

WEEK 4 – RECONCILIATION – JESUS RESTORES YOUR RELATIONSHIP

Reconciliation

MONDAY – Reconstruction through atonement



Romans 3: 25 (NIV) *God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of His blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance He had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.*

Romans 5: 10-11 (NIV) *For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life! Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

The fourth theory of atonement is “RECONCILIATION”, meaning that “Jesus restores our relationship”. This is our focus this week.

Atonement refers to the process by which we have to remove obstacles standing in the way of our reconciliation with God. This reconciliation is possible through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, as expressed in Romans 3: 25 and Romans 5: 10-11. Atonement is the central message of the cross.

Sinclair Ferguson, the Scottish theologian, explains that when

Paul preached “the cross” he preached a message which explained that this instrument of rejection had been used by God as His instrument of reconciliation. Man’s means of bringing death to Jesus was God’s means to bring life to the world. Man’s symbol of rejecting Christ was God’s symbol of forgiveness for man and this is why Paul boasted about the cross!

Reflection:

The question is: Are there any obstacles that still block our reconciliation with God and are we willing to address them?



Prayer: Thank You Abba Father that You forgive all our sins, pardon all our iniquities, and grant atonement for all our transgressions through Jesus. For it is written: If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
AMEN

TUESDAY – Reconciliation



Ephesians 4: 32 (NIV) *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

2 Corinthians 5: 18-19 (NIV) *All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation.*

In the beginning, God created Adam and Eve, on the sixth day of creation, and wanted to be in an intimate relationship with them. This was shattered when Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge and lost their righteousness through sin. As punishment for their disobedience, God banished them from Paradise, and they were forced to live lives of hardship.

Charles Spurgeon said that “Our love ought to follow the love of God on one point, namely, in always seeking to produce reconciliation. It was to this end that God sent His Son.”

This then is the fourth explanation of the meaning of the cross; Jesus came into a world of sin and torn

apart by our disobedience and fulfilled His mission to reconcile the world back to God.

“Since we have been created in God’s image, we are inherently oriented towards wanting to be in a relationship with God. Some of us realise this in childhood, others in adolescence, while yet others only come to this realisation in old age. For some it happens early in life, for others on their death bed. But the truth is we are meant to be in a relationship with Abba Father, our God” (SAVIOR – Magrey DeVega).

Reflection: Reflect on this principle – as you seek God you must be willing to reconcile with all those that you have fallen out with!



Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, help me to work for the peace and restoration of those relationships that have become difficult. AMEN

WEDNESDAY – Reconciliation with one another



Ephesians 2: 13-14 (NIV) *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.*

“In Ephesians Paul explains that the term “reconciliation through atonement” is not only about the repair of our broken relationship with God, but that it should remind us that Christ through the cross reconciles us with one another” (SAVIOR – What the Bible says about the Cross, by Magrey DeVega)

In his letter to the Ephesians Paul talks about reconciliation against the backdrop of the major controversy of the day – namely, Jews versus Gentiles, who worshipped and witnessed together in the early church. Paul and other Christian preachers said that salvation had been offered to all, Jew and Gentile alike. However, old habits die hard and the church went through tumultuous times, which caused intense cultural division.

God transforms the hearts of even those who are most resistant to transformation through relationships with ordinary people like you and me.

Reflection:

“Do we in the church today still experience such cultural divisions? Consider for a moment that Jesus through the cross reconciled us to God and to one another. Then consider that God made all people on earth, Jews and Gentiles alike in the first century, and all cultures to His image. Paul reminds us that the law did not save us, but that through the grace of God Jesus died for our redemption and reconciliation, and through that we are called to live a life of love and peace, a life that transcends the division between each of us and God, and between each of us and others” (SAVIOR – Magrey R DeVega)..



Prayer: Reconcile us, O Christ, by Your cross. Across the barriers that divide people of different cultures, reconcile us, O Christ, by Your cross. AMEN

THURSDAY: Beyond your comfort zone



Jeremiah 29: 11 (NIV) *For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV) *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Matthew 19:26 (NIV) *Jesus looked at them intently and said, ‘Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible.’*

Jeremiah 29: 11 contains one of the most quoted and most reassuring promises of God. But how often do we lack the faith to believe in God’s promises. We tackle challenges and try and resolve matters by relying on our own strengths and skills, but when things do not work out as planned, we get anxious (Philippians 4: 6-7). But then comes the beautiful assurance, in Matthew 19: 26 that with God everything is possible.

The well-known passage in Acts 9, which tells of the conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus, is

a good example of going outside one’s comfort zone. Ananias, a disciple from Damascus was visited by God in a vision and instructed to go and restore Saul’s sight. Ananias had his doubts about Saul, but when God told him that Saul was God’s chosen instrument to take the Word of the Way to the Gentiles, Ananias went immediately because he knew he that God would be with him.

Reflection:

If you are asked to go and minister to a terrorist, as Ananias was, face-to-face, would you do it?



Prayer: Heavenly Father, I humble myself before You, asking for Your grace upon me during these difficult times of anguish. My trust is in Your love which never fails, and Your power that knows no boundaries. Be my guide. AMEN.

FRIDAY: Sharing the same soul



Colossians 3: 13-14 (NIV) *Put up with each other, and forgive each other if anyone has a complaint. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Above all, be loving. This ties everything together perfectly.*

There are also numerous examples in the Old Testament about reconciliation through atonement. In Genesis 32 – 33 we read the conclusion of the story of the two sons of Isaac and Rebecca, the twins Esau, the eldest, and Jacob. Esau swapped his birth right for a bowl of Jacob's lentil soup (NIV = red stew) when he came in from the fields when tired and then by deception Jacob was blessed by their father Isaac in Esau's place. Jacob fled and went to live in Paddan Aram in Mesopotamia, where he married Leah and Rachel. When after twenty years Jacob and his family returned to his birthplace, he was afraid that Esau would take revenge and kill him and thus sent flocks of his animals ahead of them as peace offerings, hoping to appease Esau. When Jacob

and Esau finally met, Esau ran to Jacob and embraced and kissed him. Esau said he had enough of his own and did not need Jacob's gifts of atonement. They were reconciled after twenty years and were then truly twin brothers, sharing the same soul, a soul of redemption, reconciliation and love.

In the same way as Esau did not want to accept Jacob's gifts of atonement, God does not want our burnt offerings, because His Son had on the cross paid the price for our sin with His blood. God wants our repentant heart.

Reflection:

How does your and my heart need to be softened so that healing and reconciliation can occur in our broken relationships?



Prayer: Thank you Abba Father, for Your word that teaches us that those who make peace are blessed and will be called God's children! Give us a spirit of reconciliation and Love. AMEN