

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH
PAUL'S LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS – LESSON 4
COLOSSIANS 1:20-29
WEEK OF JANUARY 12 – JANUARY 17

RECONCILIATION AND THE MINISTRY OF PROCLAMATION OF RECONCILIATION

Paul clearly established in Colossians 1:15-19 that Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully man. He refutes the heretics attacking Paul and the Colossian church who claimed that Jesus was neither man nor God, but rather a lesser spirit being sent from God. These false teachers denied that man could be reconciled to God through Christ alone.

Paul powerfully proclaims in Colossians 1:20-23 that there is total, complete and full reconciliation of man to God through Christ's sacrificial death on the cross where He fully appeased the wrath of God against sinful man. Because Christ possessed the fullness of God and was also fully man, only He could provide the perfect sacrifice to satisfy the wrath of God, providing peace between God and man.

"The word *reconcile* is one of the most significant and descriptive terms in all of scripture. It is one of five keywords used in the New Testament to describe the richness of salvation in Christ, along with *justification*, *redemption*, *forgiveness* and *adoption*." MacArthur Commentary Colossians & Philemon, pgs. 55-56

Paul in Colossians 1:24-29 connects this gospel ministry of proclamation of reconciliation with a detailed look at the ministry God entrusted to him as a steward to proclaim that message.

We start the study of reconciliation in this first section, Colossians 1:20-23, with a definition of *reconciliation*: "When the Bible speaks of reconciliation, then, it refers to the restoration of a right relationship between God and man." MacArthur, p. 56.

Read **Colossians 1:20-23**:

1. What do the following verses teach of unredeemed man's attitude toward God before he is reconciled to God?
 - **Colossians 1:21**
 - **John 3:19-20**
 - **Romans 1:18-20**
 - **Romans 8:7-8**

Man's sin must be dealt with and God's just wrath against sin must be appeased in order for God and man to be reconciled.

2. From the following passages, how is Christ the key to reconciliation between God and man?
 - **Colossians 1:20**
 - **Romans 5:9**
 - **2 Corinthians 5:21**
 - **1 Peter 2:24**
3. What is the result of this reconciliation in **Colossians 1:22**?
4. What is the evidence of this reconciliation in **Colossians 1:23**?

5. In **verse 23**, Paul begins his explanation of the ministry God has given him. What does Paul say about the ministry of reconciliation in **2 Corinthians 5:17-21**?
6. From **vs. 24(a)**, what is Paul's attitude even when suffering because of ministry?

From **vs. 24**, "In what sense were Paul's sufferings filling up that which is lacking in Christ afflictions? In that Paul was receiving the persecution that was intended for Christ. Jesus having ascended to heaven was out of their reach. But because His enemies had not filled up all the injuries they wanted to inflict on Him, they turned their hatred on those who preached the gospel." MacArthur, p. 76.

7. In **verses 26-27** Paul refers to "the mystery" which is not something mystical, but rather truth that was not revealed in the Old Testament but now, in the New Testament is revealed. What was that mystery and how is it revealed in the following verses?
 - **Col. 1:27**
 - **Rom 8:9-10**
 - **1 Cor. 6:19**
 - **Gal. 2:20**
8. According to **Col.1:28(c)**, what was Paul's goal of his ministry?
9. How does Paul, in **verse 28(a)**, describe the means to accomplish that goal? Elaborate on each of the means.
10. In **verse 29**, what effort did Paul apply to accomplish the goal of the ministry? What was God's role in Paul's efforts?
11. Are you at peace with God, having been reconciled to Him through faith in Christ? How are you laboring and striving in the proclamation of the gospel, the great news of reconciliation and peace with God through faith in Christ? How are you investing in other believers to "present every man complete in Christ?" How are you serving in the body of Christ to advance the gospel?

"God sends his people forth as ambassadors into a fallen, lost world, bearing unbelievably good news. People everywhere are hopelessly lost and doomed, cut off from God by sin. But God has provided the means of reconciliation through the death of His Son. Our mission is to plead with people to receive that reconciliation, before it is too late. Paul's attitude expressed in (2 Corinthians 5) Verse 20, should mark every Christian: "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." MacArthur, p. 67