



Ministry of Reconciliation

The Biblical definition of reconciliation stems from the Greek root word *kapar*, meaning to *change* or *exchange*. At its heart, this word embodies both the relationships between each of us and God, and our relationships with each other.

Without reconciliation, without *change* or *exchange*, our sin forever separates us from God. We have no power to restore that broken relationship, no way to atone for our sins.

STEPPING IN:

1. Read **2 Corinthians 5:21**:

Yet "God made _____ who had _____ sin to _____ sin _____ us, so that _____ him we might _____ the _____ of God."

God made him who had *no sin to be sin* for us.

Sit with those twelve words for a minute.

Jesus not only took on the consequences of our sin, He bore the full weight of the judgment for our sin, reconciling us to God *through* the cross — an act of overwhelming love and complete surrender.

Yet not only did Jesus' death reconcile us to God, but *in Christ*, we are now *new creations*.

2. Read **2 Corinthians 5:17**:

"Therefore, if anyone is _____ Christ, he is a _____
_____; the _____ has gone, the _____ has come!"

Jesus not only experienced the judgment *we* deserved, but He *became sin* for us.

Can you imagine the enormity of *becoming sin*?

3. Read **Isaiah 53:3-7**:

He was _____ and _____ by men, a man of
_____, and familiar with _____. Like one _____
whom men _____ their _____ he was _____, and
we esteemed him not.

Surely he took up _____ and carried our sorrows, yet
we considered him _____ by God, _____ by him, and
_____. But he was _____ for _____
transgressions, he was _____ for _____ iniquities; the
_____ that brought us _____ was _____ him, and by
_____ wounds we are _____.

4. Read that passage again, slowly. Think about the words. Jesus *became sin*. From the most heinous crime ever committed by a human being to the smallest act of disrespect, Jesus bore the weight of *all* the sin of the world — past, present, and future. He was despised and rejected — like one from whom men *hide their faces*.

Why?

Because of *love*? That doesn't even make sense. Love is beautiful. Deep. Moving. Precious. Life-giving. Eternal. *God is love.*

Yet because of Jesus' unfathomable love for us, he was *crushed*.

By what? Our iniquities.

Do you know what the word *iniquity* means? It is immoral or grossly unfair behavior, synonymous with wickedness, immorality, impropriety, evil, atrocity, monstrosity, obscenity, violation.

Words we would *never* use to describe Jesus. Yet the man who *knew no sin* took it *all*. He stood in our place. He accepted wages of *our sin*. And *through* His death, He reconciled us to God.

Love always costs us something. Sometimes it costs us everything.

Yet, "community," as my son would say, "is worth the effort."

Yes, it's costly. Yes, it requires sacrifice. Yes, it sometimes hurts. Yes, the weight of it is hard to bear. But what could be done *to* or *against us* that Jesus hasn't *already* died for?

Not a single thing.

Simple to say, sometimes grueling to swallow.

5. Yet what could love possibly cost us that it didn't first cost Jesus? Jesus was abandoned by His Father, cut off, *utterly forsaken*. Can you imagine the desolation? Yet Jesus *chose* love, because He came to conquer death.

Why?

His Immeasurable, unfathomable, unshakeable love for His people.

That is the message we are to carry to the ends of the earth — that is the heart of the Great Commission — for *that* is God's scandalous love for His people, love that is deeper, wider, longer, and higher than we can possibly imagine.

The message of reconciliation hinges on the holy love of God *through* the death of His Son on the cross. "While we were *still sinners*, Christ *died* for us." **Romans 5:8**

The Ministry of Reconciliation is a personal ministry entrusted to each of us as ambassadors of Christ.

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us." **2 Corinthians 5:20**

WHY A PERSONAL MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION?

1. Read **Ephesians 2:10**:

"For we are _____ workmanship, created _____ Christ Jesus to _____ good _____, which God _____ for us to _____."

2. We called to bear fruit.

John 15:8: "This is to my Father's _____, that you _____ much fruit, showing yourselves to be my _____."

3. We are called to bring glory to God.

1 Peter 4:11: "... so that in _____ things God may be _____ through _____. To him be the _____ and the _____ for ever and ever. Amen."

4. We are called to serve.

2 Corinthians 6:3-10: "We put no _____ in anyone's path, so that our _____ will not be discredited. Rather, as _____ of God we commend ourselves in _____ way: in _____; in _____, _____ and _____; in _____, _____ and _____; in _____, _____ nights and _____; in _____, _____ and _____; in the Holy _____ and in sincere _____; in _____ speech and in the _____ of God; with weapons of _____ in the right hand and in the left; through _____ and _____, bad report and good report; _____, yet regarded as _____; known, yet regarded as unknown; _____, and yet we live on; _____, and yet not killed; _____, yet always _____; _____, yet making many rich; having _____, and yet possessing _____."

5. We are called to *be* the Body of Christ.

Romans 12:4-5: “Just as each of us has _____ body with many members, and these members do not all have the _____, so in _____ we who are _____ form _____ body, and each member _____ to all the others.”

In **2 Corinthians 6:4**, Paul uses the words “*great endurance*,” because he knows it is not easy to maintain a lifelong focus on reconciliation. But this central thread running through our faith, the apex of Jesus’ life, and the reason He was nailed to the cross is what illuminates and gives power to our daily work in the dozens of practical ways Paul lists in **2 Corinthians 6: 3-10**.

6. Read **Genesis 33:4a, b**:

“But Esau _____ to meet Jacob and _____ him; he _____ his arms around his neck and _____ him. And _____.”

This is a powerful moment of reconciliation between two brothers with a lifetime of dishonorable history — deception, theft, fury, vengeance and murder plots — who have been estranged for 20 years. The two men prepare to meet one another as if preparing for battle.

Yet now, the older brother, who had once plotted his younger brother’s death, runs to embrace his younger brother, throwing his arms around his neck. And together, they *weep*.

This is an honest, unforced, vulnerable, powerful, and deeply felt moment of reconciliation. *This* is the reconciliation of God.

GOING DEEPER:

7. Jacob goes so far as to tell Esau in **Genesis 33:10b**:

“For to see your _____ is like seeing the _____ of _____ ...”

There is a similar story of reconciliation in the New Testament in the parable of the prodigal son.

8. Read **Luke 15:20b**.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father _____ him and was _____ with _____ for him; he _____ to his son, _____ his arms _____ him and _____ him.”

Why is reconciliation so important?

9. Paul reminds us in **Romans 12:18** that, “If it is possible, as far as it _____ on _____, live at _____ with _____.”

That’s a tall order.

Yet Christ *died* to make reconciliation possible.

PRESSING ON:

10. Read **Matthew 5:23-24**.

“Therefore, if you are _____ your _____ at the _____ and there _____ that your _____ has something _____ you, _____ your gift _____ in front of the altar. _____ go and be _____ to your brother; _____ come and _____ your gift.”

Is there a broken, strained, estranged relationship in your life?

Is there someone you need to apologize to or a situation you need to set right?

Is there someone who has wronged you?

Those broken relationships can poison us, gaining weight and power the longer they fester. Is there a past hurt you’ve been holding onto, a debt you need to release, a wrong you need to let go?

11. **1 John 4:20-21** says:

If anyone says, "I _____ God," yet _____ his _____, he is a liar. For anyone who does not _____ his brother, whom he has _____, _____ love _____, whom he has _____ seen. And he has given us this _____: Whoever _____ God _____ also _____ his _____.

That is sacrificial love. That is love that doesn't count the cost. That is love that lays down its life for its friends.

Reconciliation is hard, messy, costly work, requiring humility, patience, honesty, and vulnerability, and it must be bathed in prayer, the wound-care for broken relationships.

Pastor Max Ramsey says, "We are beautifully flawed, but wonderfully created."

We are a contentious, captious, proud, and disputatious people. Is it any wonder that God's Word instructs us so often to be patient with one another, kind, forgiving and gracious, compassionate and peace-filled, to love one another deeply from the heart, to pray for each other, bear with one another, and serve each other?

Reconciliation is a journey. We learn rapprochement one frustration, one wound, one agitation, one unsteady step at a time.

And as we do, we honor God and display the riches of His glory, the treasure of His love to a watching, waiting, weary world.

Martin Luther King once asked, "How do you go about loving your enemies? Begin with yourself ..."

Your Ministry of Reconciliation might start right here. *With you*. Worthy. Chosen. Forgiven. Redeemed. Beloved.