



Taking Some Time to Reconnect with God

May 27, 2020

Prayer:

O Christ, You have indeed, been raised from the dead. Therefore, let us live as though death no longer holds us hostage, putting our hope in the One who goes before us, both in death and in eternal life, our Savior, Christ. Amen.

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:3

2 Corinthians 5:11-6:3 New International Version (NIV)

¹¹ Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. ¹² We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. ¹³ If we are “out of our mind,” as some say, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴ For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

⁶ As God’s co-workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. ² For he says,

“In the time of my favor I heard you,
and in the day of salvation I helped you.”

I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.

³ We put no stumbling block in anyone’s path, so that our ministry will not be discredited.

Reflect:

Back in the days of paper statements and writing checks, before the advent of debit cards and online banking, there was a thing called ‘Reconciling the Checkbook.’ Many of you may remember that, but for those of you who have never experienced it, it went something like this: All month long, when you spent money from your checkbook—either by writing a check or making a cash withdrawal at the bank—you had a little ledger in the back of your checkbook that you would use to keep a running total of how much money you had. You’d write down all the money that went into the account, and all the money that went out, carefully doing the addition and subtraction so you knew how much money you still had. Then at the beginning of the next month, you’d get a statement from the bank that would show all the deposits and checks that had been received and processed by the bank in that time. It’d show you a starting balance and an ending balance. With that in hand, you’d take your checkbook—the ledger that you’d been keeping all month long—and reconcile

the two. The goal was to make sure that the statement you got from the bank and the ledger you had in your checkbook were consistent with each other, especially allowing for transactions that had been begun but not completed. All the checks that you wrote and that the bank had received and paid out were marked as Cleared. All the checks that you'd written but hadn't been received and paid out by the bank were left Uncleared. Then you'd check your math against the bank's math to make sure that you both agreed that you had the amount of money in the account that you thought you did. It was a process that would help you make sure you hadn't forgotten any transactions and would help you avoid the dreaded 'overdrawn' fee. If everything was accounted for, that was great. If not, then you needed to make "an adjustment" to the account.

TL;DR¹: Reconciling your bank account makes sure that your records and the bank's records match.

Paul says that through the death and resurrection of Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not holding people's sins against them. God was restoring the relationship that used to exist between God and His people in the Garden of Eden—the relationship that was irrevocably broken by sin, by humanities desire to decide for ourselves what's OK and what's Not OK, rather than trusting what God said about OK and Not OK. Sin made our relationship irrevocably broken—at least from our side. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God did what we could not do, and provided a way for our relationship with God to be healed—for us to be reconciled with God. God covered the checks that we couldn't and didn't hold the 'overdrawn' fees against us.

In the course of all that, God provided a process—a way of life, really—for us to make sure that our records and God's records match. God sent the Holy Spirit to not only reset our account, but to help us continue to be reconciled with God. Only the "account" is not line items and transactions, what God wants to reconcile is our way of life to the Kingdom of God.

This is the ministry of reconciliation to which Paul and his traveling colleagues were called. This is the ministry of reconciliation to which the Church at Corinth was called. And this is the ministry of reconciliation to which you and I are called: to announce the forgiveness that Jesus offers us, and to live together lives that seek to reconcile our way of life to the Kingdom of God.

As you look at your life, does it match the Kingdom of God, or do you need to make an adjustment?

Be Blessed:

May you find hope and peace that death has been swallowed up in victory.
Amen.

¹ TL;DR means "Too long; Didn't read." A TL;DR works like Cliff Notes. . .