

body of Christ to help us settle the matter in a biblical manner (Prov. 19:11; Matt 8:15-20; 1 Cor. 6:1-8; Gal. 6:1,2; Eph. 4:29; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; James 5:9).

And the final step is to go and be reconciled. "Instead of accepting premature compromise or allowing relationships to wither, we will actively pursue genuine peace and reconciliation – forgiving others as God, for Christ' sake, has forgiven us, and seeking just and mutually beneficial solutions to our differences (Matt. 5:23-24; 6:12; 7:12; Eph. 4:1-3, 32; Phil. 2:3-4).

How do we do reconciliation? Glorifying God; Getting the log out of your eye; Gently restoring; Going and being reconciled.

We start by admitting our sin, ask for forgiveness, and offer forgiveness. Not 'she'll be right mate' but 'in Jesus' name please forgive me'. 'In Jesus' name I forgive you'. And to a child of God, declare again to them their wonderful status; that they are loved and precious to God their Father, a child, in Jesus, he is well pleased with.

Let us pray.
Jesus we thank you for not coming to condemn us but that your burning passion is to reconcile us to God. We thank you that we know for certain that in you we are the Father's loved, precious child with who he is well pleased. May we flood the conflicts we have with your grace and forgiveness bring about reconciliation, the reconciliation that alone comes from you, to your glory, honour and praise. And my your Kingdom come as we do your will in seeking to be reconciled, as we live out being your Ambassadors of Reconciliation. Amen.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553
Edmund 0429041957



Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

14 June 2009

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

2 Corinthians 5



Over the next four weeks we'll be looking at Paul's second letter to Corinth. The bulletin insert for today gives a little background to the town of Corinth. You might like to have a look at it when you get home and reflect on how Corinth compares to where we live.

Today I'm picking up on the theme of 'Reconciliation', which is the focus of the second half of 2 Corinthians 5. I'll seek to answer four questions; what is reconciliation, whose ministry is it, what's our motive and how do we do it.

So what is reconciliation? My dictionary read: 'Reconcile – make friendly after estrangement.' Reconciliation is all

about bringing people back together again after a split. One thing in life and with every relationship, you'll have conflict. Has anyone had a conflict with another person which has strained, or maybe broken that relationship?

Jesus of course specialises in reconciliation. Humanities relationship with God wasn't just strained but well and truly broken. Instead of being God's best friend we were left under a curse. There was hurt, lose of trust, fear, blame, guilt, a real mess. Jesus came that we might be reconciled to God, that we might have a relationship based on love; love for each other. A relationship based on trust, 'Yes we can trust God with our lives,

because we know he is for us'. And Jesus gave his life so that our reconciliation wasn't just sweeping things under the carpet, but he faced the situation squarely and paid the penalty of sin so that justice was maintained. There can't be reconciliation if justice isn't maintained.

Jesus is the great reconciler.

So Paul writes; "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." (2 Cor. 5:18) Whose ministry is reconciliation? The Pastors. Specially trained people in the church. Who are the people God, through Jesus is calling into the ministry of reconciliation? We all the know answer; it's

you. Because Jesus has reconciled you to God you now are empowered to bring reconciliation. There is no conflict too great for Jesus to reconcile. Admittedly I can get really stubborn and make it hard – I can complain about my rights being violated, I can whinge about how unfair it is, they're the ones at fault and should apologise to me, they're just difficult and unreasonable.

Sometimes Jesus has his work cut out softening my heart, so that I don't lash out from my hurts or go into hiding blaming everyone else.

Part of the 'Good News' today is that Jesus has reconciled you to God, so that as the Father's loved, precious child with whom he is well pleased, you can live from his love and not the hurt done to you or by you. Thank God for that!

So reconciliation is every disciple of Jesus ministry and our motive comes from the fact that we are reconciled, that we are intimately loved by God. That's what Paul is seeking to express in verse 14: "For Christ's love compels us..." What's my motive? I'm loved

Christ's Love Compels

by Christ. And that love cost Christ his life. This is not a new law but an internal force that wells up within us that we are compelled to share Christ's love and be reconciled.

What a wonderful motive. I'm not out to be proven right, or to get even, but the pure gracious love of Christ has softened my heart, and it is from this amazing grace that I'm now compelled to act. I don't want to keep this

'Good News' a secret. I don't want anyone left in the pain and agony which is unresolved conflict, the opposite of reconciliation. Why would I want anyone to grovel, to live from hurt, resentment, seething bitterness, a crushed spirit? Why would I want to leave anyone in that state

when Jesus has won the right to set them free and to be reconciled with God and with each other?

What's my motive? Christ's love. Thankfulness. A Christ driven desire to see people set free from hurt, their fears, their regrets, the guilt of life. In Christ you have the power to make an eternity of difference.

So the big question is; how do we do it?

When someone comes to you and says sorry you respond with; 'don't worry mate,

she'll be right'. Maybe not.

At our last Pastor's conference we actually focused on the 'Ministry of Reconciliation' presented by Ambassadors of Reconciliation. Their name comes from this very section of second Corinthians. What do you think their first step in reaching reconciliation was? It surprised me.

Step one; glorify God. Think about that for a moment; glorify God. I must admit that when conflict comes I'm not initially focused on glorifying God. The hurt, the conflict has the potential to absorb me and I lose focus. So in the 'Peacemakers Pledge' they write; "Instead of focusing on our own desires or dwelling on what others may do, we will rejoice in the Lord Jesus and bring praise by depending on his

forgiveness, wisdom, power and love, as we seek to faithfully obey his commands and maintain a loving, merciful, and forgiving attitude (Ps. 37:1-6; Mark 11:25; John 14:15; Rom. 12:17-21; 1 Cor. 10:13; Phil. 4:2-9; Col. 3:1-4; James 3:17,18; 4:1-3; 1 Peter 2:12).

To God's Glory

Step one; glorify God. Step two; get the log out of your own eye. Which comes from Jesus' 'Sermon on the Mount'. "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in someone else's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?... first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from the other person's eye." (Matt. 7:3-5)

From the 'Peacemakers Pledge'; "Instead of blaming others for a conflict or resisting correction, we will trust in Jesus' mercy and take responsibility for our own contribution to conflicts – confessing our sins to those we have wronged, asking God to help us change, and seeking to repair any harm we have caused." Doing this we will certainly bring glory to God and not simply win an argument.

The third step is to; gently restore. "Instead of pretending that conflict doesn't exist or talking about others behind their backs, we will overlook minor offenses or we will talk personally and graciously with those whose offence seems too serious to overlook, seeking to restore them rather than condemn them. When conflict with a Christian brother or sister cannot be resolved in private, we will ask others in the