not to be taken lightly

- Through the sacrifice of Christ, we have “received the reconciliation” (Romans 5:11) – “atonement” (KJV); the word helps describe the concept (at-one-ment); we can be one with God; this is the message of the gospel (2 Corinthians 5:18-19; cf. Colossians 1:20-23)

Conclusion

- Jesus gave His life on the cross to reconcile us to God – we were helpless without His sacrifice; we were separated from God because of our sin; yet we can be at one with Him through Jesus’ death on the cross
- However, we must take advantage of this – “be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20)