

# Reconciliation

by H.J. Vine

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*Reconciliation is a crowning truth in the New Testament, where God brings us into His favour through the death of His Son, and we are reconciled to Him in one body by the cross.*

**Scripture:** Romans 3:25, Romans 5:10, Romans 11:13, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:16, Revelation 21:16

**Topics:** "Reconciliation With God", "Salvation Through Faith"

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## Description

H.J. Vine preaches on the profound concept of reconciliation as highlighted in Romans 5:10-11; 11:13-15; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. He emphasizes that sin in the flesh and the spirit demons cannot be reconciled to God, but through Christ's death, poor sinners like us who were once enemies are reconciled to God. The joy of reconciliation is experienced through faith in God's grace, leading to a deep satisfaction and a new creation in Christ. Believers are encouraged to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God and to understand the richness of reconciliation in one body before Him.

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## Transcript

Romans 5:10-11; 11:13-15; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Four times, beloved, we have "reconciliation," as such, spoken of in the New Testament, and the very fact that it crowns the first great division of the Epistle to the Romans, shows its importance. For when we reach this 11th verse--the mountain peak of the first part of this epistle--we see it shining with that crowning truth--We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation." And in chapter 11:15, we are told that the casting away of the Jews is the "world's reconciliation."

Not that the world is yet brought into reconciliation, but, in its bearing, it is not confined to once-favoured Israel, nor to the remnant called from among Israel, but it is towards the world! There we see the width of the thought of reconciliation from God's side at the present time! But when we come into the fifth chapter of second Corinthians, we read of the "ministry" of that reconciliation,--that which, at the present time, is maintained by God; and then the "word" of that reconciliation given to the apostles in view of our being brought into all the joy and the blessedness of this wonderful reconciliation.

It is important for us to recognize this, brethren. You may depend, the place given in Scripture to this truth shows that God would have it made good in power in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, so that the joys of reconciliation may be ours! The prodigal would rejoice when he came home from the far country and was

brought inside for his father's joy and delight, clothed in his presence in the best robe, with the ring on his hand, and the shoes on his feet. I know it is joy on the divine side which that fifteenth chapter of Luke shows--the chapter of divine merry-making--giving the joy of the Father, the Son, and, the Holy Ghost, but then there is also our side in the presence of the Father: therefore, the believer is suitably received where the Father's merry-making is known, where the feasting, the music, and the dancing tell of the rich fullness of the reconciliation and of the joy of God over the one who is brought nigh!

We prayed recently that we might taste a little of the fatness of God's house, that we should--as was called attention to yesterday afternoon--be as those who are of God's royal family, and not be lean! If there be great provision made for the regal families of earth, we may be sure that God's provision for the heavenly royalty is not limited! And how good it is, at times like these, when we are together, to be led into some of the abundance of God's house. Aye, "and they that dwell" there--because there is no reason why we should not dwell there, in spite of all the breakdown and failure in Christendom--it is said, "will be still praising Thee!"

God will be praised and He would have us in the good of that which He Himself has provided! It is not proposed for us to go and put Christendom right. Do we think we are going to put that right? Are we so proud that we think we can do what the apostles could not do when they were on earth? No, beloved brethren, but, thank God, inside the house at the present time there is abundance for us in Christ, so that we may be kept above the breakdown and the failure.

Now, let us see first of all what cannot be reconciled. Oh, how we have learned that lesson--haven't we? Yes, we have learned experimentally that "sin in the flesh" cannot be reconciled to God. It cannot come into the rich provision that is known inside in the power of the Spirit. Some, however, instead of settling that matter in communion with God in their souls, are trying to find joy in the things of the world. And then, after all, it is a poor, trifling affair, the little bit they do get.

Oh, God desires us to be in the deep satisfaction of reconciliation. What is needed today is inside ministry, that, by the Spirit, we may be so in the blessedness of what is ours before God, we are glad to leave alone these poor, worldly trifles. No, sin in the flesh cannot be reconciled. Moreover, the mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God. It is enmity against God! Let us take this home to ourselves. It is not subject, "neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). We might say this without any lack of reverence, God Himself could not make sin in the flesh or the mind of the flesh "subject to the law of God,"--He could not do it!

Did He not deal with man in the Old Testament during all those long centuries of probation, and prove fully for our edification that man in the flesh was incapable of being reconciled to God? Sin in the flesh is neither forgiven nor reconciled, it was "condemned" utterly in the sacrifice of Calvary. But not only can sin in the flesh not be reconciled, neither can the spirit demons--Satan himself, their chief, and all his hosts, are incapable of reconciliation. They fell, and there is not one word that I know of in the Bible to show that ever there was a proposal to reconcile them to God.

I know the Universalist says the "all things" of Colossians 1:16 and the "all things" of verse 20 both embrace the universe; but it says, all things "in" the heavens and "upon" the earth, whatever positions of dignity are named there--these will be reconciled! But the fallen spirits, whether great dignities and intelligences of mighty power, as Satan himself, or menial demons, are irreconcilable; therefore, their part will be eternally with all those who go in the way that ends where the devil and his angels go--outside the scene of joy, happiness and blessedness for ever--in the lake of fire.

Neither sin nor Satan is ever reconciled to God. But then you ask, Who are reconciled? Glory be to God, poor sinners like ourselves, who were once enemies, far from Him! Yes, those that had sinned against Him, those who were enemies, are reconciled to God "by the death of His Son." Brethren, we would not be here in the communion and holy joy of God's favour today if that were not true. But how could a holy God--how could One whose throne is established in justice and judgment--bring a guilty sinner, an enemy, into reconciliation for His own joy and for His own pleasure?--how could He do it?

He had resource for this in His beloved Son. He had Christ, and so we read, "Him who knew not sin, He has been made sin for us that we might become God's righteousness in Him." That is how God could bring it to pass. That, if you notice, remarkably enough, ends the fifth of second Corinthians. I often used to wonder why it came in there so abruptly, but it is just explanatory of how God could have us righteously in the blessedness of this reconciliation, He could only do it by making His Son sin upon the cross, who knew no sin, and through that, opened the way whereby, in perfect consistency with divine holiness, we could be there as the very "righteousness of God in the full joy of reconciliation."

I love that word, "reconciliation."--Don't you, beloved brethren? God did not need to be reconciled to us, but we needed to be reconciled to Him, and His grace has brought us to receive the reconciliation Christ's death secured. You may depend it means all the best you know even in the natural sphere, but then, learning it in God's way, it will make us, shall I say, happier saints as we understand it intelligently. It is a great day for our souls when, by the Spirit, we see that we are in God's presence suitable to God's own holy character, and naturally, when we take our place in His presence with spiritual intelligences He gets more thanks and praise then, brethren, He gets more worship!

The meetings take on a very blessed character as we are before Him intelligently in the joy of reconciliation! For, if you notice, when He speaks of this reconciliation--whilst saying they are sinners and enemies who are reconciled--He indicates that there is a lot more in it than simply individuals being reconciled. We read of being reconciled "in one body" in Ephesians 2. In the fifth chapter of Romans He speaks of our receiving "the reconciliation." What is that? Oh, you say, I am reconciled as a sinner who has believed.

Yes, thank God, so are all true believers! But what is this reconciliation?--what is this wonderful thing here spoken of? Well, it is something like salvation, and yet there is a difference. You see someone saved, and he says, "Thank God, I am saved." Well, he has good reason to! but then, he may be making more of his salvation--of the deliverance itself--than of his Saviour. The salvation which is ours today is in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is a grand thing to be set up in the salvation which is in Christ Jesus!

That salvation, mark you, brethren, is ours, in every part of it. We have that salvation as regards our souls in the first aspect; and, day by day, we are proving it livingly, it may now be in Edinburgh especially, in its second aspect; and presently we shall experience it in its third aspect--when our Saviour from heaven will change our bodies of humiliation and fashion them like unto His own body of glory! It is ours!--the salvation which is in Christ Jesus--covering the past, the present and the future.

And it is the same with the reconciliation. We have received it, but there are three great aspects. Take redemption,--you have again the same thing. Through redemption, it says in Romans 3, "We are justified freely." Mark, that is how God does it!--"through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus!" Well, this redemption in Christ Jesus also has three parts. We possess it, thank God, in regard to our souls; but then, we have not got it yet as regards our bodies. We are still in bodies that are connected with the first

creation.

We have the first-fruits of the Spirit now, but we are still in bodies linked with the first creation, and that is how it is we have very bright saints often groaning. I was sitting beside one awhile ago, a very happy saint, but groaning. There will be no groaning in heaven, brethren. It says "We groan within ourselves." Now! Even Paul did. And so do all who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, why? Because we are waiting for the second aspect of redemption--"the redemption of our bodies!"

And if the Lord came this afternoon, He would wake every sleeping saint, and the living ones would all be changed, and, in a moment, we should all be in glorified bodies! The third aspect is also yet to take place, as we were seeing in the reading on Ephesians, when "the redemption of the purchased possession" takes place. The full redemption which is in Christ Jesus is ours, and we, as believers, have been redeemed, but we wait, as we have seen, the redemption of our bodies and of the inheritance of the purchased possession, which He is going to take up in redemption power and fill the universe with redemption glory.

It is similar as to reconciliation. We were reconciled when we were enemies, through Christ's death which put all our sins away--through the death of God's beloved Son--through what He did upon the cross! We have that part of reconciliation--"we have been reconciled!" But then, brethren, not only are we before God as reconciled, but we have received in faith as a whole "the reconciliation!" It goes a step further than our being reconciled to God as individual sinners. We have that in Romans.

Now in Ephesians 2, as we said, we see that we are reconciled to God in one body by the cross. Many thank God for their individual blessing, but they are missing this side of it--"reconciled in one body to God." We were saved when we were redeemed by the blood of Christ, and we were also reconciled to God,--not only to go to heaven by-and-bye, but even "NOW" are we reconciled in one body to Himself. I believe, beloved brethren, one of the most precious things on earth at the present time for us, is that the reconciled of God should be together before him in the truth of being one body.

I shall not then be in a meeting saying, "Oh, I won't take part because so and so is here!" I shall not be looking at someone in the flesh,--James so-and-so, or Thomas so-and-so--no, brethren, leaving distinction in the flesh behind, we shall be there in the sense of our being one body, in a new creation in Christ, reconciled to God by the cross, where sin in the flesh was condemned. If I am in communion with God I shall be there in the joy of reconciliation. And, being reconciled in one body to God, walking together simply in the truth, presently we shall prove the third aspect of reconciliation, and then, on the ground of that same work on the cross, we shall see all things reconciled to God--all things in the heavens and upon the earth, whether they be "thrones or dominions or principalities or powers,"--whatever they are--all will be reconciled, for the fullness was pleased to dwell in Christ, in view of the reconciliation which we have already, and in view of the reconciliation of all things eventually, on the ground of peace having been made by the blood of His cross.

You may be sure, beloved brethren, this reconciliation is a glorious thing, and faith has received it. So Paul speaks to the Romans, "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus, by whom we have now"--before the fullness of it is seen in splendour and glory--"received the reconciliation!" What does all this result in? "JOY IN GOD!" We are to be a joyful people, going through the world in the joy of these great things--of this vast wealth which is ours! I thought it was very helpful last night the way the truth came out.

We need it in these days. We need inside ministry too, or faithful men will soon disappear. Faithful men are needed as regards the truth, and happy men enjoying the bounty of our true Solomon's table.

In Ephesians 1 we have the administration that flows outward from the fullness that is in Christ, but in Colossians 1 we have the reconciliation, which is inward, and so, as we have seen, we are told we are reconciled to God now. We don't shrink from it, do we? Who loves us like God?--the holy God, against whom we sinned. We had done the sinning, but He devised the plan to put all our sins away, and so we read, God delivered our Lord Jesus Christ for our offences and raised Him again for our justification (Rom. 3:25).

It was God who did that. "Therefore, being justified by faith"--faith in who? Faith in God!--faith in God who delivered Jesus and raised Him again! So "we have peace"--but with whom have we peace? "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And then, what do we rejoice in the hope of as we stand in His grace at this present moment? "We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God!" We are going to be there for His praise and for His eternal pleasure. Do we truly rejoice in hope of the glory of God?

An old saint was very ill. She was a quiet, peaceful old saint, perhaps lacking a little of the spring seen in some, but she was a godly soul, and a brother who was visiting her said, "Well, sister, you are very ill." "Yes," she replied, "but I am quite resigned to go whenever God calls me." "Oh," said the brother, "are you resigned to go to heaven? Suppose I went down to Annie there in the kitchen, and said, Annie you are going to leave the kitchen, you are going to say good-bye to the servant's place, and you are going to be adopted into the family.

You will be provided for accordingly, and you will take meals in the dining room, and you will sit in the sitting room, and use the drawing room--What would you think of Annie if she answered--"I am quite resigned?" But that is just the way some speak of going to glory! No, "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God," says the apostle, and even now we have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that is given to us. God commendeth that love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

We see its commendation at the cross. We see its manifestation in God sending His Son. In Romans 5 we begin with faith in God and peace with God follows. The grace of God, the glory of God, and the love of God, as reconciled to God, are all ours, and "we joy in God," for we have "received the reconciliation." Then, as we said, in chapter 11, we see the world-wide bearing of reconciliation today. It is called there, "the world's reconciliation." In contrast to Israel's past place of favour, at the present time, God has come out to the Gentiles and Israel is meanwhile set aside.

It is world-wards today! Then, in 2 Corinthians 5 we read of a new creation in Christ, it is not simply that man should be a non-creation, but "If any one be in Christ there is a new creation," the old is gone--"Old things are passed away," and we are now where "all things are become new, and all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." Surely we are wealthy indeed, and we should be full of joy in the Holy Ghost. Well, you say, Paul had plenty of sorrow!

Yes, he was "sorrowful yet always rejoicing!" They say the best nets are well loaded down at the bottom--that may speak of being sorrowful. But it would be a bad job if the nets were only loaded at the bottom! They are well corked at the top too!--"sorrowful, yet always rejoicing!" We are to rejoice with joy unspeakable, being full of the glory to come. The "ministry of reconciliation" spoken of in this chapter was given to servants like Paul, and, in a way, might be confined to the apostles; Paul magnified his ministry;

but, thank God, brethren, it is in our hearts, and we can tell each other about it.

We may not be Pauls or Peters, but we are brethren, and we can talk to our brethren in Christ about those glorious things that are ours through divine grace. John does not say, "I am an apostle," but he does say, I am "your brother," and he wrote that our "joy may be full." The great truth is that God Himself came down in grace!--there is the truth as regards reconciliation--He was in Christ, "reconciling the world to Himself." It all began from God's side! Look at that sinner in the seventh of Luke!

She came from the street to the Saviour's feet. But the Lord told Simon, "To whom little is forgiven the same loves little. She loves much." God gets response when His love in Christ is received. He was here reconciling the world to Himself, not reckoning their offences unto them. Did the father say anything to the prodigal about his sins? Well, the repentant prodigal came back full of his sins. But what did the father say about them? Not one word! He fell on his neck and kissed him.

That is His attitude. Here He was in grace to reconcile, and not to reckon to men their offences. He also put in the apostles "the word of that reconciliation" as well as the ministry of it, and they entreated on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God." No one loves as He does, brethren, and yet He never sacrificed one atom of His holiness, He never lowered the standard of His righteousness, but He has brought us into His favour where His love can flow out freely. God loves with a perfect love, God is love, and we are received to Himself, for His own good pleasure, for His own delight. Then the ground of it is, as we have said, and repeat again in closing, "Him who knew not sin, He has been made sin for us that we might become God's righteousness in Him."

Presently, grace will place us in the full blaze of the glory in the hope of which we have rejoiced. It says, in symbolic language, in Revelation 21, "The city lies four-square." It is all of gold--pure gold--transparent gold--a gold that we have never yet seen! This would be laughed at by a mere scholar, but those taught by the Spirit understand the symbols of divine righteousness and glory in the golden city. Its length and its breadth and its height are all equal! It is a man's measure, but it is the angel's. Yet it is the "measure of a man." That city of God shines with the glory of God, and its shining is like to a stone most precious, clear as crystal. Having "become God's righteousness" in Christ, the wonderful triumph of reconciling grace will then be fully manifested to a gladdened universe. On the inside, we are for the good pleasure of the heart of God, and on the outside for the display of His righteousness to the praise of His glory: on the one side are known the deep joys of "the reconciliation," and on the other is seen "God's righteousness" in manifestation.

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