

*Removing the Barriers
to Reconciliation*

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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*And all things are of God, who hath
reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ,
and hath given to us
the ministry of reconciliation;*

*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.*

*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.*

*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.*

—2 Corinthians 5:18-21

INTRODUCTION

So often when people are hurting, they will go to their pastor for counsel. He listens and will not interrupt because he loves them. With *compassion he understands that their hurt and wounds are often the result of damage inflicted by others.*

Sometimes, though, the tremendous suffering many Christians experience began with subtle negativity and rebellion against the will of God. It happened because they didn't go to the Cross in their situation; they did not reckon that they were crucified with Christ in the details they were facing (Galatians 2:20).

In this booklet, we will look at the barriers that keep us from experiencing reconciliation and God's provision for removing them. Whether it is sin, guilt, or the effects of living in a body of death, Colossians 1:20 says that reconciliation is impossible except it is done through the cross of Christ who made peace for us through His blood.

Chapter One

REDEMPTION: THE BASIS FOR RECONCILIATION

“Giving thanks to the Father.... Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled” (Colossians 1:12-14, 21).

When the apostle Paul was writing to the church in the city of Colosse, many forms of religious worship were going on there. Epaphras, the pastor-teacher of the Colossian church, was faced with the complexity and confusion of so many philosophical backgrounds among the new believers. He wanted Paul to come and help him, but Paul was in prison, so Epaphras went to him.

One religious philosophical group causing problems there was the Gnostics. These clever intellectuals would go to church, but they believed the pastor-teacher was not very bright, so they stirred up strife and division in the church. The fact was that Epaphras was a magnificent pastor-teacher with a good congregation. Yet, this group felt superior because of their knowledge, which contradicted the truth.

In his letter to the Colossians, chapter 1:3-14, Paul first prayed for the Colossian church. With every opportunity, Paul asked God to intervene in Colosse: “Epaphras is young, and he is disturbed, but he is doing his very best. Help him.” Then Paul prayed for the assembly.

He Paid the Highest Price

But Paul did not just pray. He also clearly revealed God’s truth about the doctrinal problems, such as the doctrine of reconciliation. In Colossians 1:13, Paul said that once we are saved, God transfers us positionally from the supernatural kingdom of darkness into “the kingdom of his dear Son.” The Greek text brings out a deeper meaning about the Son, “whom the Father loves with a special objective love.”

When Paul addressed the Savior in Colos-

sians 1:14, he wrote: “*in whom we have redemption....*” Christ is the One “in whom we have redemption”! This is a very important passage because the word for redemption, *apolutrosis* in the Greek, conveys a picture of buying back a slave or a captive; his situation is reversed and he is made free by the payment of a ransom. This principle is so important in the doctrine of salvation.

The Gnostics changed what God said about redemption. They changed the doctrine of salvation from God’s viewpoint. They changed the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ’s incarnation and hypostatic union as the God-Man. Still, they continued going to the church in Colosse for one reason: to divide and to influence its members by proselytizing with false doctrine.

Paul’s answer to Epaphras’ request for help was to bring in the truth that Christ has provided redemption through His precious blood (Colossians 1:14). In this passage, we have the doctrine of redemption, the “buying back.”

Ransomed!

Just think of where we were and what we have been bought back from! According to Ephesians 2:1-3, “...you hath he quickened, who

were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air....” We had our conversations in times past in the lust of the flesh. We were fulfilling the unusual lust patterns that occupy the fallen nature of the soul of man.

“But,” Paul said, “through the blood of Christ, by His vicarious death, burial, and resurrection, once you truly believed, you were bought back.”

And so, God supernaturally quickened us, just as we were, when we were dead in sins. Justifying the ungodly, He raised us up together and seated us together with Him in the heavens.

When you think of redemption, only *you* know what God has delivered you from. But when God takes away lust patterns, He does it so that you don’t even have them. At least, they have no dominion over you—no power and no authority.

You can now experience deliverance in your conscience because you not only accepted redemption for salvation, but you also received the divine standards of Jesus Christ (which become your norms and standards as you hear the

Word of God). This is what God is saying when He calls us a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Former Slaves, Now Adopted Sons of God

Redemption is mentioned in Job 19:25a, “I know my redeemer liveth.” Here it also means to be purchased from slavery. The principle of redemption begins with the concept of bondage to the old sin nature and freedom from its domination and its damnation. No longer are we servants to the flesh, because Christ purchased our freedom from the slave market of sin (Psalm 34:22; I Peter 1:18,19) and redeemed us from the curse of the law.

Redemption through *expiation* (Christ’s dying for us and as us) emphasizes the character of the Son, Jesus Christ, and the love that results from propitiation. *Propitiation* (the Son satisfying the Father’s justice and righteousness by offering Himself as the perfect sacrifice) emphasizes the character of the Father who could not look upon sin. Though Jesus knew no sin, the Father made Him sin *for* us.

Redemption includes the precious principle of adoption. When He redeemed us, we became adopted children of God (Galatians 4:4-6). It is the basis for our eternal inheritance (Hebrews

9:15). It is the basis for our justification (Romans 3:24). So now being adopted as children on earth, whenever God leads us, we can say, “Abba, Father.” My Father!

Chapter Two

BREAKING THE BARRIERS

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Colossians 1:20).

The Bible says that at the Cross, we were presented with a clean slate. Then, the first thing God did was to make peace for us. Once we have been redeemed, it is forever; however, there will be times in our growth when we do not experience our new position as adopted children of God. For this reason, it is so important to understand the doctrine of reconciliation.

There are barriers that can keep us “alienated and enemies” in our mind, but they have all been taken care of through God’s provision (Colossians 1:21).

The First Barrier: Imputed Sin

First we had the barrier of *imputed sin* that

would keep us from ever being saved, even before we personally sinned (Romans 5:12). It means that God simply condemned us by charging sin to our account before we had a chance to sin. This imputation was the genius of God, who knew that we would personally sin. It was a miracle of love!

You see, as long as He imputed sin to us *before* we committed personal sin, that gave Him a right to intervene for us before we ever got right. That is why, the moment we believed, He was able to impute His righteousness to us—adding it to our account, freely—apart from the law and without works (Romans 4:6). So, imputed righteousness takes care of the barrier of imputed sin.

The ungodly believed, and He justified the ungodly. We believed, and our sin was imputed to Jesus Christ—the precious, merciful, gracious Son of God! The barrier is gone, and we have His righteousness. When our sin went upon Him who knew no sin, it was called an ‘unrealistic’ imputation. Jesus never had an old sin nature, yet all of our sins were placed on Him. This means that none of our sins had a basis in Him because He knew no sin. That’s why it is called an unrealistic imputation.

Because we now have God’s righteousness,

He imputes many blessings to us. This is called a ‘realistic’ imputation, because there is a basis to receive the blessings. In other words, now that we are saved, you and I have His righteousness as a robe (Isaiah 61:10). Therefore, He has a basis to give us many other things by ‘real’ imputation. When a marriage or a business is blessed by God, it is because of the principle of God being able to bless His nature in us. It is a *real* imputation.

*Sins, Death, Iniquity, Evil, Guilt:
God’s Way Out*

The second barrier is the old sin nature and its production of personal sins. The first gift God gave to Adam was ‘free volition’: the ability to choose to obey God, or not (Joshua 24:15, Romans 3:12). Adam chose to sin, and sin came into the world (Genesis 3). God knew that once Adam fell, we too would choose to sin because we inherited Adam’s nature (Job 5:7).

So, on the cross Jesus Christ bore all of our personal sins. As He bore them, that barrier was removed. It is now a “Son” question and not a “sin” question.

The third barrier we face is the fact of our natural birth into a body of death. Every one of

us has a body that will die some day. To overcome that, He offers us a supernatural birth into a new life with Jesus Christ where the soul never dies. The body dies, of course, but the soul goes directly to be with Jesus, carried by the angels into the presence of God. Christ offers eternal life to anyone who will receive it—and now, that barrier is gone.

The fourth barrier is iniquity with its production of evil (the infections of the serpent, Satan). Iniquity, as it was in Lucifer, is emotional rebellion against spiritual authority, combined with the belief that the one who represents that authority is unjust. Iniquity enters people's emotions, damaging them and causing people to rebel and to feel they have been treated unfairly. Iniquity caused Satan to go to the angels and enlist one third of them to rebel against Christ and against God (Revelation 12:4).

But through the Cross, where grace married faith, God took away iniquity. He took care of it by bearing our iniquity and not imputing it to us. In place of iniquity, He gives us absolute and total liberation through categorical doctrine, which is the mind of Christ revealed through Scripture.

When Jesus shed His blood on Calvary, He

paid for our sins and iniquities; however, He did not die for Satan's government of evil.

Most evil is the government of Satan and can be the result of living in iniquity. It infects the mind; therefore, it can only be healed by receiving the mind of God through categorical Bible doctrine. The person infected with evil needs to hear the Word of God continuously, to fill up the five parts of his soul (including the mind, emotions, conscience, self-consciousness, and volition). He needs to purpose to be around spiritual believers who will be faithful to build him up in the Word of truth and will not compromise with any negative communication.

Even as God took away these barriers, for many believers guilt is a tremendous barrier—the fig leaves, the fear complex. But He took guilt away with unconditional subjective love, and it is no longer a barrier if we give it to Him.

Through the Blood

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:14). Many ministries today teach that the Old Testament sacrifice doesn't mean a thing. There are those who say that when the Word of God speaks of the blood, it is just “a token of death”—

that the only thing that matters is the spiritual death of Jesus Christ and not the blood of Christ. *We strongly oppose that teaching!*

The Bible says in 1 Peter 1:18-19, that we have not been redeemed with corruptible things, like silver and gold that perish. Rather, we have been redeemed “with the *precious* blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” That blood was *precious*, meaning of the highest possible honor and value.

God killed an animal and blood was shed when He covered Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21). Abel offered the blood of a lamb before God, and his offering was accepted (Genesis 4:4). The Word of God says clearly that in the land of Goshen, when God was about to smite all the first-born of Egypt, He commanded Israel to put the blood of a spotless lamb on three parts of the door “...and *when I see the blood*, I will pass over you...” (Exodus 12:13). God didn’t say, “When I see the dead animal,” but, “when I see the blood.” And everyone who obeyed lived.

The Effectual Work of the Blood

In many of the Old Testament sacrifices, the animals were killed in the outer court, but the priests had to take the blood and sprinkle it

seven times on the mercy seat in the holy place (Leviticus 16:14). Every vessel in the tabernacle had to be touched with the blood. In every case, it was the blood that did the work. Certainly, the spiritual death was necessary, the physical death was necessary, but *the blood was key*.

It Is the Blood of God

This is why we have the doctrine of the efficacious blood. The first thing to consider when you think of the blood is this: Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22).

Then, think of communion—the bread for the body, and the blood. We don't want to trample the blood of Jesus Christ under our feet, nor do we count the blood of the covenant, where-with we were sanctified, an unholy thing (Hebrews 10:29).

If the blood has no redemptive value, then it has no value at all. And what did God use to purchase our redemption? Acts 20:28 says it was the blood of God. Was it in human form? Yes. But there was no old sin nature in His human blood. In the Virgin Birth, when Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit and no man, it was the blood of God himself in human form—perfect blood

with no disease and no sin in it.

Just imagine how Satan has deceived scholars and men who mock the Blood. Seventy-five years ago, it would have been unheard of to say that the Blood is not the issue, that it is only spiritual death. Guard your heart. Do not ever be influenced into compromising through rationalization the necessity of the blood of Christ for our atonement.

Chapter Three

UNLIMITED FORGIVENESS

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even the forgiveness of sins*” (Colossians 1:14). In the original Greek, the word we translate as “forgiveness” is *aphesis*, a compound derivative of the verb *hiemi*, “to send” and *apo*, “away from.” As to our sins, forgiveness means “to send them away forever, legally.”

Since he was cast down from heaven, Satan has been on trial, and Jesus Christ is the prosecuting attorney in the courtroom of heaven. For now, Satan is out on appeal. But every time he tries to use us as witnesses for his defense by accusing us before the Father, Jesus presents the Blood. Satan admits our sin as evidence, and Jesus answers, “Send it away forever!”

In this principle, God takes our sins and sends them away forever—all of them. So, forgiveness was provided on the cross when our sins were paid for. They have been blotted out

(Isaiah 43:25). Also, that Blood is always available for rebound when we have isolated times of failure.

Furthermore, the Word of God says that forgiveness is something that has happened forever (Psalm 85:2; Psalm 103:12). We have received limitless forgiveness for unlimited vengeance—that is the difference. The Christian has unlimited forgiveness; the unsaved person has unlimited vengeance because he never accepts God's forgiveness (Genesis 4:14; Psalm 99:8).

Fear and Guilt—Gone!

And here is the beauty in this principle of forgiveness: With the forgiveness, guilt is gone. With the forgiveness (when it is understood), fear is gone, and the conscience is spiritually cleansed (Hebrews 9:14).

Picture the difference between someone who is unsaved and struggling with very real fear and guilt, and someone who has been totally forgiven by grace, who can never have any sin or iniquity imputed. If we continue in sin, of course, we will be influenced by the knockout blow of evil. And if we continue in evil, God will take us home early, after a series of chastisements that result in the sin unto physical death.

God takes a Christian home early because they are hurting His testimony, misrepresenting His grace, and carelessly using His love for their own pleasures. God knows these believers will never get right and that it is better for them to be in heaven with Him.

The Beauty of Forgiveness That Forgets

Think of it: Hastings, a well-known Bible scholar, says that there is no limit to God's forgiveness. He wrote that there is no limit to the readiness of a Christian to forgive others who has received His forgiveness.* Bitterness, negativity, vindictiveness, and implacability all leave when we truly understand forgiveness.

Picture the number of people who said a prayer to God and sensed a release the first time they knew that they were truly forgiven. The beautiful thing is that God will never remember our sin (Hebrews 8:12; 10:17). People will search for the sins of Israel and the iniquity of Judah, but the sins will not be found (Jeremiah 50:20).

The only way this kind of forgiveness is revealed is when we are tenderhearted and forgive others through the Holy Spirit as God forgives us. In 1 Kings 8:30, the word *calach* says when you hear a negative report or accusation,

forgive.

Joseph forgave his brethren, as his father told him (Genesis 45; 50:16-21). The word *nacah*, used here for “forgive,” includes the meaning of carrying a burden for others. In other words, Joseph said, “They have hurt me repeatedly, but I will carry the burden by totally forgiving them supernaturally through the grace of God as a good steward of grace.”

Do you want to learn how to praise God? Just think of the Redemption, the Blood, and forgiveness.

As Soon As You Hear It, Forgive

A verse that is seldom taught in pulpits today is Matthew 6:14: “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” When you hear that somebody is running you down, the moment you hear it, forgive.

I don’t see Matthew 6:14 practiced often enough. Do you know what people do instead? We have tendencies that when we hear that somebody is on our case, we dwell on it for hours, or even days. But the attack is a test of whether we have the fruit of forgiveness.

About the things we hear that come against

us personally, a great man of God once said, “If it isn’t true, thank God it isn’t and be quiet. If it is true, get right and thank God they said it!”

**Hastings, James. A Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 1 (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988), p. 57.*

CONCLUSION

When we discover what has already been accomplished for us, we can begin to walk in the fullness of our potential as new creatures in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Thank God that for many of us, the barriers have come down, and we have been reconciled to God and to each other. It didn't happen through a system of works in the flesh. It wasn't mandated by letter-of-the-law legalists. The victory was revealed by the spirit of reconciliation given to us because of the Blood.

Because God brought down the barriers, every Christian in the world can have a spirit of reconciliation. With no barriers left, all we have to do is to walk by faith in the nature of God's Word, in the life of His Spirit, in the wisdom of His knowledge, in the fervency of His love, in the preciousness of His faith, and in the mercy of His grace.

Dear heavenly Father, thank You for Your rem-

edy when we run into barriers. Your Word is Truth. Your victory over sin and death is eternal. Holy Spirit, bring these things to our remembrance whenever we forget. Lord Jesus, thank You that You reconciled us to God in one body by Your cross and Your own shed blood. In Jesus' name, Amen.