

Pauline Theology – Lesson 03

Fundamental Structures in Paul & Reconciliation (Part 1)

Fundamental Pauline Structures

Flesh & Spirit

Flesh

- Flesh refers to the human state in its weakness, transitoriness.
 - o Rom 1:3 – “born of the seed of David according to the flesh.”
 - o Rom 8:3 – “God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.”
 - o Eph 2:14ff – “Jesus has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.”
 - o Col 1:22 – “he has reconciled you in the body of his flesh through death.”
 - o 1 Tim 3:16 – “Jesus was revealed in the flesh”
- Jesus came in the weakness of the human state (flesh) but did not share in the sin of the human race.
- The death of Christ = turning point. In His death Christ dies to the flesh (i.e., the old aeon). A transition takes place from the old aeon to the new creation. Indeed, in his death Christ has transferred his people out of the present “fleshly” aeon. This reorientation focuses the believer on the age of the **Spirit**.

Spirit

- The Spirit stands over against the “flesh”
 - o Rom 1:4 – “Declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit”
 - o 1 Tim 3:16 – “revealed in the flesh, justified by the Spirit.”
 - o Rom 8:10 – “The body is dead,...the Spirit is life.”

Reconciliation

Reconciliation *In Christ* – The Peace of God

- “Reconciliation” is a less technical term than “justification”.
- Speaks to the restoration of the right relationship between two parties.
- Placed over against “enmity,” “alienation” (Rom. 5:10; Eph. 2:14ff; Col 1:22)
- In a positive sense it has a meaning of “peace” (Rom 5:1, 10; Eph 2:15ff; Col. 1:20ff.)

Romans 5:10 (ESV) – ¹⁰For 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.

Ephesians 2:14ff (ESV) – ¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Colossians 1:20–22 (ESV) – ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. ²¹And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²²he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,

- God is the Author & initiator of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-21)

2 Corinthians 5:18–21 (ESV) – ¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

- “Reconciliation is the work of redemption going out from God in Christ to the world, for the removal of ‘enmity,’ for the restoration of ‘peace.’” – Ridderbos
- Having “peace with God” individually is in view, but not the center of Paul’s doctrine of reconciliation.
 - o Reconciliation is primarily a matter of removing all that stands in the way of a right relationship between God and the world (in the most comprehensive sense of the word “world”).
- Context of 2 Cor. 5:18-21 » 2 Cor. 5:17 (New Creation) & 2 Cor. 6:2 (Favorable time + day of salvation)

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV) – ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

2 Corinthians 6:2 (ESV) – ²For he says, “In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

- Colossians 1 passage “all things” (v. 20) connects to “heaven and earth” (v. 16)

Colossians 1:16 (ESV) – ¹⁶For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

Colossians 1:20 (ESV) – ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

- o Connects “peace” with “reconciliation”
- “[Reconciliation] consists therefore as much in the pacification of the powers hostile to God as in the restoration of peace between Jews and gentiles, the peace of the Messianic kingdom, which is represented by Christ (‘He is our peace’) because he has reconciled the enmity between the two through his cross (Eph 2:14ff.), and which stands in contrast to the wrath, indignation, tribulation, and anguish of the eschatological divine judgement (Rom 2:9-10).” - Ridderbos