

Sermon #31

Reconciliation

{Make sure that the empty offering plates are on the altar, that pens are available in the pews, and that the “Part One” handouts have been distributed to the congregation. }

Let us hear the words of our Lord Jesus Christ:

{Read Matthew 5:21-24 **on the first handout page}**

As you see on your handout, “reconcile” means to “bring back to friendship after estrangement; to settle or adjust, as a quarrel; to harmonize.”

Now, ask the Lord to bring to your remembrance any brother or sister in the congregation who has something against you, and write their names on the paper provided.

{Sit down and make your own list as the congregation is making theirs; wait several minutes or until it appears that most people are done. }

Now, if anyone has no names on their list, they may come forward and bring their offering; but don’t put it in the offering plate just yet.

{Wait for people bringing offerings to line up at the front }

Now, before any of these people give their offering, each person in the congregation should examine their heart and ask, “Do I have anything against any of the people standing up there giving an offering?” If your answer is “yes,” that you do have something against one or more of them, please stand at this time.

{Look over the congregation; if anyone is standing, ask the person to name who he/she has something against. Then ask the named person to return to the pew, and write the name of the other person on their list. Do this until everyone who stood has been recognized. }

Now, those of you who are still standing here to give an offering, there is no one in the congregation who has anything against you, so you may go ahead and give your offering. And please remain for the rest of the service because we might need you for the next part of reconciliation.

{Wait for them to give offerings and return to their seats }

The rest of you look at the names on your lists. Now, go to these people, one at a time, and reconcile with them. Check them off your list as you reconcile with each.

{Wait for people to do this; stay for as long as needed. When everyone is finished and is ready to move on, ask the ushers to hand out the second page, "Reconciliation – part II." }

Let us again hear the words of our Lord Jesus Christ:

{Read Matthew 18:15-17 and Luke 17:3-4 **from the second handout page}**

Now, on this list, write the names of any people in the congregation who you perceive have wronged you (and/or your dependents, if they are too young to reconcile by themselves). This list can include anyone who came to you to reconcile but who you perceive was insincere and non-repentant.

{Wait a few minutes }

Now, go to each person on the list and tell them how you perceive they have wronged you. Do what you can to reconcile. If a person listens to you, and the two of you reconcile, check his/her name off your list. However, if genuine reconciliation does not occur, put one "X" to the right of the name.

{Wait for people to do this. }

Now, those of you who have all the names checked on both pages are free to come and bring your offering. As before, if anyone perceives they have been wronged by someone bringing an offering, please stand.

{Go through same process again. }

Now, those who have “X’s” on their list, ask one or two people to accompany you as witnesses to try again to reconcile with the “X” person. Choose from the people who have already given offerings, if possible, since they have already reconciled to others. Witnesses, you just listen to what each person has to say, and ask God to enable you to discern what is going on and who is or isn’t listening to whom. If the two people reconcile, check off the person’s name on the list. If there still is no reconciliation, put a second “X” by that person’s name.

{Wait for people to do this.}

Now, does anyone have a name on his/her list that is not checked off, that has two X’s by it? If so, please stand and tell us the name of the person.

{If there is anyone standing, ask them the name and ask the other person to stand, as well as the witnesses who heard what was said between them. Let the Lord show you what to do and what words to say to help them reconcile. If there is still no reconciliation, let the church judge whether or not one or both is refusing to listen; and whoever is judged to be at fault should be removed from all positions of leadership and service until he/she has a change of heart, and the congregation should be encouraged to leave that person alone until he reconciles himself.}

Today, we have reconciled among ourselves, and that is very good. But remember, we have many other brothers and sisters who are not part of our congregation.

If you truly want to follow Christ, go through this reconciliation process with any other of God’s children outside this church who you have wronged or who has wronged you.

Don’t bring any more offerings to this church until you have completed the reconciliation process with each of them, according to Jesus’ instructions.

May you have a week of successful reconciliation!

“Do not be deceived by your religion.
If you do what is right, you will be blessed with peace,
joy and fulfillment.
If you do what is wrong, you will lack.

I, the Lord your God, know what is right and good,
and I can and will show you the way.
My path is good and true, fruitful and rewarding.
Do what I say.
Love how I love.
Give how I give.
Forgive and forget.
Be honest and true.
Do not fret over those who hate you; just love and forgive.
Be at peace in Me.”

Notes:

Reconciliation – Part Two

¹⁵“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ ¹⁷And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.”
Matthew 18:15-17

“If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.”
Luke 17:3-4

Those who have sinned against me but who have not repented:

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
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When you have completed the reconciliation process with each person, put a check in the box beside each name.

Do not give any offerings or tithes to the church until all of your boxes on both pages are checked. In the future, if you discover that someone has something against you, or if someone sins against you, write their name on the appropriate list and stop giving offerings until you have reconciled and checked them off the list.

If you have not been honest in this reconciliation process, or if you have not forgiven your brother, you are a hypocrite, and you are shutting yourself out of the Kingdom of God. Is this really what you want?