



# Forgiveness vs. Reconciliation

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Dan Fisher - Forgiveness vs. Reconciliation



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**Heb 12:14-15** Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: <sup>15</sup> looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;



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A close-up photograph of two hands shaking in a firm grip. The hand on the left is wearing a brown, textured sleeve, while the hand on the right is wearing a blue sleeve. The background is blurred with warm, bokeh lights. The text is overlaid in a bold, yellow font.

# 1. Forgiveness and reconciliation are central to Scripture



## 2. Forgiveness and reconciliation are essential for our justification

A close-up photograph of two hands shaking in a firm grip. The hand on the left is wearing a brown, textured jacket, while the hand on the right is wearing a blue jacket. The background is blurred with warm, bokeh light spots. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

### 3. Forgiveness and reconciliation are essential for our sanctification



- **God commands us to forgive**

**Eph 4:32** And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another,

**Col 3:13** bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another;

- **We forgive because we are forgiven**

**Eph 4:32** even as God in Christ forgave you.

**Col 3:13** even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.



- **We forgive to be forgiven**

**Mt 6:12,14-15** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. ...  
<sup>14</sup>“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup>But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

**Mt 5:23-24** if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

- **We forgive to block bitterness**

**Heb 12:15** lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;





“To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.” Lewis B. Smedes

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- **We must be willing to forgive above and beyond**

**Mt 18:21-22** Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

- **We cannot “forget” as God does**

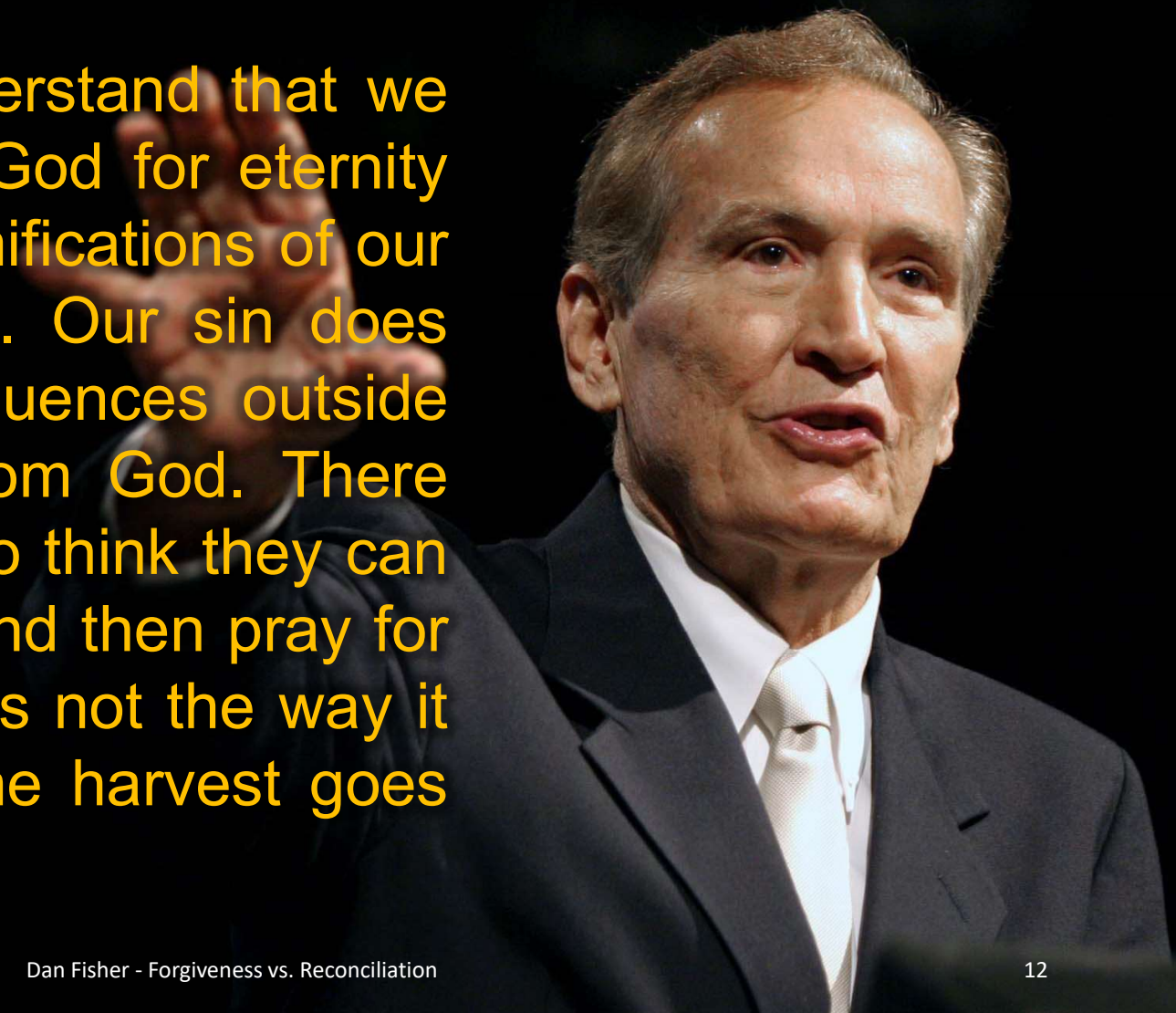
**Micah 7:19** He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.

**Heb 8:12** For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

A close-up photograph of two hands shaking in a firm grip. The hand on the left is older and has a weathered appearance, while the hand on the right is younger and smoother. The background is blurred with warm, bokeh light spots. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

## 4. Forgiveness takes two – Us and God

“It is crucial we understand that we can be forgiven by God for eternity and still face the ramifications of our decisions in this life. Our sin does have natural consequences outside of our separation from God. There are many people who think they can sow their wild oats and then pray for crop failure. But that’s not the way it works. The law of the harvest goes right on.” Adrian Rogers



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## 5. God's forgiveness is predicated upon certain requirements

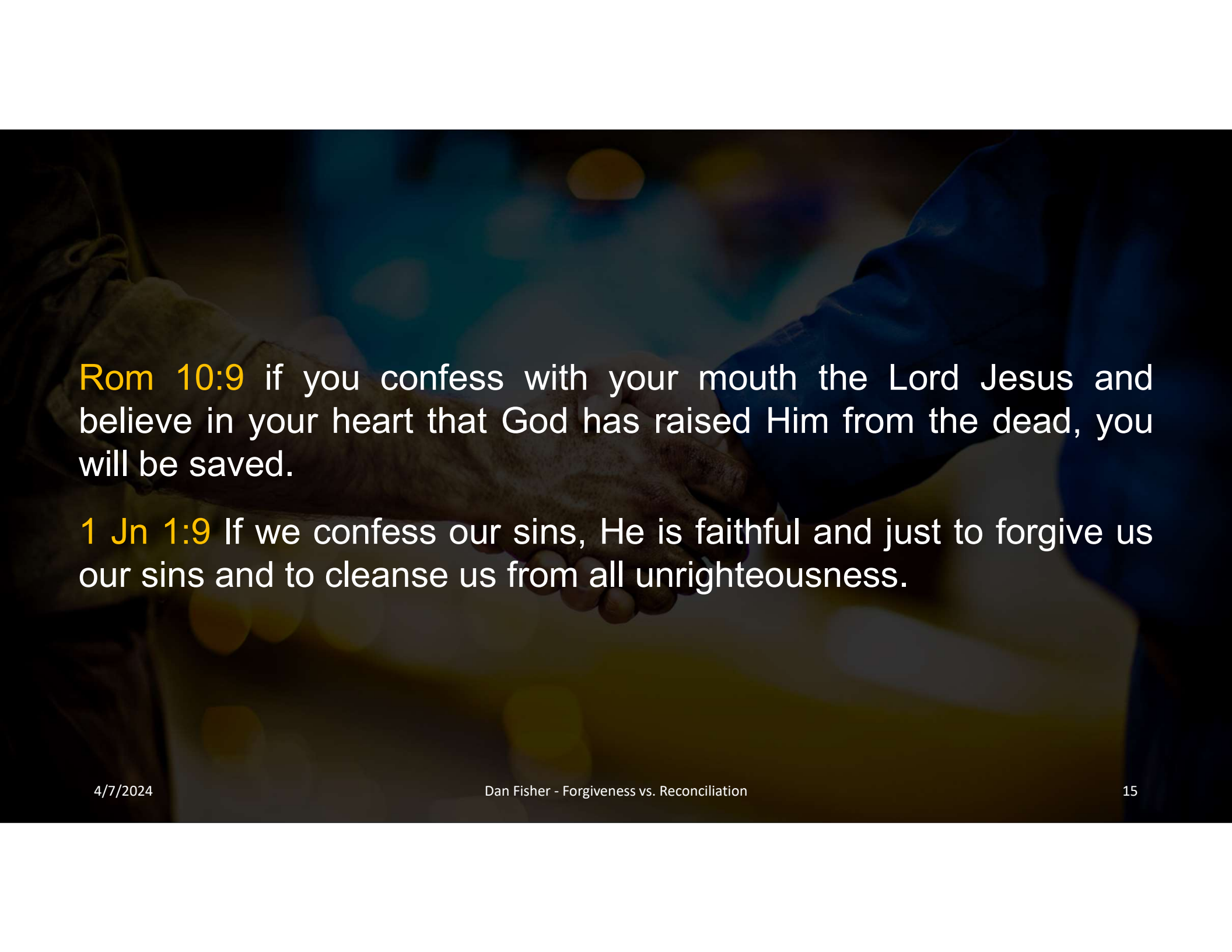
A close-up photograph of two hands shaking in a firm grip, symbolizing agreement or reconciliation. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a group of people in a dimly lit setting.

- **He requires confession (agreement)**

**Lev 5:5** ‘when he is guilty in any of these matters, that he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing;

**Ps 32:5** I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

**Ps 51:4** Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight – that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.



**Rom 10:9** if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

**1 Jn 1:9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

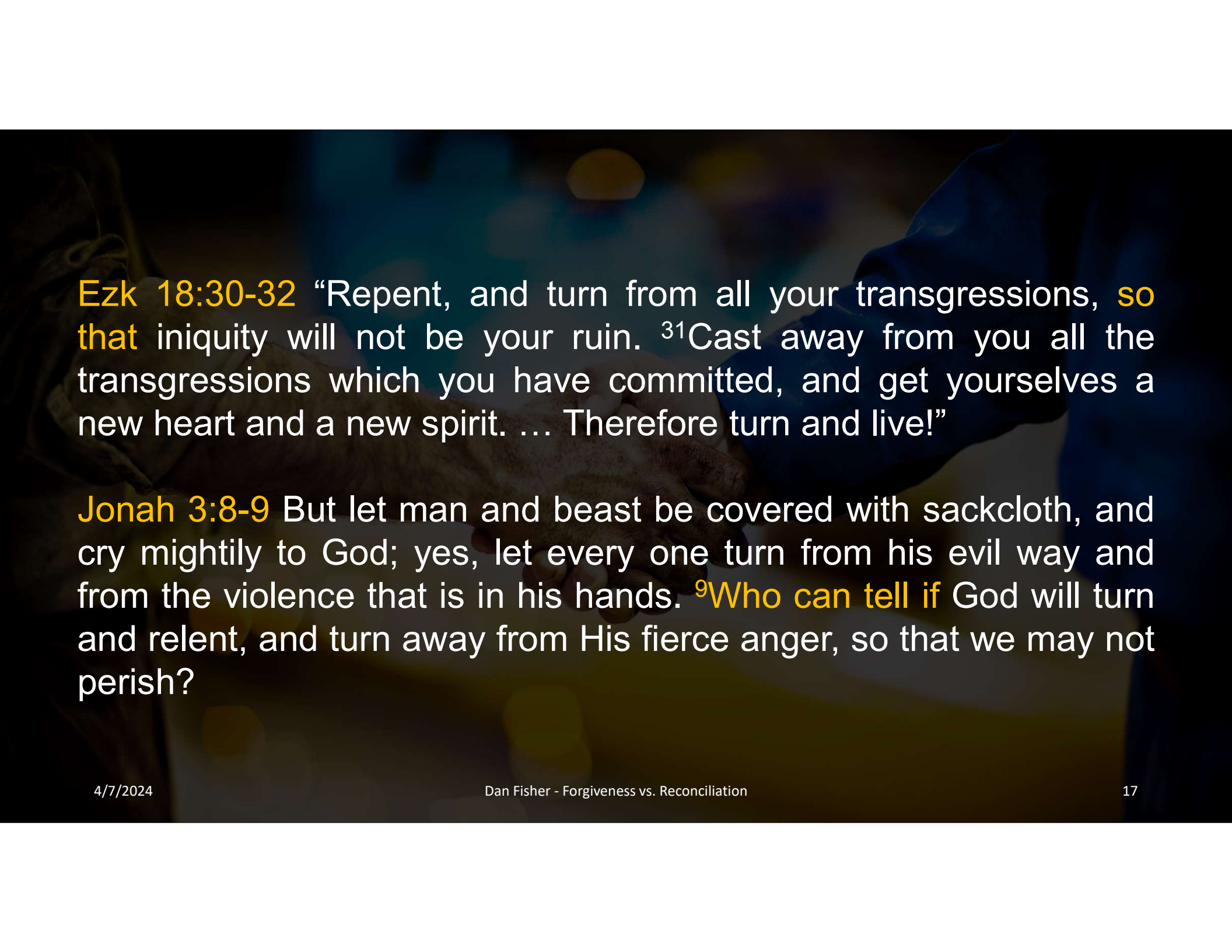


- **He requires repentance**

**2 Chron 7:14** if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, **then** I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

**Jer 26:13** Now therefore, amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; **then** the Lord will relent concerning the doom that He has pronounced against you.





**Ezk 18:30-32** “Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, **so that** iniquity will not be your ruin. <sup>31</sup>Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. ... Therefore turn and live!”

**Jonah 3:8-9** But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. <sup>9</sup>**Who can tell if** God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?



**John the Baptist** preached  
repentance: Mt 3:2; Mk 1:4

In those days John the Baptist came  
preaching in the wilderness of  
Judea, <sup>2</sup> and saying, **“Repent, for the  
kingdom of heaven is at hand!”** Mt 3:1-2



**Jesus** preached repentance:  
Mt 4:17; Rev 2:5,16

**“unless you repent you will all  
likewise perish”** Lk 13:3

The **early church** preached  
repentance:

“Repent and be converted, that your  
sins may be blotted out” Acts 2:38; 3:19





- Repentance must be authenticated

**Mt 3:7-8** Jesus to the Pharisees and Sadducees: “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup>Therefore bear fruits **worthy** of repentance,

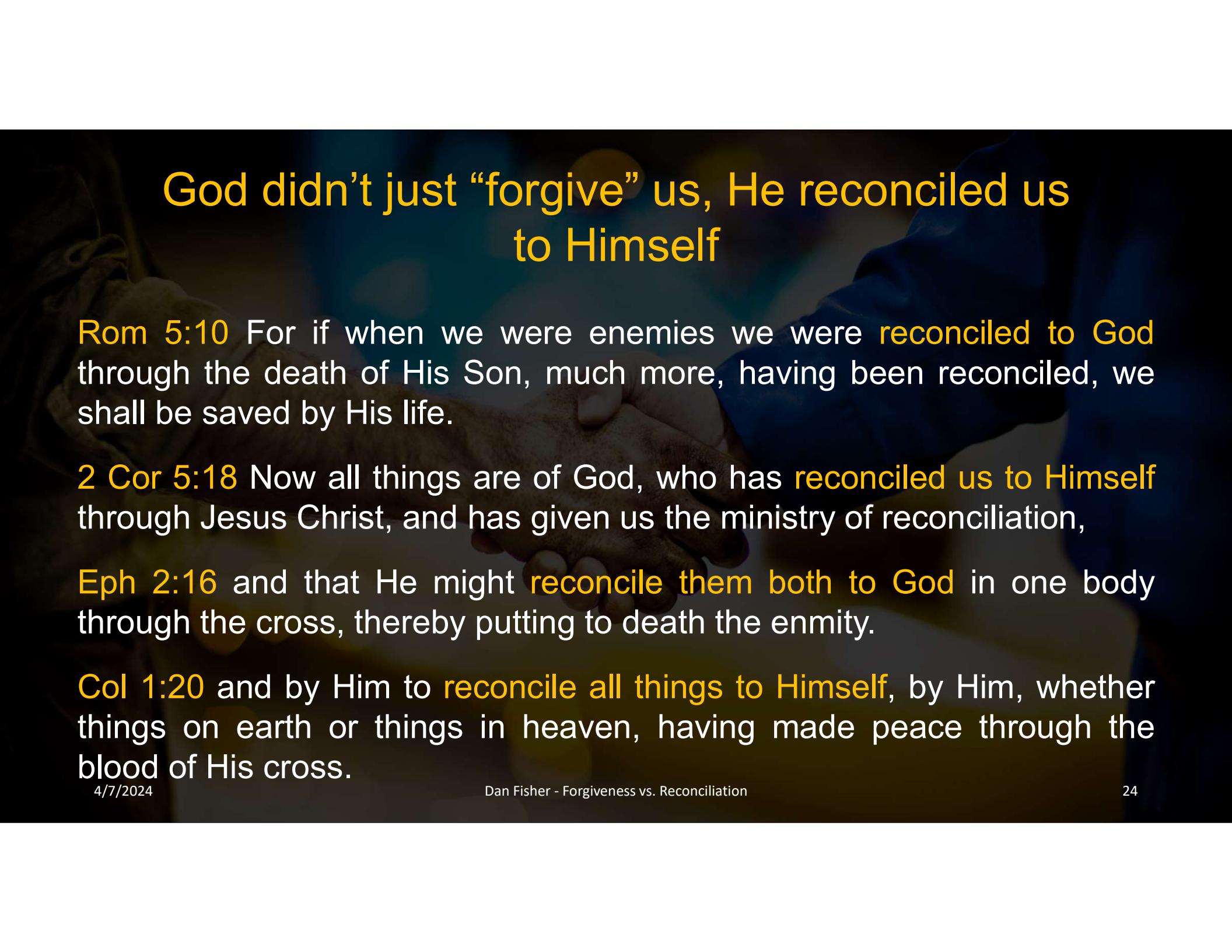
**Acts 26:20** that they should repent, turn to God, and do works **befitting** repentance.



## 6. Forgiveness & reconciliation are not the same



**Reconciliation:** the restoration of friendly relations;  
to restore harmony



## God didn't just "forgive" us, He reconciled us to Himself

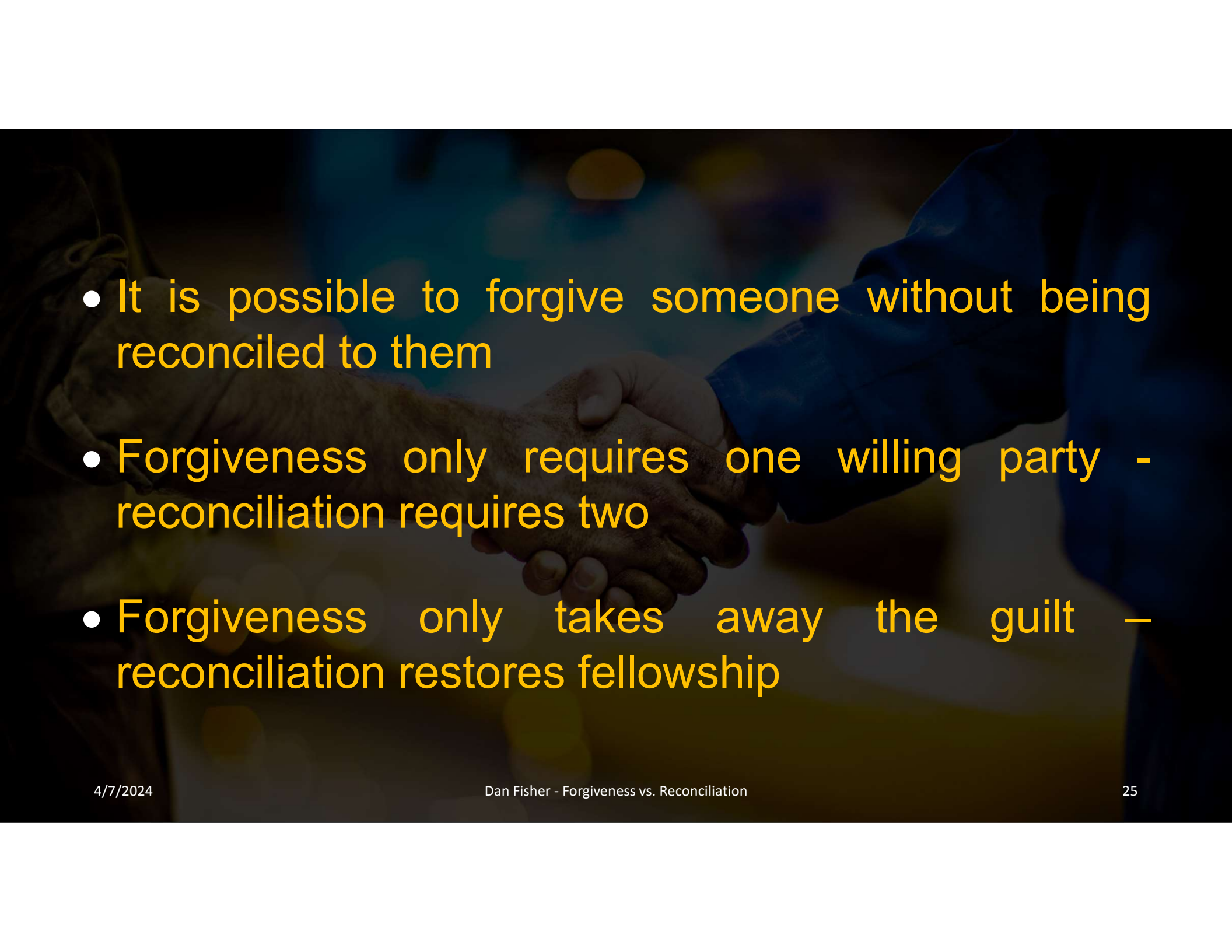
**Rom 5:10** For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

**2 Cor 5:18** Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

**Eph 2:16** and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.


**Col 1:20** and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.



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- It is possible to forgive someone without being reconciled to them
  - Forgiveness only requires one willing party - reconciliation requires two
  - Forgiveness only takes away the guilt — reconciliation restores fellowship

A close-up photograph of two hands shaking in a firm grip. The hand on the left is wearing a brown leather jacket, and the hand on the right is wearing a blue jacket. The background is blurred with warm, bokeh lights. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

# 7. Unlike forgiveness, there are specific steps to reconciliation



**Mt 18:15-17** “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup>But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ <sup>17</sup>And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

- **Go to the offended party privately for reconciliation**
- **Take witnesses and return to the offended party**
- **Take the matter to the church leadership/congregation**



**8. If one party refuses reconciliation,  
the other party is free from guilt**



**Mt 10:14** And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.

**Mt 18:17** But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.