

Reconciliation With Christ Ephesians 2 16

by Tim Conway

This sermon delves into the profound concept of reconciliation with God through Christ's sacrifice on the cross. It emphasizes that God, in His love, reconciles sinners to Himself by not counting their sins against them, thereby removing the enmity and hostility. The message highlights the peace and forgiveness that come from being reconciled to God, leading to a transformed life and unity among believers in one body.

Scripture: Matthew 5:23, 2 Corinthians 5:19, Colossians 1:21, Romans 5:10, Ephesians 2:16, Isaiah 1:18, James 4:8, Ephesians 4:3, Romans 14:12, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Reconciliation with God", "Peace and Forgiveness"

Description

This sermon delves into the profound concept of reconciliation with God through Christ's sacrifice on the cross. It emphasizes that God, in His love, reconciles sinners to Himself by not counting their sins against them, thereby removing the enmity and hostility. The message highlights the peace and forgiveness that come from being reconciled to God, leading to a transformed life and unity among believers in one body.

Transcript

Please open your Bibles to Ephesians. We find ourselves in chapter 2. Specifically today, I want to deal with v. 16, but this is in a context here. So let's go back to v. 11.

I know we've been doing this, but we just want to feel for what Paul's talking about as he says what he says in v. 16. V. 11, Therefore, remember that at one time you Gentiles..." This is the Apostle Paul speaking directly to Gentile believers at Ephesus. It doesn't necessarily mean that they were absolutely void of any Jewish converts.

There's times when Paul in the Roman letter specifically speaks to Gentiles. And at other times, he specifically speaks to any Jews that may be in the midst. But here, his words are specifically aimed at you Gentiles.

And you know, back in the beginning of Ephesians 1, we see who he's writing to. It's to the saints who are in Ephesus. And so, when he says you Gentiles, it's the saints, it's Christians who are in Ephesus.

They're Gentiles in the flesh. They're no longer Gentiles spiritually. They've been converted.

But in the flesh, as we identify people by their nationalities, in a physical sense, they are Gentiles. And they are called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision by the Jews. Jews are the

circumcised.

And what he's saying is there's a certain description. There's descriptive language that's used by the Jews to describe the Gentiles. The uncircumcised.

You remember David called Goliath that very thing. The uncircumcised. It's a statement of derision.

Because to be uncircumcised is to not be the people of God. We're called that by what is called the circumcision. Again, not in a spiritual sense, but which is made in the flesh by hands.

It's physically speaking. It's like he's saying remember what you're called. Remember the name that's been tagged to you and what all that represented.

What did it represent? You were at that time separated from Christ. Here is the terrible, horrible plight of the Gentile. Separated from Christ.

Alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise. Having no hope. And without God in the world.

But now, now, now, it's radically different. It's all changed in Christ. Now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off.

And that's a summary statement. Far off. You want to describe what all it means to be uncircumcised and separated from Christ and having no part in these covenants.

Alienated, not a citizen of Israel. No God. No hope.

He sums it up. You're far off. And you who were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

For He Himself is our peace. And Paul includes that our peace. Now, this is inclusive of those who are near and those who are far off.

He Himself is our peace. You can see that now He's speaking not just about what has happened for the Gentiles, but Christ has made us both. That both.

The circumcised and the uncircumcised. Both have been made one. Has made us both one.

And has broken down in His flesh. Again, in His flesh. That's a picture of the cross.

He's broken down the dividing wall of separation. The ESV says hostility. Hostility is here, but there's also a wall of separation.

And He's abolished this enmity. This hostility. There's a hostility that is found in a law of commandments expressed in ordinances.

And we looked at the fact that it was unlawful for an Israelite to eat with a Gentile. That's precisely what Peter told the household of Cornelius. And we can look at the difference.

It was not allowed for one of the uncircumcised to eat at the Passover. They were not allowed. And the dividing wall of hostility is very much Paul here looking to the temple and thinking about the divisions and the separations and the barriers that existed there.

And it's all been abolished. It's all been knocked down. So that Christ might create in Himself one new man.

A new man. Not that the Gentiles are made into some old version of an Israelite. It altogether is new.

The whole thing is a new man. It's a new humanity. It's entirely different.

That's the idea. In place of the two. Before you had two.

And see, as soon as you have two, you have separation. Because you have one and you have two. And the very idea that you have two means they're not together, they're not united, they're separate.

But what He has done now in His body by going to that cross, in His flesh, by His blood, He's reconciled. Excuse me. There's one new man in place of the two.

So making peace. Making peace between the two. And the verse 16 is where we're at today.

And might He Himself, who is our peace, from verse 14, that is Christ, you get that from verse 13, the blood of Christ, He Himself is our peace, He made us both one, He broke down these things, He has created in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and that He might reconcile us both. There's that term both again. Jew and Gentile.

Both reconciled to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. Now, what you don't want to confuse here is this reality. In verse 14, He talks about in His flesh.

And we could think, well, that's in His body. In His physical body. The body in 16 is not Jesus' physical body.

Paul doesn't need to say that Jesus had one body. Like what? There's a heresy that there might be two bodies? That's not it. The thing that we need to be clear on is that there's one church.

That's the body here. If you have any question about that, let's do a quick survey. Look with me at Ephesians 1.23. You'll remember this.

At the end of Ephesians 1.22, Christ is head over all things to the church, which is His body. You see, body in this letter to the Ephesians is not His physical human body. It's His body.

He's the head of this spiritual, mystical body, which is the church. It is the church being comprised of Jew and Gentile. They were two separate men before.

It's one new man. It's one humanity. It is the church.

That is the reality today. No longer do we have two separate realities, like God is dealing with the Gentiles over here and the Jewish Israelites over here. None of that.

It's one new man in place of the two. You say, that sounds like replacement theology. You better believe it.

What is being replaced is Jew and Gentile by one new man. Now this new man is the true circumcision. It is the true Israel.

It is the true offspring of Abraham. And so it is to be citizens of Israel. Not to be any longer be alienated from the commonwealth of Israel.

But as Jesus Himself said, the Israelites will find themselves alienated from the commonwealth of Israel in the end if they do not lay hold on Christ. He said specifically, you will have Abraham and Isaac and Jacob sitting down at the table. And many of you children of the kingdom who are citizens now, you will find yourself in outer darkness while many east, west, north, south, they're going to be gathered in and brought to this table.

One new man in place of the two. That's the reality. It's this body.

But we're surveying now. So brethren, look at Ephesians 3.6. This mystery. Oh brethren, what a mystery to have unfolded.

It's implied. Some of your Bibles don't actually put it in v. 6. It's being brought over. The ESV brings it over from v. 3 because it's being implied.

Stated very plainly in v. 3. Implied in v. 6. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs. Members of the same body. You see that? Let's go further.

We're going to get a lot more of this in the days ahead, but just so we're clear about one body. This is Jesus uniting all. Both.

One new man in place of the two. This one new man is one body. It is a new body with Christ the Head.

Look at Ephesians 4.4. There is one body. Can I tell you this? There's nowhere in any of Paul's writings where he refers to the physical body of Jesus Christ as one body. Now, there are places where he talks about his physical body, but when he does, he is very clear about that reality.

Notice Ephesians 4.4. There is one body and one Spirit just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call. Read further. 4.12, He gave the apostles and the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of the ministry for building up the body of Christ.

And then again, a little bit further here in 4.16, we find the word twice. From whom you get at the end of 15, the Head, Christ. From whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself in love.

But you're getting the idea here. How about a few more? 5.23, you know this one very well. Husbands and wives.

The husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church. His body. This is the one body.

There is one body and one Spirit. One. One.

One. And you say, what is this? It's the new man. It's the uniting.

It's not just this local body. He's talking about the uniting of Jew and Gentile into one body over which He is the head. That is the reality, brethren.

One more time here. How about Ephesians 5.30? Because we are members of His body. You include 29 there.

No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it just as Christ does the church because we are members of His body. But you get the idea and you can search this through all of Paul's writings when he uses this idea of one body. One body.

We're not going to turn here, but in Romans 12, for as in one body we have many members, and the members do not have the same function, so we though many are one body in Christ. Or 1 Corinthians 10.17, because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Or 1 Corinthians 12.12, for just as the body is one and has many members, all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

For in the Spirit, we were all baptized into one body, Jews or Greeks, slaves or free. You get the idea. There's the Jews.

There's the Greeks. One body. The two made one.

Anyway, I know I'm belaboring that, brethren, but you see, we're going to speak about reconciliation today. And it's just interesting to me that in Paul's thinking, as he's moving through all of this, he doesn't so much hear, I recognize we have to be reconciled on an individual basis. The Apostle says in 2 Corinthians 5, Be ye reconciled to God.

We have to be reconciled on an individual basis, but it's very interesting that here in Ephesians, his concept in his mind is us being reconciled in one body. We are a reconciled body. I mean, it's this God of peace looking down and being reconciled to this whole body of Christ.

He's the head. A people of all manner of different assorted backgrounds and ethnicities, and we're reconciled together in one body. Brethren, this is really critical.

You see, as in our bodies, there are many members, so it is in the body of Christ. You see, He does not reconcile us to live the Christian life disjointed, disconnected, and separate. It's together.

We are receiving these things together. Even in 1 Corinthians 10, the idea of taking this bread in common because we're one body. We're together.

In other words, when we take that bread, that's an idea of His body. His body broken for us. Broken for you.

And it's very interesting, you know when Jesus Christ says you there, it's not singular. It's plural. He laid down His life for a people, for His sheep.

And we come from all manner of different places. And I was thinking about our team going over there to Houston. I'd love to see them end up in the Fifth Ward.

Somebody would say, well, you can't do that. That's the hood. I've heard people from our church tell us that it doesn't get much worse than that over in Houston.

How could we ever plant a church there? Don't you know about the ethnic barriers? It just simply can't be done. Do you hear what I'm saying here? What is it that Jesus has accomplished? So, let's look at v. 16.

Because here's the heart of the Gospel.

The very heart. It is the word reconcile. And you see it.

That He might reconcile us both. Christ might reconcile us both to God in this one church through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And I wanted to sing Herald Angels Sing because in my experience, in my exposure to that song, I have not been affected by any line more than God and sinners reconciled.

And brethren, I can tell you, I remember one time, I think it was probably Walmart. It was around Christmas time. And you know, they're playing the Christmas music and they're trying to lather you all up into the Christmas spirit so you'll buy lots of stuff.

And they've got Hark the Herald Angels Singing. And I know, to them, it's Christmas music. Just right there with Santa Claus is coming to town.

Rudolph. But brethren, I'm listening because I know what's being played and I know that song. And when I heard God and sinners reconciled, I wanted to jump out of my skin.

You know how it is? Sometimes, you come to some truth and God just brings it home. And He empowers it and He fills you with joy. Brethren, that's how I felt.

I wanted to just shout to the whole store. Did you hear that? I mean, that's the greatest news imaginable. Reconciled.

Best news in the whole world. So, what does reconcile mean? Now, you know at the end of the verse, this isn't Paul's attempt to specifically define the word, but he definitely helps us get some idea of what's connected with reconciliation. I mean, vividly expresses one of the greatest realities that can be said of this.

Thereby killing the hostility or putting to death the enmity. Brethren, that's the title of my message, is Christ the enmity slayer. He kills hostility.

Don't you love those words? Those are violent words. He's a killer. There are things.

Jesus came to kill certain things, to destroy certain things. I mean, He came to be aggressive with certain things and He came to attack hostility. Here's what's interesting.

When you look at the word reconcile, it's one root word every time it's used, but it actually, here and in Colossians, it is a slightly different word than what you would find say in 2 Corinthians 5 or in Romans 5 where you have a lot that's said. And we're going to look at some of those texts in a little bit. But you know what's at the root of this word? If you were to boil it down, it means exchange.

You say, that's weird. That's not what I think about when I think about reconcile. Exchange.

In fact, the root here is used concerning money changers when they exchange money. You say, that's weird. How does that work into reconcile? God and sinners reconcile.

Just this way. It's an exchange of hostility for friendship. And see, even though Paul is only dealing very graphically with the negative aspect here, you never want to forget.

Brethren, we don't want to forget because in this world today, when people think about peace, most of the time, the mindset is just not being at war. But that's not the biblical idea of reconciliation. Reconciliation is, yes, the hostility's gone and the war is gone, but now they embrace.

And now there's friendship and there's intimacy. That's what we find. It means to bring back to a former state of harmony.

And obviously, we can recognize that. Even in the English, we get the same idea. Reconcile.

To do it over again. What's that? Is that like there was a time we were in harmony with God and then we fell away and now we're being brought back? Yes, as a race. So, it's clear from this verse and a number of others throughout the New Testament that whatever else may be true of Christ's suffering and death, because that's what's happening here.

The cross. The cross. Thereby killing the hostility.

Whatever else can be said about the cross, brethren, it is this. Jesus Christ shed His blood. He went to the cross.

The cross work is about reconciliation. It is a reconciling work. And this presupposes that God and man are in some state of alienation.

Christ is the hostility killer. That's what it says. He kills the hostility.

Paul means to imply there is hostility that needs to be killed. So, the question that we want to ask is this. Who is hostile with who? And that is not an unimportant question to ask.

Is this God's alienation against man or man's alienation against God? And the reason I say that this is not an unimportant question is, Ruby and I were watching something on Friday where a pastor was saying he didn't want people from another church coming on their church property. Because they had a youth group. They had basketball courts.

And their young people would go out and play basketball. And some guys from another church would come over and kind of get in on the game. But they weren't there just to play basketball.

They began telling the young people about the Gospel, at least as they understood it. And this pastor of this church with the basketball courts said, we told those guys they're not welcome here. Because we believe in a God of love, and they believe in a God of wrath.

Brethren, there is an idea today. I remember talking to one of my friends about our sin and about the danger behind sin. And I remember him saying, isn't God a God of mercy? You see, there is an idea that just abounds all around us that God is pervasively love.

Well, God is love. There's no question about that. But there is this idea that there is this all-pervading love of God and it just leads many to believe that the state of man today is that man is at enmity with God.

Man is hostile to God. God is loving and God is gracious and God is just sort of waiting for man to be reconciled to Him. That's very prevalent today.

So reconciliation gets primarily viewed from the standpoint that man needs to kind of appreciate the greatness of God's love for him and accept that love for himself. Brethren, you know as well as I do that to title a message sinners in the hands of an angry God, that is almost unimaginable to most people today. What? They picture God as basically pleading with man to come.

Very gracious and very loving. Now you recognize, much of what I'm saying right now is very true. But it's when things become skewed.

It's when we don't understand properly. What is reconciliation? Who is being reconciled towards who here? Is it just simply that man needs to be reconciled because he's angry with God and he's hostile to God? I just want us to notice our text. That Christ might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

But what I really want you to notice is this, that Christ might reconcile us to God. Here's the thing, Scripture never says that God is reconciled to us. Ever.

In fact, Scripture never even says what Wesley says. God and sinners reconciled. You see, God and sinners reconciled, that's kind of like, well, man is reconciled to God.

God is reconciled to man. It's mutual. God and sinners reconciled.

But you know, Scripture never even speaks that way. It is interesting. Just hear me here.

I don't want to turn to all these, but in Romans 5 and 2 Corinthians 5, they are two of the most prominent chapters in our Bibles that deal with this idea of reconciliation. And I want to quote some of the verses here. Romans 5.10, if while we were enemies... Now, even right there, while we were enemies.

So what does that mean? Mutual enemies? We were enemies of His? He was enemies of ours? Well, you know, you can search that out throughout Scripture to try to determine which is it that He actually means. But what's interesting is this, is He saying that while God was our enemy, God reconciled us? Or is He saying that while we were enemies to God, God reconciled us? Probably that later. But listen to the text.

If while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, we were reconciled to God. Same as what we find in Ephesians 2.16. That He might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross. Or 2 Corinthians 5.18. All this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to Himself.

You see that? It's through Christ, God reconciles us to Him, to Himself. Or 2 Corinthians 5.19. In Christ, God was reconciling the world not every single individual, but the world, Jew and Gentile, to Himself. That's what we get.

Or in 2 Corinthians 5.20, we implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. But you see again, even though that's mandating that we do that, we be reconciled, but we be reconciled to God. And you get that again in Colossians 1.19. And here's the interesting thing.

Many times when this sort of verbiage is used, it says that God in Christ or through Christ is reconciling us to Himself. God does the reconciliation. You'll recognize that.

God is the subject many times of these verbs. God is reconciling man to Himself. This manner of speaking tells us that reconciliation does not start with us.

It starts with Him. This is something that He has done. Okay? Now here's the question.

When somebody is said to be reconciled to somebody else, who is the one who is hostile? Who's alienated? Who's angry? You see, brethren, if I said, you came to me and said, you know, somebody... What do we mean when we say this? If I said, you need to be reconciled to brother so-and-so. What am I saying? Am I saying that you're the one angry? Or am I saying that they're the one angry? I mean, that's the question that I want us to think about right now. Let's look at Colossians 1.21. Brethren, I want you to hang with me.

I'm going somewhere with all of this. And probably in your minds, you're thinking of all sorts of Scriptures. Well, here's one you might not be thinking of.

Colossians 1.21, and you, look there where it says, and you, in the ESV, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, He has now reconciled in His body of flesh. See, here's one of the places where it is actually His physical body being spoken about. In His body of flesh by His death in order to present you holy and blameless and above reports before Him.

So at first glance, who is the one who is alienated and hostile? From this text. Us. Yeah, I hope you can all see that.

Certainly, it's the sinner. It's man. He's doing evil deeds.

Look at his mind. Look at the mind of man. What does it say about it? Hostile.

Hostile in mind. Alienated. I mean, there it is.

We don't deny this at all. Scripture talks all over the place about man's hostility for God. You remember last week when we were going through the list of just man and how he's divided and at war with others and with God? Well, you'll remember there that in Romans 1.30, it describes man as being a hater of God.

Man hates God. Now look, that doesn't mean that man always is going around with his fist raised. Sometimes man just doesn't care.

Sometimes it's just he ignores God. He suppresses it. He ignores it.

He turns his back on it. And in fact, if you asked him, he'd say maybe he would say he's not specifically at war with God. But look, the reality is that man does not like the God that's presented in Scripture.

He's a hater of that God. We know the text very well in Romans 8.7. The mind that is set on the flesh is what? Hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law.

Indeed, it cannot. Or in Ephesians 4.18, when we get a little further here, we're going to see that Gentiles in the flesh, lost Gentiles, spiritually speaking, they're darkened in their understanding. They're alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to their hardness of heart.

That's in Ephesians 4.18. So does this mean that God reconciling sinners to Himself? I think so. I just got an immediate red light. But here's the thing, I hope you have your Bibles open to Colossians 1.21. If you don't yet, flip there.

Notice, verse 19, in Christ, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. And through Christ, to reconcile to the Father, or through Christ to reconcile to Christ, all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace... see, there's the peace. The hostility is removed.

"...by the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death." Now you need to see that. In 20, by the blood of His cross.

In 22, in His body of flesh by His death. Brethren, what we get here is that this is the basis for reconciliation. 20, through Him to reconcile to Himself, making peace by the blood of His cross.

Or 22, reconciled in His body of flesh by His death. What does this mean? Does this mean that what Paul is saying is somehow man's hostility has been melted away by the death, by the shed blood? Is that what he's saying? Is he saying that basically, your hostility gets somehow appeased by the fact that this blood is shed? I recognize he's speaking about alienation. And he's speaking about enmity and hostility here.

And he's speaking about evil deeds. But what is he actually saying when he then turns to the cross and he says Christ was put to death and His body on that cross and He was shed blood? And what is all that looking at? What is this? Peace is made by the blood of Christ's cross. Is he saying that through this, somehow the hostility of man is destroyed? Well, how? How would it be? Is he saying that, well, you're supposed to look at it and be melted by God's love that He would do such a thing, and that destroys your hostility.

Is that what he's saying? Or is he saying that, well, on that cross, God did such things as would eradicate the hostility from you? Now that may be true, but is that what he's saying here when he suddenly turns in light of making peace, and he turns and has us look at the cross? What in the world is he saying? Listen, brethren, it is not to be argued that man is hostile towards God. I don't argue that. Paul doesn't argue that.

Paul brings that up right in the context of reconciliation. It is not to be argued that man's hostility isn't a serious matter. It is a serious matter.

It's not to be argued that this alienation of man towards God must somehow be dealt with, and that it must be eradicated and removed before God and man can be in harmony. I'm not arguing any of that. But this hardly captures the greatest meaning of reconciliation.

Hardly does it capture it. Man is alienated and hostile in mind. He does evil.

But you don't bring up the cross to simply show how man crucified Him, and it somehow placated man. That's never the idea of the cross. It isn't man's anger that is being dealt with.

It isn't man's wrath that is being dealt with at that cross. That isn't why you bring it up. It is God who strikes Christ on that cross.

It is He who crushes His Son on that cross. Man is under condemnation. What we need to recognize is this, it isn't just man simply going through life and he sins.

And in his sin, he's hostile to God. And what we need to do is just kind of melt that and get him to where he's affectionate towards God again. And it's like, look at the cross.

If anything should melt man's hostility, it would be that God would be willing to give His own Son to die. That isn't the issue, brethren. It isn't like we just kind of draw back and get near and make peace with God.

There's another issue here. Man in his sin is under the condemnation of God. That is the issue.

And God poured that condemnation on Christ. What I want you to see, brethren, is when you get this verbiage that somebody is reconciled to somebody else, I want to show you who the one is that's being appeased. You get this same construct in Matthew 5. And it's very helpful.

I want you all to turn there. Matthew 5 v. 23. Phenomenal example.

This is very helpful. Matthew 5.23. Sermon on the Mount. So, if you are offering your gift at the altar, or you're doing anything religious, you're getting ready to go serve God over in Houston, or go visit Aunt Banji, or put an offering in the offering box, whatever that is, and you're doing this, something that's counted a good deed, or an expression specifically of worship, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go.

Now notice this. Same construction here. First, be reconciled to your brother.

And then come and offer your gift. Same construction. We are reconciled to God.

Both of us reconciled to God in one body through the cross. We are reconciled to God. Just as the person being addressed here, which is you, is to go be reconciled to your brother.

But let me ask you, who possesses the hostility in this verse? You or your brother? Yeah, notice v. 23. It's the brother who has something against you. Oh, that is very helpful.

The one being reconciled to the other, the other is the one who has the offense. It's the other one who has something against you. Let me tell you something.

You know what the cross is all about? God has something against us. Jew and Gentile alike. It's the brother who you are to be reconciled to who has the ax to grind here.

Brethren, it is God who is angry. Sinners in the hands of an angry God. Be ye reconciled.

That's the issue. The truth of the Gospel is not so much that man is angry and alienated and hostile towards God and that reconciliation means that man's wrath is melted away by observing God's amazing act of love by putting His Son to death on the cross. The greatest reality of reconciliation is that we, you saw it here, back when He's describing our state, what did He call us? Children of wrath.

Like the rest of mine. He doesn't mean we are full of wrath towards God. That's not what children of wrath means.

That means you are objects of God's wrath. That is the issue, brethren. Notice 2 Corinthians 5.19. Turn over there.

Very helpful. 2 Corinthians 5. We get the word reconcile repeatedly here. It's one of the most rich portions of Scripture when it comes to reconciliation.

17. And the beauty here is the one new man. It's the new creation.

17, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. And this is what was said. In Christ.

In Him. The two are made one. In Himself.

The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. All this from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself.

You see, it's God who does the reconciling. And it's to Him. See, the amazing thing is that God is the one angry.

God is the one full of wrath. And God is the one who reconciles. While we were yet enemies, God's love is at work devising a way to vent His wrath that it may not fall upon our heads.

And He gave us the ministry of reconciliation. That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself. Now, this is what I want you to get.

Brethren, this shows you as much as anything else, who has issue with who. This shows you the heart of what reconciliation is all about. Do you see it here? In Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself.

How? By not counting their trespasses against them. Brethren, any of you get shocked in Scripture? We get occasions in Scripture, and it's meant to be an example. Because that's exactly what we're told in the New Testament.

When God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, it's an example of what He's going to do to all of the ungodly. And you get these glimpses through Scripture where God shows us. And He makes examples out of certain people.

Do you remember Uzzah? Do you remember Nadab and Abihu? There are many places through Scripture where God gives us these little glimpses. There's a text in Luke's Gospel. You may remember it well.

When all is said and done and judgment day is had, He said, bring those people before Me who would not have Me to rule over them and slaughter them. That's our Lord. Do you recognize reconciliation in what God has done? This is such a part of the Gospel, we tend to take it for granted.

By not counting their sins against them. Do you ever read about judgment day? Any of you ever read texts in Scripture about judgment day? Do you ever find them a little bit unsettling? I'm talking about ones like you find in Matthew 12. Have you ever read this? The good person out of the good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of the evil treasure brings forth evil.

I tell you, on the day of judgment, people will give account for every careless word they speak. That ever unsettle you? By your words, you will be justified. By your words, you will be condemned.

Romans 14, even to Christians, you're told words like this, why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? We will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, as I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me and every tongue shall confess to God, so then each of us will give an account of himself to God. Now you think seriously about those words.

You're going to stand before the God who has tallied up every careless word and says men are going to give an account. The God who says that you're going to have to give account of all that you did in this body. On that day when according to my Gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

Your secrets. The things that only you know are going to be judged on that day. The things you've thought. Every single thought. Every careless word. We're looking at a judgment that is so precise and so exact, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we warn men.

We warn them to do what? You see, brethren, to be reconciled. Why? Because if you're reconciled, there's peace. Which means what? Do you hear Jesus Christ in Matthew 25? Well done, good and faithful servant.

Do you hear Him? I was hungry and You fed Me. And you know what they're saying? Lord, when were You hungry and we fed You? We don't remember that. But you know, Lord, we do remember that we spoke a lot of careless words.

But you notice there's none of that there. Let me ask you, do you think any of those people that fed Christ's little ones or clothed them, went to Houston and did those, do you think any of those people ever spoke careless words? Brethren, we are talking about a reality that is most precious and most glorious. Reconciliation.

He doesn't hold your sins against you. That is no small thing when you think about the things that you've thought and the careless thoughts you've had and the careless words you've spoken and the things that have happened in secret places even since the time you've been saved. Even today, perhaps.

Brethren, do you realize what's being said? Man, every time you were careless with your eyes and you looked where you shouldn't have looked or thought a thought, James was talking about these thoughts. You let the birds come and make a nest in your hair. How often have we done that? How often have we let something that did not reflect loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and we've let it pull us away? Or you've had some envious thought or some jealous thought and you've let it work there and it kind of created this canker there.

Or you've thought these things, you've had covetous thoughts, you've been discontent, you don't like what God's doing in your life, you've mumbled, you've complained. Do you recognize those people who complained out in that wilderness? They were destroyed. Unbelief.

How often have we had these little thoughts of God? Or we've been led by unbelief to not trust God when we should trust God. How often, brethren, have we not fed the poor when we should have fed them? No, I'm not saying we never have done that, but how often have we missed the opportunities of serving Him? How often have we not done what we're supposed to do? How often, brethren, have we fallen short? How often have you had thoughts in your mind that you know right now that you've read about it? If it could be put up on the screen, your life, you know you'd be... Brethren, not every one of us, we know the things that we've thought. We know thoughts that have come into our mind.

We know where we're at. Brethren, what I'm talking about is reconciliation where God does not hold your sins against you. Do you recognize what we're talking about here? Do you recognize what it is to stand before God and have those thoughts on your account? And have those careless words on your account? Do you recognize what's going to happen? There will be no peace.

And it will not matter how hostile you are against Him, because your hostility will dissolve away. It will give place. It must of necessity give place.

And He will pour His wrath upon you. And if you've been in this place and heard the truths that you've heard, to whom much is given, much will be required and more will be required of you, and it will not go well. Be ye reconciled to God.

He came and He preached peace to those who were far off and peace to those who were near. He didn't come preaching that He'll put us at peace and He'll dissolve our active enmity against God. That's not what that means.

When He came and preached peace, He just got done saying He went to the cross and He killed the hostility. He's coming and saying, God is bidding you to be reconciled. I have done everything on that cross.

And I have taken God's anger and His displeasure towards sin. And now, just what it says here. Oh, 2 Corinthians.

It says that He doesn't count their trespasses against them. That is salvation. That is what we want.

Brethren, you know the text. Depths of the sea. Far as the east is from the west.

Behind His back. What are all those? All those statements are this. They're pictorial.

They're something you can see, you can envision, but what God is saying... Years ago, I heard Paul Washer preaching through Hebrews 11. And he got in there and he was talking about Sarah and Abraham and how by faith. And it's like, really? Seriously? If you go back into the Genesis, there's laughter of unbelief and Abraham's not trusting the Lord and he's giving his wife off to be taken by Pharaoh.

And it's like, what's all that about? Isn't it interesting when the Holy Spirit comes along in the New Testament? As Paul Washer pointed out, no reference to those things at all. It's all faith. Why? Because there was truly faith.

God wrought faith there. But you know what He has no memory of? The unbelief. The sin.

The distrust. How come that's not there? Because that's how it is to be saved. He doesn't count our sins against us.

They're all gone. They're gone. Christ is the great enmity slayer.

This is what the cross is all about. And brethren, it's not so much that God and sinners are reconciled. That's all true.

But it's that we are reconciled to Him so that when we stand before Him, can you imagine? Well done, good and faithful servant. Just drop our heads. Lord, when? And He'll say, when You gave in My name to support the help of those people over in Houston, as much as You did at least of those My children over there, You did that to Me.

As much as You desired to see My kingdom spread over there and You actually prayed about seeing a church planted, You just weren't seeking to simply give a bit of physical. You were concerned about My name and My kingdom. As much as You did that on My behalf, well done.

Lord, when we were driving over there, I had some lustful thought. I had some covetous thought. I was discontent about something that You'd done in my life.

But you read it. He doesn't count their trespasses against them. And brethren, even if you're one of these people whose ministries you are backward, you are ignorant, maybe even self-willed, and you built with wrong materials wood, hay, and stubble, even when it gets put on the altar and gets burned up, they're saved so as by fire.

My whole point is this, even if you've got things in your life that are not going to pass the test, He doesn't hold those sins against us. Yes, it's burned up. Yes, there might not be as much to be commended for in some when it's really put to the test.

But what we're reading about here is reconciliation. I'm going to look upon the Lord and even after all the things that I've done in my life, I'm going to be met by a smile. And it will be because of no merit in me and not anything I did.

And when it says be reconciled, brethren, what it's saying there is that we are to be reconciled through the merits of Jesus Christ. It is that we are to surrender and trust Christ. Surrender ourselves to being made right and at peace with God.

Not through our efforts to clean up our life. Looking and trusting solely in the fact that on that cross, He killed the hostility. He killed it so that there's peace.

There's peace. And even as I live this life, and even when I sin, what? The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from all sin. There's peace.

The peace is maintained. I recognize that what James said is absolutely true. There's a manifest peace.

But I'm talking here about a legal, forensic reality that is laid down. Forgiven. It's all forgiven.

This is the heart of the Gospel. Sinners being reconciled to God through the cross. And it's all in one body.

One body. Thereby killing the hostility. I mean, we are a group of people.

Have you ever read in Isaiah, I have no wrath. To this church, that's what he says. No matter what our background is, no matter what our ethnicity, every person in this room truly converted.

I have no wrath. Brethren, do you see what that does? You don't go off to Houston like you're some servant-slave. I've got to chalk another one up and put another notch on my belt so that I hope when I get to the end, it's none of that.

It's like, I'm received. I can go and I can serve the Lord and I can do it joyfully. And if I fall or I trip or I grumble along the way, I can ask the Lord to forgive me and I can just get back up off my knees and I can go on and I can serve Him.

And I'm free. Why? I'm the Son. I'm forgiven.

I'm reconciled. I'm reconciled to God in one body. A whole bunch of us are reconciled together.

You know where he's going with all this. This is what really makes peace between men. This is it.

This makes peace. This is what really brings Jew and Gentile or barbarian, Scythian, male-female, slave, master. Brethren, there's no greater uniting reality than this.

And it's united in Christ in one body. And that's going to be a prominent theme as we move through here. This redeemed body and how we function together.

How we live together. Christ, the enmity slayer, thereby killing the hostility. Lord, we thank You that there is such a redemption as this.

Thank You. Thank You in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/Hg2RWv9mht0.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/tim-conway/reconciliation-with-christ-ephesians-2-16/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net