

Title: A Recipe for Reconciliation

Text: Romans 5:10-11

Date: April 21, 2013

Place: Decatur Church of God

Saturday mornings as we get up and begin to get ready in our morning to turn on the TV and listen to the cooking shows. It is amazing how many ways a person can use garlic.

I have seen presentations of food that would make your mouth salivate (if you were affected by things like that). And they give you recipes so that you can prepare similar dishes in your own kitchen.

There are simple foods that even I could fix but some of the complex meals require the use of a recipe.

I wonder...could the same be true in life? I mean in our journey with Christ?

Romans 5:10-11

For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! [11] Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

I. Have you ever considered yourself an enemy of God?

* Enemy is a term for an individual or a group that is seen as forcefully threatening.

- A. No doubt, many of us have, at one time or another viewed God as threatening?
 - a. We are told that he wants us as his “doulos”, bond-slaves.
 - b. He expects absolute devotion.
 - c. All that we have is subject to Him.
 - d. That certainly gives us a reason for considering Him an adversary.

* If a foreign country sought that relationship with us, we would go to war.

B. We have responded to God with great emotion.

* The term "enemy" designates a particular threat that invokes an intense emotional response.

- a. We either fight to retain our perceived freedom.
- b. Or we recognize that through Christ we are released from the bondage of selfishness, self-centeredness, and sin.

II. What do we mean by reconciliation?

A. Reconciliation is an element of salvation that refers to the results of atonement.

2 Cor. 5:19

...God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

B. Reconciliation is the end of the separation, caused by original sin, between God and humanity.

2 Cor. 5:18

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

* John Calvin describes reconciliation as the peace between humanity and God that results from the expiation (the act of making atonement) of religious sin and the propitiation (appeasing or satisfying God's wrath) of God's wrath.

* Evangelical theologian Philip Ryken describes reconciliation this way; "It is part of the message of Salvation that brings us back

together with God. ... God is the *author*, Christ is the *agent* and we are the *ambassadors* of reconciliation.

2 Cor. 5:20

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

B. It was always God's plan to provide a way back to Him.

Ephes. 2:15b-16

...His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, [16] and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

Col. 1:19-22

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

[21] Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. [22] But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation--

C. Reconciliation is an essential term, describing the "substance" (the real and practical value or importance) of the gospel and salvation.

* Stanley Porter writing in the *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, suggests a conceptual link between the reconciliation Greek word *katallage* and the Hebrew word *shalom*, generally translated as 'peace.'

When I become one with God and discover the true meaning of peace!

III. Jesus' death on the cross brought reconciliation.

A. Jesus offers a path to peace.

a. An option to our fatalistic journey to destruction.

* Pilgrim's Progress, by John Bunyan, is a book about a man who understands his hopeless life and seeks to find meaning through a journey to the cross.

B. Without the cross I am fully accountable for my decisions and guilty before God and humankind.

a. There is nothing that I can do to fix it.

* Thanks to Lowes, Home Depot, and of course, Rural King, we believe that we can fix anything that breaks. Give me the right tools, proper instructions, and sufficient materials, we can make it right.

That's why we have buildings that lean, roofs that leak, faucets that drip, and paint jobs with sloppy corners and drips on the floor.

I know, it's all a matter of expertise.

Sorry, that is not true of life. Because SIN was introduced into our lives, we are unable to make it right. You see, sin is an absence of God and the only way to make it right is to have God enter our lives and Jesus did that on the cross.

IV. Jesus, living in us makes it better.

In December 1943, German fighter pilot Franz Stigler was in pursuit of American bomber pilot Charlie Brown's plane, looking to shoot it down. If he did, it would earn him the Knight's Cross, the highest honor for a German soldier. But as he approached the plane, Stigler saw that it had no tail guns blinking, no tail-gun compartment remaining, no left stabilizer, and the nose of the aircraft was missing.

Surprisingly, he could also see into the plane, the skin of it having been blown off. Inside, he observed terrified young men

tending to their wounded. Stigler could not shoot the plane down. He had been trained that "honor is everything." If he survived the war, his superior officer told him, the only way he would be able to live with himself was if he had fought with as much humanity as possible. Stigler could tell that Brown didn't realize how bad a shape his plane was in. He gestured for Brown to land the plane, intending to escort him. But Brown had no intention of landing in Germany and being taken prisoner along with his men. Stigler then yelled "Sweden," meaning that Brown should land his plane there. But Brown didn't know what Stigler was yelling. Stigler saluted Brown and veered away. His last words to him were, "Good luck, you're in God's hands now."

Brown was able to land the plane in England. He continued his Air Force career for two decades, but remained obsessed with the incident. In 1990, he took out an ad in a newsletter for fighter pilots, looking for the one "who saved my life on Dec. 20, 1943." Stigler, living in Vancouver, saw the ad and yelled to his wife: "This is him! This is the one I didn't shoot down!" He immediately wrote a letter to Brown, and the two then connected in an emotional phone call.

Stigler and Brown both died in 2008, six months apart. The article in the *New York Post* also noted that both men were Christians and that the obituaries for Stigler and Brown both listed the other friend as "a special brother."

That's what Jesus does for us.

- A. He finds us in our destroyed life and provides a way of making it home.
- B. God has no intent of destroying us, although initially it might require sacrifice, he ultimately seeks to bless us beyond our most extravagant dreams.
- C. When we discover that we can be reconciled to God, we encounter a friend that will be ours throughout eternity.

V. Now, we rejoice in God!

* How do you choose to rejoice?

1. I want to be with God's people.
2. To honor God I want to...
 - a. See people come to Christ
 - b. See people become disciples
 - c. See people truly experience worship
 - d. See people invest in the lives of others
 - e. See people share their love
 - f. See people demonstrate compassion and faithfulness through Christian stewardship
3. I rejoice by developing a deeper relationship with God each and every day.

Conclusion: What will you do this week to celebrate your restored relationship with God?

If he were a girl or boy friend, we could give Him a big hug and a bunch of kisses. Maybe we would buy our loved one some gifts or do something special for them. Could this work for God?

Matthew 25:40

"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

* In the classic "The Wizard of Oz", near the end Oz gives the Scarecrow a degree, the Tin Man a heart, and the lion a testimonial. He even sought to provide Dorothy a way home to Kansas. They seemed to be overwhelmed by the simple gifts that were life-changing in nature.

God's gift is so much more. Do you really understand?

How about it? Will you rejoice in God? Will you join me this week in finding a way to say, "Thank you Jesus for restoring me to the Father?"