

HE DIED TO MAKE HIS ENEMIES, FRIENDS

I. Colossians 1:15-23

A. I watched a movie earlier this past week called, "*Christmas Grace*."

The movie's about a Christian man who owns a small toy store. He soon learns that a very large toy store is moving in across the street. The sinister manager of the new store comes into the small store and tells the owner he will do everything possible to see his puny store goes out of business. Shortly thereafter a delivery comes to the new store. The shipment on the truck also includes items for the little store. So the dastardly manager bribes the delivery guys to dump the goods bound for the store across the street. Because it's close to Christmas and the shipment is so vital to the little store, the lost revenue forces the small store to close. About this same time, the Christian man's wife learns she's pregnant. The financial strain looms large. But the couple turns to prayer and seeking God for direction.

Soon the out of work toy store owner invents a clever new game. He patents it and it sells like hotcakes. He profits so much that he's able to reopen his store. Loyal customers are elated and return in droves. Meanwhile business in the big store tanks and now they face closure. But instead of acting in malice, the Christian owner secretly cuts a check for \$200,000 to bail out the big store. Eventually the evil manager finds out who's behind the bailout and he's stunned and humbled. He then repents and turns to Christ. By the following year, the Christian owner and his former rival are in business together. Enemies are turned into friends.

C. Last week we talked about Jesus' command to love our enemies. God loved His enemies so much He sent His Son to die for them and reconcile them to Himself. To reconcile means to turn enemies into friends. We are among those He turned! The symbol for reconciliation between God and man was the first Christmas tree--the cross. Jesus may have been born in a manger but He was always destined for the cross. As for the evidence of His successful mission of reconciliation, He left us His empty tomb. The Bread & Cup remind us we're no longer enemies.

D. Colossians 1:15-23 (NIV) tells us about the Reconciler, Who He was long before that Bethlehem stable. This would be no ordinary Babe lying in that manger...

1) V15-17: 15 *The Son (Jesus the Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (Creation was a Trinitarian endeavor with God the Son acting in full participation! **John 1:1-3 (ESV) puts it like this: 1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. Need more? **Hebrews 1:1-3a (ESV) pounds the point: 1** Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, **2** but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. **3a** He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power.)*

2) V18-20: 18 *And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross. (The Bread & Cup boldly remind us!)*

3) V21-23: Next comes your testimony: 21 *Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation-- 23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. (Once enemies, now friends, because of the blood shed by Jesus Christ. The Bread & Cup remind us.)*

E. A number of years ago, Christian author and businessman, Os Hillman, published a true story about a sea captain and one of his crew members...

A Christian man worked on a cargo ship and he often shared his faith with others. He was a good worker, respected by his peers. His boss was the captain. One day this crew member led the sea captain's girlfriend to Christ. The sea captain already hated and ridiculed the Christian worker because of his faith in Christ. When his girlfriend came to Christ, she stopped sleeping with the captain. The captain blamed the Christian man for the change in his girlfriend. So one day he entered the restaurant where the Christian man was having lunch. He walked over to his table and began hurling obscenities and began beating him. The Christian man simply tried to defend himself but did not fight back. The captain kept beating him until eventually the man lay on the floor bleeding.

Two men entered the restaurant and saw what was taking place. They jumped the sea captain and took him outside and began beating him. The sea captain was beaten so badly that he needed immediate medical attention. The Christian worker saw the condition of the sea captain, came to his aid, and began helping him. The sea captain was so moved that this man could do this after he had literally beaten him bloody that he began to weep, not understanding what could move a man to have such love in the face of being beaten. The sea captain accepted Jesus at that moment. **(Once again, enemies are turned to friends!)**

*** Pray and Serve Communion...**

*** Romans 5:9-11 (ESV) is our Benediction Verse:** **9** *Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God.* **10** *For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life.* **11** *More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Colossians 1:15-23 (NIV)

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16** For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. **17** He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. **18** And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. **19** For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, **20** and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross. **21** Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. **22** But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation-- **23** if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

John 1:1-3 (ESV)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.

Hebrews 1:1-3a (ESV)

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, **2** but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. **3** He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power.

Romans 5:9-11 (ESV)

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Film Clips & Other Links

Millersport Covenant Church Sermon Podcasts (MP3s on iTunes)

<http://millersportcc.com/feed/podcast>

"Jesus, Thank You" - (Renew Cover) Sovereign Grace Music

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQw1loTeWwA>

WWII Veteran Jack Tueller: "I Shook the Hand of the Enemy"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBuHokEpxiE>

Enemies Become Friends - Assignment America - CBS Evening News

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5nelyf6jQk0>

"Christmas Grace" (Movie Trailer)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Jgb5HR2PQE>

Bonus Stuff

Suffering for the Salvation of Another

by Os Hillman I posted 10/05/04

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. — Matthew 5:11

Recently, a friend told a true story about one of his closest friends who experienced great suffering for the soul of his persecutor. This man worked on a cargo ship. His boss was the captain. This friend was a committed Christian who shared his faith with others and was a good worker. One day the friend led the sea captain's girlfriend to Christ. The sea captain already hated and ridiculed the Christian worker because of his faith in Christ. When his girlfriend came to Christ, she stopped sleeping with the captain. The captain blamed the Christian man for the change in his girlfriend. One day he entered the restaurant where the Christian man was having lunch. He walked over to his table and began hurling obscenities and began beating him. The Christian man simply tried to defend himself but did not fight back. The captain kept beating him until eventually the man lay on the floor bleeding.

Two men entered the restaurant and saw what was taking place. They jumped the sea captain and took him outside and began beating him. The sea captain was beaten so badly that he needed immediate medical attention. The Christian worker saw the condition of the sea captain, came to his aid, and began helping him. The sea captain was so moved that this man could do this after he had literally beaten him bloody that he began to weep, not understanding what could move a man to have such love in the face of being beaten. The sea captain accepted Jesus at that moment.

The Bible tells us that while we were yet sinners Christ came and paid our penalty so that we might live eternally. Many in the workplace have never known the love of Christ. You might be the only one they ever meet who can introduce them to this love. Ask God to show you how to love the unlovable in your workplace today.

Quote by A.B. Simpson

A. B. Simpson is reported to have said that the gospel "Tells rebellious men that God is reconciled, that justice is satisfied, that sin has been atoned for, that the judgment of the guilty may be revoked, the condemnation of the sinner cancelled, the curse of the Law blotted out, the gates of hell closed, the portals of heaven opened wide, the power of sin subdued, the guilty conscience healed, the broken heart comforted, the sorrow and misery of the Fall undone."

- *Evangelism, A Biblical Approach*, M. Cocoris, Moody, 1984, p. 29.

Lyrics by Charles Wesley

"Hark the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born king." Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!

Quote by Wayne Grudem

"[The incarnation] is by far the most amazing miracle of the entire Bible--far more amazing than the resurrection and more amazing even than the creation of the universe. The fact that the infinite, omnipotent, eternal Son of God could become man and join Himself to a human nature forever, so that infinite God became one person with finite man, will remain for eternity the most profound miracle and the most profound mystery in all the universe."

- Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, Zondervan, p. 563.

Quote by J.I. Packer

"The Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child. The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as this truth of the Incarnation."

Quote by Athanasius

"He became what we are that He might make us what He is."

Quote by Martin Luther

"The mystery of the humanity of Christ, that He sunk Himself into our flesh, is beyond all human understanding."

Quote by St. Augustine

"He was created of a mother whom He created. He was carried by hands that He formed. He cried in the manger in wordless infancy, He the Word, without whom all human eloquence is mute."

Quote by C.S. Lewis

"The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God."

Quote by Charles H. Spurgeon

"Infinite, and an infant. Eternal, and yet born of a woman. Almighty, and yet hanging on a woman's breast. Supporting a universe, and yet needing to be carried in a mother's arms. King of angels, and yet the reputed Son of Joseph. Heir of all things, and yet the carpenter's despised Son."

John Piper on Christmas

"Christmas means that a King has been born, conceived in the womb of a virgin. And this King will reign over an everlasting kingdom that will be made up of millions and millions of saved sinners. The reason that this everlasting, virgin-born King can reign over a kingdom of sinners is because He was born precisely to die. And He did die. He died in our place and bore our sin and provided our righteousness and took away the wrath of God and defeated the evil one so that anyone, anywhere, of any kind can turn from the treason of sin to the true King, and put their faith in Him, and have everlasting joy."

Jesus, Thank You

By Pat Sczebel

http://www.sovereigngracemusic.org/Songs/Jesus_Thank_You/14

The mystery of the cross I cannot comprehend,
The agonies of Calvary.
You the perfect Holy One, crushed Your Son,
Who drank the bitter cup reserved for me.

Chorus:

Your blood has washed away my sin,
Jesus, thank You.
The Father's wrath completely satisfied,
Jesus, thank You.
Once Your enemy, now seated at Your table,
Jesus, thank You.

By Your perfect sacrifice I've been brought near,
Your enemy You've made Your friend.
Pouring out the riches of Your glorious grace,
Your mercy and Your kindness know no end.

Bridge:

Lover of my soul,
I want to live for You.

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