

## Reconciliation from God

There is peace and harmony in a happy family. It reminds me of the families of Pastor. Gerald's family and Yuko's daughter-in-law, Bethany's family. Also, if father and son are close, they can inherit their father's business. And they could learn from their father's mistakes and not make the same mistakes. A couple that gets along well is also a good example. After I divorced and became a single, I realized that there is a limit to what one person can do, but two people can make a better life together. Even if the husband's income is a little low, if the wife helps out a little with part-time work, the children will grow up and the family will prosper in a few years.

In our daily lives, it is beneficial in many ways to forgive each other's weaknesses, to reconcile with each other, and to live in harmony. The Bible speaks of reconciliation between God and us as one of the most beneficial aspects of reconciliation. If we can be reconciled to God, we can live the most wonderful and abundant life imaginable. Now look at verse 1. "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God

through our Lord Jesus Christ." We have been studying the grace of being justified by faith. First of all, all our past, present, and future sins have been forgiven. We have become God's children. We can receive the Holy Spirit and live holy lives in this world. We will not be judged when Jesus Christ comes to earth again, but we will have eternal life. And we will be transformed into a glorious image. Also, last month we learned about inheriting grace from God like Abraham.

Today, we come to the privilege of "justified saints" to be "reconciled to God." This reconciliation is made possible by the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, see verse 2, "through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God." The New Community Translation says 'into this grace,' but the New Revised Version, the colloquial translation, and the English translation all say "this grace in which we now stand." We are standing on grace. Jesus promised Peter (Matthew 16:18) "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." The "rock" on which the church stands here is this very 'grace'. Christianity has its foundation in this grace.

When I was in high school, I went to school at 7:30 a.m. and finished classes at 10:30 p.m. After that, I went to the library and studied for exams until 1:00 a.m. My high school teacher told me every day, "While you are sleeping, your competitors are learning English words." I and all my classmates were constantly abused by the competition. There was no grace in the college entrance exams for Korean high school students. The world does not teach grace. Jesus' parable in Matthew 20 introduces us to the wondrous world of God's grace. The owner of the vineyard gave one denarius to each worker who came at 9 am, 12 pm, 3pm and 5 pm. This is a world of wondrous grace that would be unthinkable in a competitive society. We are led into this grace through "faith" in Jesus Christ.

The word "led into" is used here to mean 'to go before kings and judges,' but it is originally a ritualistic expression to enter the sanctuary where God is present. **Hebrews 4:16, "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."** This grace enables us to go out boldly to God and pray. And because God is rich in His grace, He enriches our lives. **John 1:16, "Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given."**

Guided by this grace, we desire the glory of God. The "glory of God" refers to the second coming of Jesus Christ. We who desire this glory of God can rejoice greatly. Christian joy is a joy that is different from the values of this world. Look at verses 3-4, **"Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."** We hope for the glory of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and we are proud even of our tribulations. We will not be disappointed because this hope will be realized. We have perseverance, discipline, and hope through suffering. This hope is because we see the glory of Jesus Christ.

**1 John 3:2, "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."** Our goal in life is to see God's glory. We Christians have the hope of becoming more like Jesus Christ and eventually meeting Him face to face.

Look at **verse 5, "And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."**

We have hope because God's love has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. So what is the love of God poured out by the Holy Spirit. This love is the love of Jesus Christ who died for sinners.

Look at **verses 6-7, "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die."** Jesus died for us when we were still weak and

when we were still sinning, not even believing in Jesus Christ, when we were worshipping the values of this world as idols without the awareness that God is our Father.

In Japan and Korea, there were rare college students who threw Molotov cocktails and sacrificed their lives for the realization of democracy. We sometimes see human beings lay down their lives for what is right, for justice, for principles, for respected leaders, but not a single person would die for a sinner for a change. If asked if you would lay down your life in exchange for the death penalty for thugs, no one would choose a death with no meaning or justice.

But Jesus Christ died for us while we were sinners. See v. 8 and v.9. "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!" The Bible says we are under God's wrath. We deserved to be judged by God for our sins, but Jesus Christ died for us sinners. We are sinners from the time we are born and we are sinners until we die. We are born in a state of life sentence, or even death sentence, in God's wrath. But if we believe in the grace and love that Jesus Christ died on the cross for us in this state, only then can we be saved from God's wrath.

Look at verse 10 and 11. "For if while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life (10)! Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation." Through Jesus Christ, God has extended God's own hand of reconciliation. Loving us as sinners, He Himself has prepared the way for us to be forgiven and saved. It is not reconciliation coming from mankind. And it is not reconciliation coming from an equal. It is a unilateral reconciliation from a righteous and holy God, an expression of His love.

2 Corinthians 5:19-21, "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 (19). 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 (20). God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (21). "We Christians have been reconciled and saved by believing in the gospel of the cross of Jesus Christ. And we are to share this gospel with many people. We are proud of this gospel of Jesus Christ. This gospel is not any philosophy, psychology, science, or political philosophy, but God's love itself. Do you accept this love of God? Do you believe in the cross of Jesus Christ?

As you know and prayed for me, I recently completed the greatest reconciliation project

of my life. I forgave my father for not providing for my family, for abusing me, and for leaving deep wounds in my mother, my sister, and me during my divorce. This is truly a miraculous event that would not have been possible without the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I thank you all for your prayers over the years for this.

I had PTSD symptoms because of my father, and even just recently I had flashback symptoms and it was hard for me. But I prayed earnestly to God for many long years. I want to forgive my father because Jesus tells me to forgive in the Bible. During the time I prayed for reconciliation with my father, it was really hard for me. But one day, this happened.

I said, "God, why do you ask me to forgive someone like my father? My father is a terrible sinner. Why? In my heart, God said, "I died on the cross for sinners. I died for your father's sins. I love your father, too." Wow, I was so overwhelmed by this. I realized that the grace of the cross of Jesus was that He died for sinners. And God loves even those criminal-like offenders. But I could not understand Jesus' heart and could not truly love my father whom even God loves. I realized that I had been committing the sin of hatred before God for decades. I said, "Jesus, I am sorry. I truly repented from my heart, saying, "Jesus, please forgive me for the decades I have hated and judged my father. And, I thanked Jesus Christ for His love that He died on the cross for my sins. Oh, right after that, I felt something that had been stuck in my chest for many years melt away. It was amazing. After this, I didn't hate my father at all. And the flashback symptoms disappeared completely. I experienced God's grace covering me completely.

This had happened before I met my father again several weeks ago. Fortunately, I had already completely forgiven my father before I met him. With this grace, I finally met my father. I expected just one word from my father, 'I am sorry. I did wrong to your mom, your sister and you.' However, my father was living as a complete victim more than my mother, my sister and me who were the real victims. There was no apology at all regarding his family he hurt. But amazingly, I listened to my father's pain for more than two hours, and I did not get angry at all. I felt the Holy Spirit in my heart saying, "Listen to your father." And I told him, "I'm sorry I couldn't be there for you when you were lonely and going through a hard time. In fact, these were the words I most wanted to hear from my father, but I could not hear them from him. But I realized that the Holy Spirit told me to do that. Because I have received great blessings and abundant grace from God. I did not rebel against my father, but instead comforted him, which seemed to calm him down. With this, I feel that my reconciliation with my father has been successful.

I am proud of the cross of Jesus Christ, because the gospel of the cross of Jesus Christ has given me freedom and life. This love of the cross of Jesus Christ is still powerful in 2022.

This cross accomplished reconciliation between God the Father and us as sinners. This

reconciliation is a unilateral love and grace from God. We who have received this abundant love of Jesus Christ are able to forgive others and be set free from the serious hostiles. How much do you appreciate this grace, what Jesus has done for us? We were all born into this world under the wrath of God. And we have lived under the control of the devil while sinning. But just by believing in Jesus Christ, we have been led into the path of salvation. Are you accepting this grace now? Believing in this love will never let us down. I pray that all of us here will believe in the cross of Jesus Christ and be saved.

Let us pray together.

Heavenly Father. Thank you for reconciling me through the cross of Jesus Christ. Forgive me for all my sins up to now. Now I believe in Jesus. And I will live as a child of God. Holy Spirit, help me. For those who are sick, those who have problems, and those who are suffering from hatred, I ask you to give them complete healing, complete forgiveness, and complete freedom and liberation through the blood of the cross of Jesus Christ. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.