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Series: The Ministry of Reconciliation

The Ministry of Reconciliation (2)

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[2 Corinthians 5:18-20](#)

(Continuation from 10/27/13)

The Ministry of Reconciliation

[2 Corinthians 5:18-20 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁸ Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,

¹⁹ namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Again down in [verse 19](#) at the end of the verse, “He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

[2 Corinthians 5:19 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁹ “namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

Literally, “he has committed to us” means he has placed in us. Once we’ve been called to preach, once we’ve been called to proclaim, we have been given the word of reconciliation.

[2 Corinthians 5:19 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁹ “namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

Just a brief note about that. The term “word” here is “[logos](#),” it really can be a synonym for “message.” But it carries even something beyond that. “[Logos](#)” in ancient times indicated not just a word or a message, but it indicated what is true and trustworthy, as opposed to what was, on the other hand, [muthos](#), not [logos](#), but [muthos](#), [muthos](#) meaning “myth.” [Muthos](#) described what was fictitious, what was spurious, what was not verifiable. It’s very opposite was [logos](#), what was true and trustworthy.

Socrates, for example, declares that a particular story is no fictitious [muthos](#), but is a genuine [logos](#), hence the term [logos](#), carries with it like a kind of overtone the implication of genuineness, of truthfulness. It then is peculiarly appropriate as a synonym for the

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gospel which indeed is truth and not myth. We have then been given in a world of religious myths the truth, the truth about how men can be reconciled to God. And that, of course, is the most needed message because apart from that reconciliation men will spend eternity in burning hell. If you were to look at [Acts 13:26](#), and we will take the time to do that, you would hear the Apostle Paul refer to the [logos](#) of salvation, the message of salvation.

[Acts 13:26 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁶“Brethren, sons of Abraham’s family, and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent.”

If you were to look at [1 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 18](#) you would hear the Apostle Paul refer to the [logos](#) of the cross, or the word of the cross which to those who are perishing is foolishness but to those who believe it is salvation.

[1 Corinthians 1:18 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁸“For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

If you were to look at [Philippians 2:16](#) you would read about the [logos](#) of life, the word of life which is what we hold forth.

[Philippians 2:16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶“holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.”

Our message then is a message of salvation. It is a message of the cross. It is a message of life. It is a message of reconciliation. And opposed to all the myths that exist in the world, it is the truth about salvation; it is the truth about the cross. It is the truth about life with God. And it is the truth about reconciliation. This was the heart of Paul’s preaching. To go back to [1 Corinthians chapter 1](#) and [verse 17](#), Paul says,

[1 Corinthians 1:17 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁷“For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void.”

To adulterate or to at all alter the simple straight-forward message of reconciliation in the cross is somehow to render that cross null and void. And though the word of the cross may be to those who are perishing foolishness, to us who are being saved, it is indeed the power of God.

And so, Paul was committed to the straightforward, direct proclamation of the word of reconciliation. In the [second chapter](#) of [1 Corinthians](#) he says,

[1 Corinthians 2:1-2 \(NASB\)](#)

¹“And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.
²For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”

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And, of course, that means that there had to be a death in light of sin and that brings in the whole issue of culpability, guilt, judgment before God.

1 Corinthians 2:3-5 (NASB)

**³I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling,
⁴and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,
⁵so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.**

When writing to the Romans in order to solidify a base from which he could launch a ministry further west when he arrived, he said,

Romans 1:14-16 (NASB)

**¹⁴I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.
¹⁵So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.
¹⁶For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.**

Paul was committed to the proclamation of the gospel, unstintingly, unhesitatingly, and unreservedly. And that is what we are called to do. We announce that God can be reconciled to doomed sinners, the greatest news the world has ever heard.

If you look at just the enmity between God and man, it might appear at first hopeless. A perfect, infinite, holy, flawless, righteous God whose justice must be satisfied by the punishment of all who have violated His laws, and standing under the looming sword of judgment is the helpless sinner who can't please God at all and cannot change his condition. A holy God whose justice must be satisfied, a helpless sinner who can do nothing at all to satisfy it. Man then stands in a doomed position. The relationship seems irreversible. And frankly, from man's side it is. Happily from God's side, it is not.

There is actually a way to satisfy God's justice, to satisfy His wrath and vengeance against sin, and still reconcile sinners. That is the supreme and sublime reality that is our message that is what we preach. We can get caught on all kinds of peripheral issues. We can...we can find ourselves messing around with the fringe elements. But sooner or later this is the core of everything we do. God can be reconciled to sinners. And to us is committed that ministry of reconciliation by preaching the word of reconciliation.

A.T. Robertson, many years ago, said, **“The pulpit is the Golgotha on which the preacher gives his life for the reconciliation of the world.”** This is our calling!