

GM OHC // newbies // online peeps // my name is ____ ...

Continuing in Colossians series ... great stuff ... today in ...

Colossians 1:19-23

19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 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, 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 under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

This passage talks about reconciliation.

We love that idea. (we love a fairytale ending.)

People being brought together // happily ever after.

Miss America finally gets her wish for world peace.

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I think we would all agree it would be great to live in harmony with others.

Deep down that is what we all want.

But if history has taught us anything, mankind is unable to achieve that.

Not that we haven't tried.

The two big ways has been

- domination
- OR, doctraction.

There have been great leaders who have tried to unify the world through domination (think Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan).

Pathway to peace through bloodshed and oppressive control. [enemies surrender or die.]

We've also tried through doctrine. (think Enlightenment).

The enlightenment promised that our pursuit of science and philosophy would bring about peace.

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It sought the pathway to peace through education and rejection of religious thought and control.

We just needed to believe in ourselves, cultivate the good that exists in us.

Mankind had the ability to unlock a utopian future.

What did we get after a few centuries of that dominating doctrine?

2 world wars ... a cold war, mass genocides ... as men tried to bring about their vision of a utopian future.

[again it ended in enemies opponents surrender or die]

Even today, the USA is more divided than ever.

The tone and temper of politics is growing hotter.

Why is that? What is the problem?

Is it not possible to bring about reconciliation/peace without bloodshed?

This passage points to answer:

Throughout history mankind sought peace through the death or domination of its enemies. → Peace through fear.

Never works.

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Jesus, however, has achieved a greater peace & reconciliation.

Not through his enemies dying, but dying for his enemies.

1 Colossians 1:19-20

19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him **to reconcile to himself all things**, whether on earth or in heaven, **making peace by the blood of his cross**.

Jesus' died to make a way for us to be with him.

Now that is the Sunday school answer that every Christian will say "Amen" to.

But maybe you're here and you don't believe this.
You need more convincing.

You might be thinking ... "Why is the shedding of blood all that necessary?"

That is a fair question.

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On the surface Jesus' sacrifice seems over-the-top.

But is it really?

Let's consider the cost of relational separation.

Separation is a bloody business ... maybe not literally, but figuratively.

Even the modern poets of our day ... the pop songwriters ... they know the costliness of this.

Here are selections of lyrics from John Mayer's "Heartbreak Warfare" circa 2009

Lightning strike

Inside, my chest to keep me up at night

Dream of ways

To make you understand my pain

Drop his name

Push it in and twist the knife again

Watch my face

As I pretend to feel no pain, pain, pain

Clouds of sulfur in the air

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Bombs are falling everywhere

It's heartbreak warfare

Once you want it to begin,

No one really ever wins

The point is that we all agree with the pain of disharmony in relationships.

Relational separation is bloody business.

We feel real emotional / mental anguish.

Not to mention the deep soul wounds that only God can heal.

So if relational separation is a bloody mess.

Doesn't it stand that reconciliation should be as well?

When you consider the problem ... the solution doesn't sound so over-the-top.

God agrees, and is saying so here.

**The problem isn't that God is overplaying the problem ...
the problem is that we downplay it.**

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We cannot understand the severity of separation until we consider the costliness of reconciliation.

Without the cross we can't understand the severity of our sin that causes the separation.

Without the cross we will minimize our sin and guilt that caused separation from God.

"I'm not really that bad."

We compare ourselves to others ... "At least I'm not that person ... I don't do what they do."

That reminds me of a moment in the life of Jesus:

Luke 7:36-48

36 One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. 37 And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, 38 and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who

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is touching him, for she is a sinner.” 40 And Jesus answering said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” And he answered, “Say it, Teacher.”

41 “A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?” 43 Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt.” And he said to him, “You have judged rightly.” 44 Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.” 48 And he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

What is happening here?

The Pharisee saw himself as a good person.

He did all the right things. He wasn't a “named sinner” like this woman.

That is to say ... his sins weren't public ... they couldn't be seen by others.

But make no mistake he still sinned.

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The Pharisees problem was that he saw himself as a fifty denarii sinner ... not much to payoff.

While the woman understood her sins as much more.

While he minimized the reality of his sin, the woman understood the full measure of hers.

One resulted in pride and placing himself in the seat of judgment. Very little love. Very little need/consideration for Jesus.

The other resulted in humility and letting Jesus remain in the seat of judgment. She had a great love and gratitude to Jesus for he alone could forgive her sins.

The point is this ...

No sin you and I commit is small ...

In one sense it is breaking God's rules / his boundaries / his order.

But over and above that, sin is violating our relationship with God.

Colossians 1:21-22

21 And you, who once [before Jesus saved us] were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,

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We are all sinners that need to be reconciled to God.

This is what the Pharisee missed.

We are not 'good people' that need a little bit of help.

Before Jesus reconciles us through the cross ... what are we?

- Alienated
- Hostile in mind
- Doing evil deeds.

See, we often get hung up on the evil deeds part.

Just got to stop doing those. → "Yes, and amen."

But ... even if you happen to be "pretty good person" ... there is still this mind hostility toward God.

Maybe that doesn't leak out in "evil deeds."

But just because its private doesn't make it less nefarious.

[man looks on the outward ... God sees the heart]

And our condition is this ...

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We are alienated ...

And that word deserves further investigation to do it justice.

That means more than being an outsider.

It's not like we are outside looking in the window of Jesus' house on all the cool stuff going on. → "Wish I could be in there."

This word means to "belong to another." [affections/loyalty]

Who would that other person be that we belong to? Maybe another nice guy?

Nope! Jesus' enemy.

We belonged to that camp.

Ephesians 2:1-3

1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 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— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

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Whether or not you are a Christian ...

This is important, central stuff ...

You never move away from this truth ...

Without Jesus this is all you and I can be.

We belong to the prince of the power of the air ... (the Devil).

We will never be truly free people. We will either be slaves to sin or slaves to righteousness.

There is spiritual power at work exerting itself on us all the time.

There is no spiritual Sweden / no neutral ground.

You are either reconciled to Jesus ... or you are hostile to him and on Satan's team.

If that sounds bad ... well it is ...

But this bad news makes the good news so good.

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See this is who we are before Jesus ... but then He saves us and gives us a total makeover!

The before and after is crazy!!!

Like way better than the Weight Watchers before/after transformation pics.

When Jesus reconciles us he totally changes us.

Colossians 1:22

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,

Before: hostile/enemy/practice evil

After: holy/blameless/above reproach→(accusation & guilt)

That is a huge change! (Total transformation)

You would think this would take a long time ...

Like body transformation ... strict diet / gym rat.

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But it happens instantly ... when you surrender to Jesus and believe in Him as Lord and Savior ... this is what happens to you.

Last week we baptized Cadence ... that is what baptism points to...

We go from spiritual death to life...

Who we were is buried ... we are raised as a new creation.

The Bible draws the distinction of the “old self” and the “new self”.

BUT, we receive this transformation passively.

It is something God does TO US.

Theology nerds call it “definitive sanctification”.

We are definitively holy/blameless/above reproach b/c Jesus reconciled us to Himself through his blood. [united to him / his righteousness]

This is what God's mercy and grace are all about.

We don't get what we deserve (mercy) ...

We get what we don't deserve (grace) ...

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It is received / not earned ... Jesus earned it for us.

We are called simply to believe.

We have to get rooted in that truth.

There is nothing you and I can do to be more reconciled.

Now that is true ... which almost makes the very next verse a confusing contradiction.

Colossians 1:23

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 under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Now we look at that and say ... “Wait a second ... there IS a whole lot I have to do.”

“This IS a contradiction...”

“So which is it? Do I get salvation freely or do I have to earn it?”

I would kindly suggest you are reading this the wrong way.

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This “IF” doesn’t mean you have to earn your transformation ... [status of holy/blameless/above reproach]

This “IF” proves your transformation ...

This isn’t suggesting earning a righteousness through works.

It’s “continuing in the faith” ... how ???

- You are stable ...
- You are steadfast ...
- Not shifting from the hope of the gospel

So basically, we don’t take the gospel ... which is “We are reconciled to Jesus through his bloody cross.”

And then ADD something to it.

The Colossian letter was written at a time when guys were coming in and saying ... “Jesus great ...”

But you know there is even more ...

A “higher plan” / an even holier holiness ...

And so false teachers were enticing believers to shift from truth that the Gospel is all you need.

Colossians 2:16-18

16 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a

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festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. [explain] **17**
These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. 18 Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism [suffering=righteous] **and worship of angels** [secret knowledge=holy], **going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind,**

See these little shifts ... seemingly insignificant.

Like rungs on a ladder to climb.

“You can stay where you are or you can climb even higher.”

There is an even greater hope to hope in.

- Keep this festival, practice this discipline,
- Deny your flesh
- Chase angels and visions

For what ... all for a new revelation.

But the reality is the Gospel, the revelation of Jesus, is the final word.

Nothing can add to that!!!

So that is what we hold on to and continue in and DON'T SHIFT FROM!!!!

The Gospel of Jesus is not only the power that is efficient to save us.

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It is sufficient to save us.

BUT ... // we DO have to HOLD ON ...

We have to fight ...

AND we don't fight alone.

We have the gift of the Holy Spirit.

It's part of the grace package God has given us.

With him we practice "Active Sanctification."

Remember we talked about Passive Sanctification. [what God does TO US]

Where we are totally transformed by faith in Jesus.

The other side of that sanctification coin is active sanctification.

Where we cooperate with the leading of the Holy Spirit.

We put in some effort.

But wait, you might say. Isn't that anti-grace???

No, grace isn't against effort in our salvation, it's against earning our salvation.

That is a black and white line you need to draw in your faith.

There is no gray area.

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Effort “Yes”. Earning “No.”

And God gives us the power to do this.

The Holy Spirit is our strength.

He is God’s empowering presence.

[doesn’t matter your myers-brigg type or enneagram #]

God gives us all we need.

[Dad: Few years back really sick, almost died a couple of times. I asked him how it was facing that final moment.

He said, “Peace ... amazing peace. God gives you what you need.”]

We don’t tell the Holy Spirit ... “I’ve got this, you can go take a nap.”

No way!!! The Holy Spirit is all-powerful ... and he is for our success in persevering in our faith.

We say thank you!! Help me!!! Empower me to live out this faithfulness.

[wise person ... everyday ... → ? Manna ?]

All we can do is be faithful.

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We can't force fruitfulness.

We can't force results.

That is in God's hands.

All we can do is be faithful ... in the power of the Holy Spirit.

NOT A CHRISTIAN:

- Salvation isn't you earning it. [doing all the right things]
- And, salvation isn't beyond you b/c you've sinned.
- God is holding out the free gift of reconciliation.
- Stop minimizing your sin.
- Stop resisting the reality that you are hostile / belonging to a side that hates Jesus.
- Put your faith in him today.
- While you were his enemy, Jesus died for you.
- Come and be reconciled and totally transformed.

CHRISTIANS:

- Be who you are.
- A sinner saved by grace through faith in the sufficient work of Jesus on the cross.
- Jesus is everything ... not a little tack on to life.
- We start with him / remain in him.
- What is the effort (not earning) you are putting into abiding in Jesus?
- Before you come to communion, consider the next step Jesus is calling you to make as his disciple.
-
- Then let's come celebrating that Jesus paid it all to reconcile us to himself.

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- On the night Jesus was betrayed ...
- He broke bread with his disciples.
- “This is my body broken for you.” Take and eat.
- “This cup is the blood of my new covenant. The forgiveness of your sins.” Take and drink.
- We come to the table, b/c our Savior has reconciled us to himself.
- We are invited as saved, washed, holy, blameless, above accusation.
- Let's come and take with faith and thanksgiving.

PRAY