

Podcast 271 Jesus the Reconciler

Welcome to the "Building Faith Families" podcast with Steve Demme. I'm your host Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today. Good morning, Steve. How are you today?

Steve: I am well, Scott.

Scott: How are the dogs?

Steve: The dogs are doing well. One is about to be picked up from the vet. He'll be barking with a higher tone in the future. The little puppy is being a puppy. We haven't had a puppy in our house for a long time. It's a joint effort between all three of us to try and keep him entertained because even though Johnny is 33, he's fallen into the ways of the two old people. We have an old dog and we have three old people, and we have this puppy who's trying to enliven us.

Scott: Mercy. God bless you.

Steve: The grandkids love him and the little foster kids love him. The pup had a big weekend when we had a birthday party for my oldest son. Because of concerns about the virus, we had it outside in the snow. We bought one of those heaters that they have in outdoor restaurants and put that on our back patio. We enjoyed sled riding and even built a little fire out in the middle of the yard surrounded by snow.

Scott: I applaud you. I would not have been that creative.

Steve: It's my wife who gets all the kudos. I'm just a cooperator. She's an amazing lady who has worked hard to keep our family together through this last year of alienation and separation, which leads us to our topic today which is Jesus the Reconciler.

Scott: All right.

Steve: Let's read a scripture and then we'll pray. I love reading this passage of scripture. I could read this on every podcast. It's Colossians 1:17–20. "He, Christ, is before all things. In Him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent. For in Him, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on Earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross."

Let's Pray: Father, that picture is amazing. Those words are more than inspired. They're divine. Thank you for this picture of Jesus. Thank you for this exalted look at our Savior. He's before all things. In Him all things hold together. He's the head, and the fullness of God was pleased to dwell on Him. I pray that today by Your Spirit, You'll help us to appreciate this aspect of Him where He reconcile all things, all things to Himself. Things in heaven and things on Earth, through the blood of His cross, in Jesus name, Amen.

The word reconciled is a wonderful word. To help us understand it, we're going to talk about the English root of it and the Greek root of it and some antonyms. The opposite of reconciled is alienated. Some translations use the word estranged. Other words are used. We were hostile. We were enemies. We were estranged. We were alienated.

These are strong words, but they're all covered by reconciled. Now, I'm going to read the next two verses, Colossians 1:21 and 22. "You, who once were alienated and hostile in mind doing evil deeds, He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him."

I just feel like weeping and kneeling at that, because He did everything. His body of flesh, His death, and the results are ours. We are now presented holy and blameless and above reproach before Him. There's the gospel. There's all creation there.

Reconcile in the Greek, is only found in Christian writings. If you've ever taken a class in Greek, oftentimes the Greek words that Paul will choose or John will select can be found in other Greek writings of the time. Then these other writings in the vernacular will illuminate us, and help us to understand the words in the Koine Greek which is used in the New Testament. This word, apparently, is only used in Christian writings.

The word is apo A-P-O apokatallasso. Apo means finishing and completion, and katallasso means the exchange of hostility for a friendly relationship. Isn't that good? The exchange of hostility for a friendly relationship, or to reconcile, or to reconcile completely. When you put it together with the apo-katallasso, the finished exchange of hostility for a friendly relationship.

"We owe that knowledge to Mr. Pharr. With that new definition in our minds, I want to read that passage again, Colossians 1:19-22 in the New Living Translation. See if it brings it to life a little bit more. "God in all His fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through Him, God reconciled everything to Himself.

"He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross. This includes you who once were far away from God. You were His enemies, separated from Him by your evil thoughts and actions.

"Yet now He has reconciled you to Himself through the death of Christ in His physical body. As a result, He has brought you into His own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before Him without a single fault."

Steve: This is such rich stuff. I'm so thankful I have the job that I have. What better job than to study scripture [laughs] and to draw near to God and get to talk to wonderful people who I wish I could meet face-to-face after all these podcasts. This thought continues in Romans chapter 5:8-11. After Paul says "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die," etc. Then, in the eighth verse he says, "God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

"Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more now that we are reconciled shall we be saved by his life.

"More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have now received reconciliation." That's powerful stuff. Now, let's look at the English root a little bit.

The Webster's 1828 dictionary defines reconcile as "To call back into union and friendship the affections which have been alienated, to restore to friendship or favor after estrangement." This wonderful word stems from two Latin roots, "con," in the reconcile.

Con means with or together and calo, the cile part, to call, which means to call back into union. I wish I had a little bit more picture of what it was like in the Garden of Eden, but we have a couple glimpses. We have some hints. It says that after Adam and Eve had sinned, they hid themselves from God. God was walking through the garden in the cool of the day when He calls out to Adam because he wasn't there as he usually was.

What a picture though of God walking through the garden in the cool of the day to have communion, fellowship with Adam and Eve, to discuss what they'd done during the day, to commune from their hearts, to express love for each other, just to be with each other. That is such a picture to me.

I prefer to walk in the evenings when I have my walks with God. There's just something sweet about that picture. When I read that, I think, "Oh, what would that have been like to walk through a perfect garden with no sin and nothing separating us from God and have heart-to-heart communication? Our spirits is one. Our minds is one, nothing separating us." Then sin entered, and separated us from God, as it says in Isaiah 59:2.

Adam and Eve used to look forward to that as the high point of the day, now dreaded meeting God. God calls their name and now they hide. What would that be like just to have God say, "Scott" or "Steve." Yet, now they're hiding from God. They're estranged from God.

This whole word "reconcile" is to call back into union and friendship, but we know that the calling back does not take place until a reckoning has been made. Now I'm going to read Ephesians 2:13-18.

"Now, in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ, for He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the love commandments expressed in ordinances that they might create in Himself one new man in place of the two.

"Making peace and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the Christ, thereby killing the hostility. He came, and He preached peace to you who once were far off. Peace to those who were near, for through Him, we both have access in one spirit to the Father." I want to stop.

2 Corinthians puts it all in context. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. All this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

"That is in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us.

"We implore you on behalf of God. Be reconciled to God. For our sake, He made him to be sin, who knew no sin so that in Him, we might become the righteousness of God." I don't know about you, but my heart is full. I'm appreciating the opportunity to read these wonderful passages.

My walk last night was interesting. I met God again. I drew near to Him. I sang hymns. I meditated. Those precious times that I share with God could not be taking place if it hadn't been for Jesus who, in Himself, took my sin, my estrangement, my hostility, my enemy status and turned it all around. He drew me to Himself. You get opening in your heart for a couple more verses?

Another verse in Scripture talks about how for the joy that was set before Him. He endured the cross. I believe that a lot of that joy was He was going to watch us be reconciled to His dad. He knew how much His dad loved us. He knew how much we needed to be reconciled. That's what drove Him.

That's what kept Him going, not His own joy, but the joy that He was going to witness as the Father and His children were finally reconciled. That's what we have in Revelation 21. He's going to say the dwelling place of God is with man. As I read through Scripture, that's how I see this whole panorama unfolding.

We had this wonderful relationship in Genesis, and we're going to have it again in Revelation. In between is this whole process of God reconciling us to Himself, culminating in the cross. There's so much that happened on that cross, we've got to have a couple of million years just to contemplate it in eternity.

1 Peter 3:18. "Christ also suffered once." I say, that's what gets me too. He suffered once for our sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God. Philippians 1:6, "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion, that the day of Jesus Christ."

Remember, that's what we first started off when we defined this word. We have the apokatalasso. The apo means finishing and completion, and the katalasso, the exchange of hostility for a friendly relationship. We have been reconciled completely by the death of Jesus.

We have been completely brought back to God. There's nothing between us because in one minute the words that were used to describe us were alienated, estranged, hostile and

enemies, and the next minute he says, we are presented holy and blameless and above reproach before Him. I'd like to end with a song, what do you think?

"Jesus paid it all." The second verse, "Lord, now indeed I find thy power and thine alone can change the leper's spots, and melt the heart of stone."

Steve: Father, thank you for melting our hearts today. Thank you for changing our leper's spots to whole, wholeness and reunion with you. Thank you for this wonderful word that you have taken the hostility and the estrangement and the alienation out and restored it to a complete fellowship and a calling back and a reunion with you.

Thank you that we can communicate with you, nothing between. Take our sins a fresh today. Wash us, cleanse us, help us to take this in little bit deeper, so that we can come with boldness into your presence and find you growing with us, smiling at us because of Jesus. Thank you, Jesus, for reconciling us to the Father, in Jesus name. Amen.