

Title: From Alienated Enemies to Holy Friends

Text: Colossians 1: 21-23

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Throughout the epistles we find that the early church suffered the same charges and teachings from will-workers that the church faces in our day.

In the epistles of Paul, he continually warns believers against the error of false teachers.

The false teachers would say that sinners are saved by faith in Christ. They will say Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to all who believe. But in addition, they insist that the believer must keep the law or they cannot be saved.

Either Christ is the end of the law or the sinner must keep the law. Either Christ has fulfilled the law or the believer must fulfill it. Either we are complete in Christ or there is some work the sinner must do to make himself complete. But the two cannot be mixed. To do so is to mix law and grace. The error Paul dealt with is the same false teaching which we hear so much in Christianity in our day.

Proposition: Paul's object in his epistle to the Colossians was to comfort the saints with the truth that they are complete through faith in Christ, not by their works, but only by Christ's finished work. Our text is Colossians 1: 21-23.

There are five words in this text that we will focus our attention on. We will have four divisions.

Colossians 1: 1) ALIENATED AND ENEMIES: 21: And you, that were sometime ALIENATED and ENEMIES in your mind by wicked works,

2) RECONCILED: 21:...yet now hath he RECONCILED 22: In the body of his flesh through death,

3) PRESENT: 22...to PRESENT you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight:

4) CONTINUE: 23 If ye CONTINUE in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

I. ALIENATED AND ENEMIES

Colossians 1: 21: And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works...

Alienated

Before we were regenerated by God the Holy Spirit we were alienated from the life of God—alienated from the life of God. This is the natural mind, the sin-nature, the carnal heart, the flesh, the old man, the way we are born the first time:

Ephesians 4: 18: Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

By our first birth we were alienated from the life, completely ignorant of God, ignorant of our need of salvation, and ignorant of how God saves.

We are unable to give ourselves the life of God. If we could it would be the life of man, not the life of God. The life God gives when we are born of God is spiritual, eternal life which is the life of God, and this life is in his Son. It is being born of Christ Jesus, the Everlasting Father, of God the Holy Spirit, of the incorruptible Seed.

Enemies

But our condition is worse than alienation, we were ENEMIES. The carnal mind hates God who is life, hates the truth that only God can give life, and hates the life God gives, Christ Jesus.

By our Wicked Works

God made man upright, in his own image and good. God did not separate himself from us. We did. The wicked works were our wicked works.

Isaiah 59: 2: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

First, by Adam's wicked works as our federal head

Romans 5:12: By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that [the margin reads "in whom"] all have sinned.

Secondly, we were alienated and enemies in our minds by our own wicked works. Enmity is not inactive. Enmity actively does not submit to Christ.

With some, these wicked works are the base, wicked, outward sinful acts. But outward sins are only the tip of a iceberg---underneath the surface is the sin-dead heart, the mind, the nature, the root of the problem. And enmity also manifests itself in active religious works whereby a sinner tries to earn acceptance with God.

Sinners will say, "I do not hate God; I never hated God." But the carnal mind is so defiled and deceitful, that until God intervenes part of our wicked works is rejecting the word of God against ourselves.

The paradox is: the natural man will vent his enmity against God defending himself against the charge that he is enmity against God.

The paradox is: whole churches are planted, deacons set up, great works performed, all by the will and wisdom and methods of unregenerate men—all being the active manifestation of enmity against God.

Titus 1: 15: Unto the pure all things are pure:

The pure are those in whom God has created a new man created in the righteousness and true holiness of Christ, gifted with faith to trust Christ who is All and in all, our complete acceptance with God.

Titus 1: 15: Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. 16: They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

The works spoken of here clearly are not immoral, lewd sins, he says, "unto every good work." Where "the mind and conscience is defiled", though they "profess that they know God", though the deeds may be in

themselves “good works”, the doer of those works is yet “abominable and disobedient and unto every good work reprobate” because the carnal mind is actively working out his enmity against God by trying to come to God another way than by simply trusting Christ. He will not renounce himself, repent from all his vain works, and believe on Christ.

Romans 8: 5: For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6: For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7: Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8: So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

II. RECONCILED

Colossians 1: 21: yet now hath he reconciled; 22 In the body of his flesh through death,

Reconciliation Accomplished for his Elect

By Christ’s finished work, God has already reconciled his elect to himself. **Yet now**...it is done. It can never be undone. **Yet now hath he reconciled**—Christ did it for all the elect of God scattered throughout the four corners of the world. God did not leave the slightest degree of reconciliation to hinge upon the will of those he chose to reconcile—we were alienated from the life of God and enemies in our minds—if reconciliation were left to the sinner none would be reconciled. **Christ accomplished reconciliation for the elect “In the body of his flesh, through death.”** The Son of God was made flesh because his brethren were flesh; the Son of God was made flesh to bear our sins in his own body on the tree; the Son of God was made flesh to have the chastisement of our peace laid on him. There was no other way God’s fallen elect could be reconciled to him and God remain just so Christ paid the full ransom price redeeming all for whom he died from the curse of the law.

Colossians 1: 20: And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself

Reconciliation is peace with God accomplished by God in Christ for his elect.

Romans 5: 10: When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son...

2 Corinthians 5: 18: And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. 21: For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Reconciliation Accomplished in his Elect

Reconciliation is also a work of God wrought within us. Paul is speaking to believers at Colossee who were reconciled in heart and affection to God as well—“we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” But we were alienated and enemies in our minds. A sinner can’t make himself be at peace with God when in his mind, God is his enemy! We have to be born of God and given the mind of Christ. The glory goes to God for this inward work the same as the other.

When we are born of God, he purges our conscience within, by Christ's blood, through the gospel. He reveals in us that God has already reconciled us into a state of eternal peace with himself, justifying us of all our sins past, present and future, by Christ's blood.

Hebrews 9: 14: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

While our conscious is defiled our deeds are evil because they are not done out of love for God but in the evil attempt to make ourselves acceptable to God. It is the evil attempt of giving ourselves the preeminence that God has given to Christ alone.

So God sets our affection on Christ by teaching us inwardly in spirit and in truth that he has already reconciled us in Christ and we are accepted in him. He put away our sin himself. God remembers our sins no more. He teaches us that there is now no condemnation to them that in Christ Jesus. The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death. Justice and mercy have kissed in harmony. He reveals his righteousness, Christ, by whose obedience he has made us the very righteousness of God. God accepts me!

Then the terror we had of God ceases, the enmity against God ceases to rule us, the fear of approaching God is cast out because God's perfect love is shed abroad in our hearts.

1 John 4: 18: There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

For the first time, we believe on Christ, we are made honest, we confess our sins, we believe Christ has worked all our works for us so that we are accepted of God by what he has done. Now we...

Hebrews 10:22...draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Psalm 57: 7: My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise.

Now doing his will becomes the delight of a son to our loving Father. God puts his will into our hearts, making you

Hebrews 13:21...perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

When the old man screams, "Don't trust God too much!" God's keeping hand turns us away from that old nature in repentance to faith in Christ our All.

So you see how that reconciliation is wrought by God FOR us and reconciliation is wrought by God IN us. So truly our being reconciled to God is all of God, not of us, by the blood of Christ, applied by God the Holy Spirit.

III. PRESENT

Colossians 1: 22:...To present you holy and unblameable, and unreprovable in his sight.

God the Father has done all this in his Son, Christ Jesus and gave us his Spirit to present you himself in his sight the only way he will receive you. Right now Christ our High Priest appears in the presence of God for us. Before his Father, in his sight, Christ our High Priest bears our names on his breastplate. Our life is hid with Christ in God. Then one day, Christ will deliver up the kingdom to the Father and say, "lo, I and the children thou hast given me"—not one will be lost. (Hebrews 2: 13)

Holy and Unblameable and Unreprovable

He will present you...in his perfect, all knowing, sight holy and unblameable, and unreprovable. As verse 12 says, the Father, hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

Christ is the righteousness and sanctification (outward and inward) of the believer. He is our perfect obedience. All our sins were purged away by his sacrifice. Our persons are washed and cleansed in his blood. We are clothed with his spotless righteousness. Our hearts are sanctified by his Spirit. He shall present us in all the beauties of holiness. Christ will present us to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, as a bride prepared for her husband.

Illustration: Can you imagine a bride showing up to her wedding, claiming to be the bride but the groom had never met her. He knows them that are his.

Sinner, be honest with God. You can plead all your works, deny your sins, while you claim you believe God, but this one simple fact will betray you to him, in that day, he will say, "Depart from me, I never knew you....Bind him hand and foot and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Illustration: Can you imagine a stranger showing up before the King, claiming she is the king's daughter, wearing a garment that she made claiming the king made it. We can't fool Christ our King.

Christ "The king's daughter is all glorious within; [her glory within is that she is born of the King's Seed, she's his daughter, partaker of the Divine nature of Christ the King—Christ is our Sanctification within] her clothing is of wrought gold. [it is the robe Christ the King himself made for his daughter to wear—our righteous just standing before God by his obedience]" (Psalm 45:13.)

We can't fool Christ. Those given him of the Father were alienated and enemies in our minds by wicked works, but by his pure holy person and perfect work we are reconciled by him, all shall be born of him, robed by him, presented by him: and shall be his **holy and unblameable, and unreprovable workmanship**.

IV. CONTINUE

Colossians 1: 23 If ye CONTINUE in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

Believer, Continue in the Faith

Our faith will proven to be the gift of God if we endure to the end trusting Christ and him alone. "He that endureth to the end, shall be saved."

Some are moved away from the hope of the gospel: for the works of the law or to join with the deceitful workers or for the wages of unrighteousness or for some other crooked way. They are debtors to keep the

whole law, Christ shall profit them nothing. There remains nothing but to fearful dread of the day of judgment.

Psalm 125:5: As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.

It proves they were nothing but a fraud from the beginning. It is not that such a one was a saint who fell away. They were never the workmanship of God. True faith endures to the end because God finishes what he begins: Paul said, "Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day" (Acts 26:22)

Philippians 1: 6:...he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

Grounded and Settled

How do we continue in the faith? **V23:...grounded and settled.** Christ is our Foundation our sure Cornerstone, born-again believers are living stones, fitly framed together, God's house, built upon Christ our Foundation. The house is truly grounded on the foundation when it "settles down" on the foundation—grounded and settled.

The Hope of the Gospel

Be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you have heard. The hope of the gospel is Christ. The anchor of our soul is Christ who has entered within the veil. You are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. Therefore our hope is sure and steadfast. If Christ is truly our hope, you will not be moved away from the hope of the gospel.

Matthew 7: 24: Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

I have preached this same gospel since the day we first met. You who have heard our Gospel inwardly know we have a good hope through grace. We must endure much tribulation. But whatever trials come, whatever doubts or fears, hope against hope and believe against unbelief. His strength is made perfect in weakness. Look nowhere else but Christ. Ye are complete in him. May the Lord ground and settle us more with these words as only he can.

Amen!