

## Colossians Series, #8- Colossians 1: 21-23- “The Transformation Presentation”

**Introduction: IL-** The best illustration I can share with you about this transformation that God brings about in the life of a believer is from the account of the Apostle Paul in Acts 26: 4-6 “My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. <sup>5</sup>They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. <sup>6</sup>And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers.” He is the writer of this letter to the Colossians church and his passion to share truth with them starts with his own story as he reveals it to King Agrippa while under trial in Jerusalem. He makes it abundantly clear that, being once a zealous persecutor of Christians, his life was turned around when the Risen Savior stopped him in his tracks and he was reconciled to God. He became a tireless proponent of the true Gospel and wanted the church in Colossae to be reminded of what that reconciliation looks like in everyday life anywhere where Christians heard the Gospel and gave their hearts to Jesus! His testimony was of a radical transformation, and YOU can know and experience it too! Before we get into today’s brief text, listen to Paul’s word of testimony in 1 Timothy 1: 12-16: <sup>12</sup>“I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, <sup>13</sup>though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, <sup>14</sup>and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup>The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. <sup>16</sup>But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.” That is Paul’s testimony- now we get to study Colossians 1: 21-23 in light of it...

If you want to know more about that divine transformation, you need to learn from and value three vital truths from this text:

**1.- What all of us were like before we were saved: verse 21- And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds...**

**Alienated-** alienation leads to hostility and hostility leads to evil deeds. Actions spring from what we believe or refuse to believe.

**hostile in mind-** Evil thrives on deception and ignorance and then hostility to follow. But it doesn’t have to stay that way! Yes, Ephesians 2: 1-3 says: “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup>among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body<sup>(a)</sup> and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.” BUT notice verse 4- “BUT GOD...” So Paul is thrilled to teach that reconciliation comes about through God’s beautiful grace!

**doing evil deeds-** It is clear in Scripture that we all were separated from God because of our sin. David wrote in Psalm 58: 3- “The wicked are estranged from the womb;

they go astray from birth, speaking lies." We ALL were estranged from God at birth and began doing evil deeds early on! For all of us it is vital to know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God. Unbelievers are called "Enemies" of God in 32 places in the Bible! An James 4: 4 reminds us of the why- "Whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." Think of it this way- apart from a transforming relationship with God most people start and end their day with no thoughts of God. They live by principles that are contrary to God. **IL- R.A.** Torry writes about 56 characteristics of sin: I'll speak of four- blinded, boastful, deceptive, foolish! The unbeliever at best might say, "I want God on MY terms!" More often than not they make it known- "I don't NEED God!" To such ardent Christ-rejectors the Bible teaches that God is wrathful- not a blind rage toward specific sinners, but a reasonable response to offenses by all sinners against His holiness, not even realizing that God is rightfully intolerant of sin! **To put it another way,** they are comfortable with themselves. When they DO sin their response often is- "It's no big deal!" They desperately need to know what is written in Romans 5: 20- "Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more." Out of God's amazing grace reconciliation comes to us...Why?

**2.- Why Jesus reconciled us to the Father: verse 22 ... 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...**

**To present us holy before Him IL- Bible.org-** "The process by which God forms Christ's character in believers by the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the context of community." The Gaithers wrote a song years ago that expresses it will- "I'm just a sinner saved by grace- when I stood condemned to death He took my place." What is reconciliation after all? It is the result of a right relationship with God- it means to change from enemy to friend. It is the removal of the hostility between us and God that WE caused! To put it bluntly, it is transformation. It comes to one who is no longer alienated and held captive by sin. And plainly said- GOD gives it as a gift of His grace! The word "now" is in direct contrast to "once were." The hostility is exchanged for holiness. And that verb "present" means to place next to or to yield to one another. Psalm 51: 17- "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. That's our side of reconciliation- a broken spirit and a contrite heart." Paul says it well in Romans 12:1-2- "I appeal to you therefore, brothers,<sup>Ⓜ</sup> by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.<sup>Ⓜ</sup> <sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this world,<sup>Ⓜ</sup> but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." Jesus' part is the most amazing! He died as our substitute, having satisfied God's wrath. No one can bring a charge against us- especially Satan. He can't make any accusation against us to stand in God's "courtroom" in Heaven! God sees us as we will be in Heaven someday. God challenges us to holiness now and promises Heaven to come! It is not us trying hard to be holy but rather it is HIS work in us! Satan says we're guilty and don't deserve Heaven, but God says differently in 1 Corinthians 1: 8- "...who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." And Revelation 12: 10 speaks of time yet future when Satan is still trying to put blame on God's children- "And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers <sup>Ⓜ</sup> has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God."

**to present us blameless before Him-** Jesus gave His total self for you and me!

**to present us above reproach before Him-** not “might be” presented but will be! God looks at believers and sees no fault in them, just like His Son! We are free on all charges for all eternity! No more of Satan’s finger-pointing or fault-finding. There is no fault as far as God is concerned. We are to be presented blameless before the Father because of the Son!

**3.- What we should delight to do now in praise to Him: verse 23** if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation<sup>in</sup> under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. That little word “IF” is a tough word to handle for many because it makes it seem like a Christian can lose their salvation IF they don’t keep on doing certain things. But that little word in the Greek can either be conditional or it can express certainty. I believe the form this word takes in the Greek intends for it to be taken as, “If you will, and I know you will!” Paul was confident that Epaphras had taught them well and that they knew much about reconciliation, so for them it meant- “Keep on keeping on, and I am sure you will!” I take this IF clause as a reminder of real faith mixed with confident expectation or hope, while all long the way we live stable, steadfast lives. In 1 Corinthians 15: 58 the believers in that city were told- “Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord”, and Paul wanted the Colossian church to accept the same challenge for day by day living for His glory!

**continue in the faith-** This challenge in chapter one indicates one way to demonstrate that my faith is strong and in Jesus alone. Obeying this 23<sup>rd</sup> verse is evidence of having been reconciled. It means to stay the course and hold on to the hope- that is not an “I hope so” kind of faith or hope but a ‘confident expectation’ kind of faith that carries you and me through even the toughest days when we feel weak and helpless and unworthy! BUT GOD- Jesus, Son of God makes us worthy for time and eternity- to Him all the praise goes- excitedly!

**live stable, steadfast lives-**

**not shift from the hope of the Gospel-** That is what Communion is all about in the final analysis- Jesus gave His all so we could have all that God desires us to have spiritually, now and forever! Let’s praise Him expectantly in song and with the simple elements of the Lord’s Table...