

Sunday, February 4, 2018—Grace Life School of Theology—*Ambassadorship 101*—Lesson 5  
Understanding the Ministry of Reconciliation

### **Introduction**

- This is our 5<sup>th</sup> lesson in our current series of studies Ambassadorship and Evangelism. In summation the first four studies sought to establish the following points:
  - We learned that all members of the body of Christ are ambassadors.
    - We have a heavenly conversation and an earthly ambassadorship.
  - We are ambassadors in hostile territory.
    - The adversary opposes our witness as ambassadors in terms of Evangelism (“all men be saved”) and Edification/Establishment (“and come to the knowledge of the truth”).
  - We learned that the adversary has three lines of attack that he uses to try and neutralize our witness as ambassadors.
    - Attack the Message
    - Attack the Messenger
    - Discourage or Discredit the Messenger
- II Corinthians 5:18-20—if we are going to be effective ambassadors we need to understand the ministry of reconciliation. This is going to be the focus of this study.

### **The Problem**

- In 2013 I first encountered someone saying that all the world was FORGIVEN of their sins 2,000 years ago when Christ died on the cross. Folks asserting this are arguing based upon II Corinthians 5:17-21 that people die and go to hell with their sins FORGIVEN because God has already reconciled the world unto himself. This position maintains believe in the FORGIVEN & RECONCILED LOST.
- In 2013 I called this view of II Corinthians 5:17-21 New Reconciliationism (NR) because it manifests a “new” understanding of the subject than has historically been articulated by members of the Grace Movement. Historically, O’Hair, Stam, Baker, and other founding members of the Grace Movement did not hold this view of reconciliation that is currently being embraced in some quarters.
- Since 2013 the number of people enunciating this view on Facebook and social media has only increased. Please also see the PowerPoint containing the memes.

## Defining Words

- II Corinthians 5:18-20—in these three verses, Greek words related to reconciliation occur 5 times.
  - Verse 18—*reconciled* (Strong’s 2644) “1) to change, exchange, as coins, for others of equivalent value: a) to reconcile (those who are at variance); b) return to favor with, be reconciled to one; c) to receive one into favor.”
  - Verse 18—*reconciliation* (Strong’s 2643) “1) exchange: a) of the business of money changers, exchanging equivalent values; 2) adjustment of a difference, reconciliation, restoration to favour: a) in the NT of the restoration of the favor of God to sinners that repent and put their trust in the expiatory death of Christ.”
  - Verse 19—*reconciling* (2644)
  - Verse 19—*reconciliation* (2643)
  - Verse 20—*reconciled* (2644)
- *Reconciled*—“brought into friendship from a state of disagreement or enmity; made consistent; adjusted.” (Webster’s 1828) This word is past tense and speaks of those who have already been brought into friendship from a previous state of enmity.
- *Reconciliation*—“1) the act of reconciling parties at variance; renewal of friendship after disagreement or enmity. 2) In Scripture, the means by which sinners are reconciled and brought into a state of favor with God, after natural estrangement or enmity; the atonement; expiation.” (Webster’s 1828) This word speaks of the act of taking two parties that are at variance and settling the enmity between them.
- *Reconciling*—“bringing into favor and friendship after variance; bringing to content or satisfaction; showing to be consistent; adjusting; making to agree.” (Webster’s 1828) Once again this word speaks about the active process of settling the differences between two parties.
- Those that are working on settling their differences are said to be in the process of “reconciling.” “Reconciliation” does not occur until both parties have settled their differences and put away their former enmity. At which point one can say they have “reconciled.”
- What the meaning of these words teach is that reconciliation is both a process and two sided. One party might be willing to be “reconciled” and take steps and actions towards that end. However, it is not until the second party desires to be “reconciled” and agrees to settle their differences that one can say “reconciliation” has occurred. Therefore, God can take the necessary steps (sending Christ to die on the cross for sin) that MAY result in one’s eventual reconciliation to him, but it is not until one agrees with him about their problem (sin) and accepts God’s provision for it (the

blood of Christ) that one is ACTUALLY reconciled to God. Just because God is no longer at enmity with mankind based upon the cross work of Christ does not mean that humanity is not at enmity with him. If enmity exists within one or both of the parties COMPLETE “reconciliation” has not occurred.

### **Who Is Reconciled and Who Is Not?**

- Verse 17—the only person who is a new creature is the one who is “in Christ.”
- Verse 18— in this context, who is the “us” that have been reconciled to God? Paul and the believers in Corinth i.e., those who are “in Christ” in verse 17. Because Paul and the Corinthians have already been reconciled to God and had been given the ministry of reconciliation.
- Verse 19—the major contention of New Reconciliationism centers around the sense in which God reconciled the world unto himself (more on this below). If this means, as New Reconciliationists maintain, that every person has already been reconciled to God individually, then why bother committing unto Paul and the Corinthians the ministry (verse 18) and word of reconciliation (verse 19)?
- Verse 20—once again, if every person has already been reconciled to God 2,000 years ago when Christ died upon the cross, then why bother beseeching people in Christ’s stead to be reconciled to God? If the reconciliation spoken of in II Cor. 5:19 were individual and not dispensational, and each person’s individual sins were already FORGIVEN, why bother committing to the Corinthians (and us) “the word of reconciliation”? If all were already forgiven and reconciled by the work of Christ, what do we make of Paul’s exhortation to be “ambassadors for Christ” (v. 20) and to be “beseeching” the world to “BE RECONCILED TO GOD”? It is senseless to beg them to be reconciled to Him if in fact they already are in right relationship.

### **Forgiveness and Justification**

- As far as I can tell, the advocates of this new doctrine believe that the entire world was RECONCILED to God and FORGIVEN of all their sins 2,000 years ago when Christ died upon the cross. However, if you don’t realize that or believe that, you are not JUSTIFIED, and go to hell with your sins forgiven.
- On January 11, 2018 I posted the following on Facebook:
  - “I have been watching the debate among Pauline Right Dividers regarding whether or not everyone is automatically forgiven since 2013. Those who argue that all sin was FORGIVEN 2,000 ago will say there is a difference between FORGIVENESS and JUSTIFICATION. Those articulating this position assert that ALL sin was FORGIVEN at the cross, but one must trust Paul’s gospel in order to be JUSTIFIED. This a misuse of the word JUSTIFICATION.

Noah Webster's "American Dictionary of the English Language" (1828) defines the word JUSTIFICATION as follows:

"4. In theology, REMISSION OF SIN and absolution from GUILT and punishment; or an act of free grace by which God pardons the sinner and accepts him as righteous, on account of the atonement of Christ."

<http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/justification>

The very same dictionary defines the English word REMISSION as follows:

"5. FORGIVENESS; pardon; that is, the giving up of the punishment due to a crime; as the remission of sins."

<http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/remission>

It is therefore a contradiction to assert that one is FORGIVEN but not JUSTIFIED. According to the meaning of English words, one cannot be FORGIVEN without being JUSTIFIED because to be JUSTIFIED means to be FORGIVEN. This of course means that for the sake of consistency that if one is going to assert that all are FORGIVEN they must also assert that all are JUSTIFIED. If all are automatically JUSTIFIED that is UNIVERSAL JUSTIFICATION.

The razor's edge is a dangerous place to be.

Even the Middle English Dictionary acknowledges that the word justification means:

"God's act of imparting forgiveness and grace to man and absolving him of his sins"

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id...>

All sin has been PAID FOR but one must trust Paul's gospel in order to receive JUSTIFICATION i.e., the FORGIVENESS of sins as a FREE GIFT."

- It is a massive confusion and/or misuse of terms to say that one can FORGIVEN but not JUSTIFIED. One cannot be FORGIVEN without being JUSTIFIED and vice versa.