

## THE GIFT OF RECONCILIATION Prt 2

- Last week, we started talking about **THE GIFT OF RECONCILIATION** and this week I would like to go a bit deeper around this matter.
- We read from 2 Corinthians 5, and it is to our advantage that we read it again this morning.

*2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 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. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

- Last week, we learnt a couple of things:
  - Jesus came to reconcile us with God. Before reconciliation, we were powerless, ungodly, sinners, and enemies of God; we were under God's wrath.
  - The death of Jesus brought peace between us and God and everything became new.
  - Having been reconciled with God, in turn, we received the ministry of reconciliation.
  - It is therefore safe to say without first being reconciled to God, no meaningful reconciliation can take place.
- If we are to operate in the ministry of reconciliation, we need to look at how Jesus brought reconciliation to humanity. We learnt the following:
  - 1. Humility mixed with self-denial paves way for reconciliation.**
  - 2. Be decisive about reconciliation.**
- This morning, I want to consider two more principles on how we can distribute the gift of reconciliation. You might not need these principles right now, but I bet you, sooner or later you will need them.
- So, let's continue taking our cue from the Lord Jesus, the greatest reconciler of humanity.
- 3. Prayer prepares you for reconciliation.**

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- As I mentioned last week, reconciliation is a contested space and as such anyone who attempts to get into that space, must be ready to enter into warfare.
- A believer's battle is fought and won on the knees. Prayer is talking to God, it is inviting divinity to intervene in the affairs of humanity.
- I have seen that many people try to reconcile without soaking the moment in prayer.
- One of the first things that Jesus did before embarking on the journey to reconcile us to God, was to engage in a time of prayer.

*Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit up into the wilderness, to be tempted by the Devil. 2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterwards hungry.*

- Jesus the son of God understood the terrain He was getting into and decided to soak the moment in prayer.
- Prayer aligns you with God's heart regarding reconciliation. It is in times of prayer that you get God's perspective regarding the person and the situation at hand.
- It is prayer that gets you to die to self and be alive to the ministry of reconciliation.
- Jesus continued to pray right through His ministry on earth.

*Luke 6:12 And it happened in those days that He went out into a mountain to pray, and He was spending the night in prayer to God. 13 And when it was day, He called His disciples. And He chose twelve of them, whom He also named apostles:*

- Jesus was about to choose key people that were going to influence His decisions. Jesus did not take it lightly; He spent the whole night praying.
- What was Jesus praying for? Jesus was asking for wisdom, Jesus was praying for insight and foresight.
- Don't you think you need lots of wisdom when it comes to reconciliation matters. Prayer provides clarity of thought in difficult moments.
- Attempting to reconcile without prayer can lead to a disastrous situation – through prayer, your timing will be right, through prayer, you will have the right words to speak, and through prayer you learn patience.
- Another aspect regarding reconciliation is that you need the right support system around you.
- One of the best support systems you need is support in prayer. You need someone to pray with you as you go through the process.

## THE GIFT OF RECONCILIATION Prt 2

- Jesus had times of praying with His inner group, He needed them in times of prayer. Do not underestimate the power of a praying friend.

*Luke 9:28 And about eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James and went up into a mountain to pray.*

- When someone prays for you, they can easily hear from God better than you because they are not too involved in the matter – they are watching from outside.
- On His journey to reconcile man with God, Jesus prayed for courage and strength. The account in the garden of Gethsemane shows how painful and stressful the process of reconciliation can be.
- The experience in that garden, depicted the son of man in great and urgent need.

*Luke 22:41 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw. And He kneeled down and prayed, 42 saying, Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me. Yet not My will, but Yours be done. 43 And an angel appeared to Him from Heaven, strengthening Him. 44 And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly. And His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

- Jesus needed strength to pull through and He got it whilst in prayer. When you are in agony, pray, when you are in pain, pray, when you are about to give up, pray, when you feel betrayed, pray – reconciliation is impossible without prayer.

#### **4. Forgiving the unforgivable is the final step towards reconciliation.**

- You cannot reconcile with what you cannot forgive. This is a sticky point for many people – many people want to reconcile but their hearts are not ready to forgive.
- Forgiveness does not condone the behavior but makes reconciliation possible.
- Forgiveness must happen whether someone has confessed and asked for forgiveness or has not asked for forgiveness.

*2 Corinthians 5:19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them*

*Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

- God the Father decided to forgive our sins before we asked for forgiveness. Jesus had to live out this principle as He walked here on earth.

## **THE GIFT OF RECONCILIATION Prt 2**

*Luke 23:33 And when they came to the place which is called Calvary, they crucified Him and the criminals there, one on the right, and one on the left. 34 And Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do. And parting His clothing, they cast lots.*

- What a life and what an example – for a moment, position yourself in the shoes of Jesus.
- Whilst Jesus hung upon the cross, and while being insulted and abused by all sorts of men, and put to the greatest pain and torture, he addressed himself to God his Father.
- When you put yourself in the presents of the Father, you are able to forgive the unforgivable.
- Instead of crying out for justice and judgement on them, Jesus cries out for forgiveness.
- This is what God is calling us to do, to forgive the vilest of acts against us, to release people who violated your person and took away your dignity.
- Jesus forgave them because He identified that they were ignorant of their behavior. He said they did not know what they were doing.
- Forgiveness will happen when you realize that whatever that person did, happened under the influence of ignorance. If they had known they would not have done what they did.
- No amount of ignorance can excuse anyone's sins, but this view allows you to have compassion on the perpetrator – your forgiveness wells up when you feel sorry for this person's ignorance.
- Forgiving the unforgivable is only possible when you live in the light of the forgiveness you received.
- Many times, we forget what God forgave us of, we tend to think that our trespasses were less serious than others.
- Seated here, are people who had offended God at the highest level, but God in His mercy counted not your sins against Him.
- You were deserving of death because of your trespasses, but you were forgiven.
- When you fail to forgive others, you are making yourself more righteous and more Holy than God Himself.

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- In Matthew 18:21-35, we have the 'Parable of the Unforgiving Servant'. It details the story of a servant who was forgiven a massive (unrepayable) debt, only to refuse forgiveness to another servant who owed a relatively small debt.
- Do not receive the grace of God in vain by refusing to forgive others.
  
- What this tells us is that no one can fully reconcile with others in the absence of being reconciled with God.

*2 Corinthians 5: 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

- Today, the Lord is calling us back to Him. There are two types of reconciliation that God is calling you to.
- The first one is for those who are already at peace with God but from time to time, you have strayed away, thereby causing tension in your walk with God.
- Are you standing aright with God, is there peace between you and God. You see, children in the home will experience moments of tension with their parents when they misbehave.
- If there is no peace with God, please be reconciled with God today.
- The second aspect of reconciliation is for someone who has not accepted Jesus as Lord. I can tell you now, if you don't have Jesus in your heart, you are on a dangerous road, that will lead to death.
- God is calling you to reconcile with Him by accepting Jesus as your lord as savior.