

# Reconciled by Jesus

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

2 Corinthians 5:18-21

We've considered three images of salvation describing Jesus' efficacious atonement on the cross: substitutionary sacrifice at the altar to pay, redemption from slavery, and justification in the court of law. Today we consider perhaps the most personal aspect of our salvation: reconciliation within a close relationship.

## **Alienation from God and Others**

The doctrine of reconciliation captures the idea of atonement (at-one-ment). Sin has broken the relationship between God and man which has to be put right for harmony to be restored. Adam and Eve had to hide after sinning against God, and the Bible repeatedly teaches that we are enemies to God and vice versa, that there is hostility and alienation between us (Rom. 5:10, 8:7; Jn. 3:17-19; Jms. 4:4). In this sense, everyone has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ! The friction between us and God results in aimlessness and despair (Eph. 2:12, 15-16). It also produces conflicts and quarrels between us (1 Jn. 1:6; Titus 3:3; Jms. 4:1).

## **An Active Father**

As in every aspect of the atonement, God initiates reconciliation. Like a good dad who hates to see his son broken and dying and hurting himself and others, God intervenes to bring us back. Reconciliation follows closely on justification: having been pronounced righteous, justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, we have *peace* with God and great joy because of it (Rom. 5:1, 9-11). The work of reconciliation is finished on the cross, and yet we have to embrace it and be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:18, 20).

## **Entrusted with Reconciliation**

The reconciled have access by one Spirit to the Father and are being built together as a dwelling place for God (Eph. 2:17-22; Heb. 9:22). So we can come to God in prayer for others, and we can go to others not just representing him as ambassadors, but with his power, in-dwelt by the Spirit. God didn't just welcome us back into a relationship with him, he has provided the way, filled us with his love and person, and promised to transform us (2 Pet. 1:4; Col. 1:21-22). We are entrusted to take the message of reconciliation to a world full of prodigal children.