

Revelation and Reconciliation

by H.J. Vine

The sermon emphasizes the importance of revelation and reconciliation, highlighting how God's love and forgiveness are revealed to us through Christ, and how we are reconciled to God through His death and resurrection.

Scripture: John 1:18, Romans 5:10, 2 Corinthians 5:17, 2 Corinthians 5:19, Ephesians 2:10, Colossians 1:15

Topics: "Gods Revelation", "Christian Reconciliation"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches about the profound impact of revelation and reconciliation in our relationship with God. Using the illustration of a youth reconciling with his father after a revelation, Vine emphasizes how God's revelation of Himself through Jesus Christ brings us to reconciliation with Him. The Bible, as the perfect written revelation, points to the ultimate revelation of God in Jesus Christ, who perfectly represents the invisible God to us. Through Christ's death and resurrection, we are reconciled to God, experiencing His love and favor, and are called to share this message of reconciliation with others.

Transcript

Behold in a far-off city a youth of unhappy countenance. A deep sense of disgrace weighs heavily upon his spirit. He is also struggling against adversity, although in his distant home he has a wealthy, godly father, who loves him dearly. The fact is, he has committed a serious misdemeanour, and through misrepresentation he believes his father has turned his back upon him altogether.

One day, amidst his sorrow and suffering, a revelation comes to him in a letter from his father, who had discovered his whereabouts. That revelation undid all the misrepresentation and chased the sadness from his life, for it made known to him what he was unable to discover himself: that his father's heart still loved him, and that he desired his return. This revelation changed his thoughts, and resulted in reconciliation to his own joy and satisfaction, and more especially to that of his noble father.

Our illustration only serves to show the difference between revelation and reconciliation. The one comes to us and the other brings us to GOD. But the wonderful revelation of God Himself, which comes to man is necessarily beyond all human comparison, for it must be miraculous in that it is the making known of the Creator to the creature who had sinned against Him, having fallen under Satan's misrepresentations and consequently deserved His judgment and not His favour--His frown and not His smile. To such the great and holy God has been pleased in grace to make the revelation of Himself; and that the misrepresentations of Satan might be undone in the thoughts of all who believe, His great love to usward

has been made known in His Son and in His atoning sufferings and death for us upon the cross, so that we might be brought to Him in reconciliation.

Nor has this revelation come to us in writing only, as in the letter of our illustration, though the Bible, inspired of God from Genesis to Revelation, is indeed the perfect written revelation from Himself, a treasure of priceless value, to be prized and studied prayerfully and carefully by all the redeemed; but the final and supreme revelation of God Himself is made in a living Person of whom the written Word tells, in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word who was God, who became flesh so that He might be fully made known. In His ways, in His works, His walk and His words, in all that incomparable life and death recorded for our hearts' meditation and adoration in the four Spirit-given gospels, we behold God manifest in the flesh, God revealed in infinite perfection. The works of God in creation, in providence, or in government could but show some of His glorious attributes, but His Son, a real Man amongst men, seen in moral, spiritual and Divine perfectness and power always, revealed the invisible God Himself to us. The Holy Spirit the Comforter, who has been given from our exalted Lord to dwell in us, brings us the written Word, where we behold the wondrous glories of this revelation, which is declared to us in the Son of the Father's love, to whom we sing,

"Thou wast the Image, in man's lowly guise,

Of the Invisible to mortal eyes,

Son of His bosom, come from heaven above,

We see in Thee incarnate, 'God is love.'"

Again, the change brought about in our thoughts by the knowledge of the love of God, was not sufficient of itself to bring us into reconciliation, for, as we have seen, sin, which is such an awful thing in God's holy sight, must be righteously dealt with. Christ, who knew no sin, was therefore made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in Him, and be consequently set before God in reconciliation in the rich enjoyment of His love, in perfect consistency with all the holiness of His character and nature. If in His goodness we were brought to repentance on account of our sins, if our sense of need caused us to think of Himself, if our deep poverty brought us to consider the wealth of His abundance, if the fear of perishing made us seek His mercy, then, His love, told out to us at Calvary, and "commended to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us," received in faith into our hearts, banished our guilty dread; and thus, believing the truth of God, even "when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son" (Rom. 5:10). And joy in God in reconciliation follows, as the next verse shows so blessedly.

Neither the perfect revelation nor this wonderful reconciliation was known before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. They were not found in the Old Testament. We read, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him" (John 1:18, N.Tr.). In regard to the Second we are told, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not reckoning to them their offences" (2 Cor. 5:19, N.Tr.); and, as we have seen, the death of our Lord Jesus Christ was necessary to bring it to pass righteously; thus having put away the sins and the enmity at the cross, He ascended to the right hand of God. From thence He gave gifts to men, and empowered them as appointed ambassadors to proclaim the word of reconciliation from God, as though beseeching men to be reconciled to Him. He gave to them also the ministry of reconciliation, so that the reconciled might be instructed in all the new things which are theirs in Christ, and that they might be maintained in fullness of joy before God revealed as Father in the Son. No one knows the Father but the Son and he to whom the Son is pleased to reveal Him

(Matt. 11:27), nor could any be reconciled to Him save through Christ's death upon the cross.

In revelation God is fully made known to us in Christ; in reconciliation we are set in full favour before God. To us God is brought in revelation; to God we are brought in reconciliation. In the first we have the true and exact representation of God to us, for He is otherwise invisible and beyond the creature's ability to discover, yet in the Son of the Father's love become Man, we behold "the Image of the invisible God"--the perfect representation of Himself--the invisible become visible. In the second we are restored to God through our Lord Jesus Christ for His own pleasure and satisfaction, so that He can now say, "It is meet that we should make merry and be glad" (Luke 15:32).

In Colossians 1 we have stated the most complete expression of the revelation of God in Christ. In Hebrews 1:3 we are told that He is the "effulgence of His glory and the exact expression of His substance" (N.Tr.). In John 1 we read of Him as "the Word," the embodiment and expression of God's mind. But it is in Colossians 1:15 we learn that the invisible God Himself is imaged--perfectly expressed--in the Son of the Father's love. We have there not only His substance, and not only, His mind, but HIMSELF revealed. This, of course, takes us back to the Gospels, where we are enabled by the Spirit to behold Him who was God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16), Him who came to undo all the evil works and misrepresentations of the devil (1 John 3:8).

When our souls are at peace with God through the death and resurrection of Christ, when we are brought to know our acceptance in Him who has ascended on high, and as united to Him by the Spirit there we know Him as the Head of His body, the assembly, and also know that all the fullness of the Godhead resides in Him, then we are free in the power of the Spirit of God to go back and behold in the wonderful Gospels the marvellous expression of that fullness in the Man who glorified God on the earth and completed the work He entrusted Him to do. Faith, having followed Him up to where He is as the Man glorified by God on high, goes back to follow Him as the Man who revealed God here below. The Spirit was given when Jesus was glorified (John 7:39) and it is in His power we rightly appreciate the infinite excellencies exhibited in the Man of the Gospels. In the Acts and in the Epistles (which give us the preaching and the teaching) we necessarily have progress; but in the four Gospels we behold perfection, for God Himself is there revealed in Jesus, in Him who is the same yesterday and today and for ever. In keeping with this the meat offering, which so beautifully typifies Jesus on earth, was to be appropriated by the sons of the high priest (Lev. 2:3, 10); strength in the power of the Spirit of sonship being needed to be able thus to appreciate Him. "All the males amongst the children of Aaron shall eat it" (6:18). On the other hand that which resulted so richly from the death of Christ--"the wave breast and heave shoulder," speaking of His love and His strength, were food not only for the sons, but also for the high priest's daughters (10:14). This gracious provision of God, foreshadowed in the sacrifices of peace offerings, yields precious communion with Himself for all the saints, whether strong or feeble. We can all feast our souls in nearness to Himself upon Christ who died for us and rose again.

As we thus feed upon Him in the grace and energy of the Holy Spirit, our ability to take in more perfectly the revelation of God is increased. If in that revelation we are enabled to see the disclosure of Him to whom we are reconciled through Christ's death, it is in the reconciliation we rejoice before God and increasingly value the infinite glories of Him who has been revealed in the Son of His love.

Not confined now to the favoured nation of Israel, this is the time spoken of as that of the "world's reconciliation." Israel being broken off through unbelief from the good olive of promise, we have been grafted in (Rom. 11:15, 17). The appeal "Be reconciled to God" is sent out now to Gentile as well as to

Jew, and in higher and fuller blessing still, those who believe today are reconciled in one body to God by the Cross (Eph. 2:10), and they form the one new man in Christ. They are reconciled to the fullness which dwells in Him now; and eventually all the positions of dignity and honour in the heavens and upon the earth--thrones, lordships, principalities and authorities--the visible and the invisible, will be reconciled by Him, the Supreme One, who holds as the Head of the body, the assembly, the pre-eminence in every circle of splendour and glorious majesty. Therefore He re-adjusts all for the good pleasure of our God and Father. Having so done with the assembly now "in" Himself, He will subsequently and consequently do so "by" Himself with all the vast range of positions of dignity which we have mentioned. All enmity and alienation having been removed by His death upon the Cross we are already presented in holiness and without blame in the presence of all the fullness as is well-pleasing to God our Father.

Being reconciled already then to Him who has so blessedly been revealed, we may well rejoice in the new things and the new relationships which are ours "in Christ," where there is "a new creation," where "all things are of God" (2 Cor. 5:17, N.Tr.). Members now of the one body of which Christ is the Head, fellow-citizens of the saints and of the household of God, sons before Him as alive from the dead, all that is suitable to this is ours for faith to apprehend and appreciate.

The glory and the grace of that which is ours through revelation and reconciliation, the dignity and yet the joy of it, the greatness and yet the satisfaction of it, the holiness and the love of it all, produce a wonderful effect upon us practically as its reality is delighted in.

Even that proud monarch Herod, and that representative of Rome, Pilate, the governor, who were at enmity before, were reconciled at the base rejection of Jesus. What shall mark those who are accepted in His eternal acceptance before God? "Go, be reconciled to thy brother" (Matt. 5:24). Has unnecessary estrangement come in between wife and husband? Let her "be reconciled to her husband" (1 Cor. 7:11). Has alienation troubled members of a family where Christ is owned as Lord? Surely the sweetness of reconciliation will be solicited and secured where God's grace is experimentally rejoiced in. How good is the rich blessing of the reconciliation which is of God!-- Sinners, at enmity once, now reconciled to God Himself.

Soon, in scenes of holiness, love and majesty, where nought to mar can ever come, the abiding results of the wondrous death of God's beloved Son shall eternally endure. There the reconciled ones shall worship and serve the revealed One. There all shall be to His own good pleasure, to His everlasting satisfaction and joy.

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