

(Apostolic Vision) First Be Reconciled

by Dale Heisey

The sermon emphasizes the importance of reconciliation and unity in the church, highlighting that division is a spiritual deficiency and a lack of love.

Scripture: Matthew 5:23, 1 Corinthians 12:21

Topics: "Reconciliation", "Forgiveness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of the spirit of reconciliation in our lives. He shares a story set in Greenland about a drunkard who caused harm to his wife. The speaker highlights the need for reconciliation in broken relationships within church communities. He urges listeners to have an attitude of forgiveness and to seek reconciliation with others, emphasizing that this is the spirit of Jesus and God's church. The speaker concludes by emphasizing the importance of seeking forgiveness from God and healing our land through reconciliation.

Transcript

This evening I want to greet you in Jesus' name, and it is a Wednesday night and this week is rapidly going by and I want to again express my appreciation for your support in this meeting and for your faithful attendance and for the mothers to get the children ready, for the boys and girls that are present here, for the youth that are present here. We welcome you. It's a blessing to have all of you here in this meeting.

The brother said that there are choices to make and what we hear tonight is going to leave us responsible to make a choice. I want you to listen real closely this evening, and I know that preaching consists of two things. Preaching consists of what is said, and it consists of the spirit with which it is said.

And what we need to do tonight is bring this message with the right spirit. And I'm sure there are going to be times in the message when you are thinking that I am overstating the case. I'm afraid there might be times in the message when you're going to tend to just kind of turn it off because it sounds too strong.

It sounds like it's being overstated. But I want to urge you to be careful about that. Be careful to not do that.

Try to be honest with the Bible and try to understand the heart of our Lord Jesus on this subject. I feel that and I want you to know that I'm able to bring this message tonight with peace in my heart. And it would not be possible to do any good with this subject without peace in our hearts.

And we need to have peace with all men. And if we cannot have peace with all men, we cannot make any headway here. And we needed the message last night before the message tonight.

If you didn't hear the message last night, you're not quite prepared for the message this evening. We need why it is really only the person that has experienced last night's message that's able to enter into this chapter. That is the way that Christian life is.

And so, if I have your attention by now, then I think we can begin. I want to read you a very common story. I'm not even going to tell you where the story is, but you will recognize the story.

I'm going to read you a story, but I want you to be thinking about only one thing as I'm reading this story. There are two boys in this story, and I want you to decide which of the two you are. There are two boys in this story, and I want you to do nothing more than just to think, which of these two boys am I? Now, I realize if you're a girl, you're not a boy, and so you can't be a boy.

And if you're a grandfather over here, you can't be a boy. But which one of these two persons do we represent? Or which one of these two people represents us? A certain man had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that follow to me, and he divided unto them his living.

And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all there was a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

And he would fain have filled his belly with a husk that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hard servants of my father's have breaded up in despair, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

Make me as one of thy hard servants. And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let it eat, and be merry. For this my son was dead, and is alive again.

He was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field, and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing.

And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in.

Therefore came his father out, and entreated him. And he answering, said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and ye that transgress I at any time thy commandment. And yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I may make merry with my friend.

But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlot, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad.

For this thy brother was dead, and is alive again, and was lost, and is found. You recognize that as the story of the prodigal son. Which of the two sons represents you tonight? Let's bow our heads in prayer.

O gracious Father, it is our sincere desire that you help us find broken lives, and lost sons, and needy people, and lonely persons. And help us, Father, to reconcile these people to God, and reconcile them to the Church, so that we can be reconciled to each other. I pray, O God, that you would give us tonight in this congregation the spirit of reconciliation.

I pray, O God, that your spirit of mercy and peace, your spirit of love, would so fall upon us that we could find those who are estranged and far away, those who are divided from us and at odds with us, and we could be restored as you want us to be restored. I pray, O God, that this would be a time of healing in this Church, a healing in this community, a healing in our homes and in our hearts. I pray, O God, your blessing upon this assembly tonight.

I pray that you would teach us from your holy word, and we want you to be glorified. In the name of Jesus we pray, amen. Now, there is a tremendous problem with division in our churches.

I suppose if there is any problem that characterizes the Church in our time, it is division. And it is so common that we take it for granted. It is so common that we have become used to it.

It is so common that we have come to accept it. It is so common that it no longer startles us. It seems like it does not bother us that there is division in the churches.

Division in the church is something that nearly destroyed my wife and I. It destroys a lot of people. It destroys our sons and daughters. Division in the church means that there are broken relationships in the church.

In broken relationships, division is a form of neurosis. We do not really know what is wrong, but we divide, and our division is a symptom of a deeper problem. Our division is a symptom of a spiritual deficiency.

Division is nothing more than the lack of love in the church. And with a lack of love in the church, with this lack of love, we forfeit our right to be a church, because you cannot be a church without love. And love is the very thing that prevents division.

And love is the very thing that reconciles if there would be a division. Division is on love in practice. Division is toleration, is tolerance, instead of fellowship.

And did you ever hear what tolerance is? Tolerance is controlled hatred. Tolerance is hatred on a real stack. And you can turn it up or turn it down to your preset degree that you want it to be.

Now, that was a lot to say, and we've only been talking for three minutes. I'd just like you to think a little bit. Is there any brother in your fellowship, and I don't care which congregation you represent here tonight, all congregations are welcome here.

I don't care if you attend a local Catholic church. I don't care if you're part of a synagogue. Everyone is welcome to this meeting tonight.

But I want to ask you something. Is there anybody in your congregation from whom tonight you sit here and you're divided from him? There's something between you. You might practice brotherhood symbols with him, with her.

You might have some kind of way to exchange some words of greeting and some smiley mascara that she put on your face there, and you kind of get along all right. But in the depth of your heart, you know that you've turned him off, and you know that you're doing well without him, without her. Tolerance is controlled hatred.

Broken relationships are a sign of a serious spiritual deficiency. Now, I'm going to give you the title of this message very soon. But I'm going to bring the first point of this message before I give you the title.

And I want to make the first point very clear that human relationships, from me to you, human relationships reveal the truth of our spiritual relationship. That is, the relationship that I have with my brother is a revelation. It's a manifestation.

It's an evidence of the relationship that I have with God. That is to say that I do not have some kind of pietistic, spiritual, deep, loving relationship with God if I don't have a good relationship with my brother and sister, or with my neighbor, or with my wife, or with my husband, or with my children. If I have broken human relationships, that broken relationship is a manifestation of another broken relationship.

And the broken horizontal relationships are nothing more than an indication of a broken, vertical, spiritual relationship with God. And it cannot be otherwise. And we like to say, well, listen, Dale, let's listen.

Back off a little bit. It's only with those two or three. It's only with those.

Look how well I get along over here. Look how well I get along over here. I'm sorry, brother.

I must correct you. I must correct you tonight. The reason you're getting along over here is because it hasn't happened over here yet.

What happened over here? And as soon as it does, you'll be in the same shape, because it takes the same equipment. It takes the same equipment to maintain it over here as well as it takes to heal it over here. It takes the same equipment.

But if you don't believe that, we won't have any choices tonight. We can just stay the way we were. But I want to show you from the Bible what I said.

I said that human relationships reveal our spiritual relationships. We want to show that from the Bible. I can look at that in three ways.

We can look at it in the relationship of marriage, for example. You notice in Ephesians chapter 5, it tells us very, very clearly that the relationship that a man has with his wife is characteristic of, typical of, a demonstration of, an example of, the relationship that we have with Christ. Now, how can a man be one with Christ? How can a man be in touch with Christ? How can a man be in fellowship with Christ? How can a man love Christ? How can a man be united with Christ and divided from his wife? Well, that would be an oxymoron if ever there was one.

That would be absolutely an impossibility. There's no one estranged from his wife tonight that is in favor with God, that is one with Christ. There is no one like that on the face of the earth.

Don't tell me that you're okay with Christ and you're okay with God and you have a good spiritual life and the marriage is broken. There's something wrong. The one is typical of the other.

The one is an expression of the other. 1 John chapter 4. Look at it in your Bible. This is true in brotherly relationships.

Relationship with a brother. What's it say in chapter 4? 1 John verse 19. We love him because he first loved us.

If a man say, I love God and hate his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And he who says he submits to God whom he has never seen, how can he submit to God whom he has never seen if he can't submit to his brother whom he has never seen? And how can we say we love God whom we have never seen when we don't love our brother whom we have seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God loveth his brother also. And the love we have with our brother, the relationship we have with our brother is a direct revelation of the relationship we have with God.

And how can I say I have love here and I don't have love here? And the Bible says such a person as they want. What do we read there? He's a liar. I didn't write 1 John chapter 4. But the Bible says he's a liar.

You see the relationship we have here is an indication of the relationship we have vertically with God. And we have grown accustomed to allowing walls to build up. We have grown accustomed to talking about him, talking about her, when they are not here.

We have in Latin America a bird that talks a lot. A bird that's all the time talking. It's the Chachalaca.

And so we refer to a gospel prayer in Costa Rica as a Chachalaca. And this thing just keeps on going. This thing just keeps on going.

And we would never say it to the person, but we don't have any problem saying it about the person. And here we are. We're one with the Lord.

We love the Lord. We're spiritual and we're holy and we're children of God and we take communion. And we wash our feet.

And we're Chachalaca. And we gossip. And we're used to doing it.

And we feel comfortable doing it. We don't feel guilty doing it. We do the same thing in the church.

1 Corinthians chapter 3. The relationship we have on earth with our fellow man is an indication of the relationship we have in heaven. Notice what it says here in 1 Corinthians 3.3. For ye are yet carnal. For whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? You're not spiritual.

We're not spiritual and walk as God. We're not spiritual and walk as spiritual men. We are carnal.

We just walk, we just do what a man can do. Why a man can do that. A man can live with divisions with his wife and divisions with his sons and daughters.

And divisions with him and his preacher. And divisions with him and his brother in the church. And divisions with him and his neighbor.

A man on the street can do that. You'll need any spiritual power to do that. You'll need any new birth to do that.

You'll need any peace and joy in the heart to do that. A man on the road can do that. A man that never met Christ and never knew the Lord can do that.

Can live with divisions between one another. Why? A spiritual man can't live that way. A spiritual man can't handle that.

A spiritual man, that breaks his heart to have divisions with somebody else. A spiritual man must do something about it. A spiritual man has to go knock on the door.

A spiritual man must go and seek and search out. A spiritual man can't stand that. A spiritual woman.

But a carnal person is just fine. Come over there and be over here. Let them hold their own row.

I got along without you before I met you. I got along without you now. That's Sinatra saying.

My relation to God can be no purer, no stronger, nor more meaningful than my fellowship with my brother. Koinonia is the union of hearts. Hearts that are mutually participating in Christ Jesus.

And so if you are a participant of Christ Jesus, and you are in Christ Jesus, and you are one with Christ Jesus, and I am one with Christ Jesus, there is a bond, there is a power, there is a magnetism, there is a love union that draws us together. And as close as we are to Christ, that's close we are together. And the further I am from Christ, that's how far I am from you.

And we come close to Christ, and we come close to each other, and that's koinonia, that's fellowship. So that was the first point I wanted to make. I wanted to help us to see that the relationship we have with one another, whether it's in the church or in the community, in the home, in the marriage, that's the relationship we have with God.

Now I want to show you what the Bible says about this subject. And here we'll find our title in Matthew chapter 5. I suppose if the Lord has done anything in the last 14 years of my life that has been to show me how much it hurts him when God's people are divided. If there's anything that I believe God wants us to do, wherever we go, it is to build bridges between God's people.

And I'm not talking about ecumenism. I'm not talking about some kind of doctrinal smorgasbord where we all find some common denominator and all decide to get along with each other. I'm talking about no feelings between us, nothing to divide us, no hurts that are unhealed.

I'm talking about true love reigning. I'm talking about an open door with no hindrance. I'm talking about an open face, an open heart with all men.

I'm talking about seeing every person as God sees every person. I'm talking about going down the street and seeing the dirtiest, loneliest, loneliest person as a candidate for the kingdom of God. I'm talking about no division in your heart towards anybody.

That's what God is talking about. Matthew 5, I'd like to read verses 21-24. For ye have heard that it was said unto them of old time, Thou shalt not kill.

And whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Rekha, shall be in danger of the counsel.

But whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gifts to the altar, there remembers that thy brother hath ought against thee. There is division.

You know it's there. You're not responsible for it if you don't know it's there. You're not responsible for it if you haven't sensed it or felt it.

You're not responsible for it if you've had no evidence of it. You're not responsible for it if it's not in your heart and you do not know it's existing. You're responsible for what you know is there.

If thou bring thy gifts to the altar, there remembers that thy brother hath ought against thee. There's something there. And you say that was his story.

That was his problem. That's what he thinks about it. That's the way he took it.

But it's there. There's a division there. And you bring your gift to the altar, you know that it's there.

Lead thy gift before the altar and go thy way. First be reconciled to thy brother. Then come and offer thy gift.

The title of this message is First Be Reconciled. And before I explain these verses, these powerful verses, just hold your hand in Matthew 5, turn to 1 Corinthians 12. I want to read a few verses there and then compare these verses one with another.

1 Corinthians 12, and the verse we want to read here is verse 21. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary.

And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable upon these, we bestow more abundant honor. And our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our uncomely parts have no need, but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lack, that there be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another.

And in our church tonight, there's either schism or same care one for another. There's either schism and division and we're content to have it so, or the whole body is working together, having the same care one for another. Is there any brother in your church for which you would be willing to do more than you would for another one? Are there brothers in this church that in your congregation that you feel you could do without? That's just one brother that we do not need.

Now, I want to go through this passage in chapter 5 of Matthew, and he says here that in the old time it was a matter of killing. You should not kill, it says. But Jesus says, I say something different to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother.

And you notice that in your Bible, if you have a KJV, it says without a cause. And we like those three words in there. At least that's at least a degree of comfort.

That's at least a hiding place. That is at least a certain amount of a reason. That at least, of course, gives me a catch-all column.

At least that's a miscellaneous column. I can at least put it in there if I'm an accountant. I can get something in that column there.

But, but, if you were speaking Spanish tonight, that phrase is not in there. It's not in the original text either. I don't know why it is in here.

I'm not going to find fault with this version that I'm reading. But there's no place in the Bible that gives you right to be angry with your brother. Whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment.

And whosoever shall say to his brother, Reca, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Are you angry with your brother? No, I'm not angry.

No, I'm not angry with him. I don't think he's angry with Bob. Do you love your brother? Now, between love and hate, what is in between? What is in between love and hate? When you leave love, how far is it to the entrance of hate? After we have left love, how far is it? Reca.

Reca means empty. Empty head. Veins.

Mentally off. The fellow's not with us. You know, when someone is Reca, when someone is Reca, I'm not going to spend a whole lot of time being reconciled with Reca.

Why? What's it worth? I mean, what's next? It's not worth it. I mean, if you can do better, you're better off without Reca. Without that fellow around.

Why try to reconcile yourself with Reca? And you know, when I'm willing to live without reconciliation with my brother, when I'm willing to live with broken relationships, when I'm willing to live, I'm saying with voices as loud as I can speak, I'm saying, I have no need of thee. I'm saying, you are a worthless fellow. You are empty.

You are vain. I'm saying, you are Reca. And God said, Jesus said, engage in the counsel.

And how about if we say, thou fool. The Greek language, the word there is mortals. Or we get our word, moron.

And whereas Reca means mentally worthless, mentally empty, mortals means morally worthless. Morally empty. Not only is intellect is off, his character is off.

This fellow is of worthless character. This person is of uselessness. Not worth keeping.

I have no need of thee. You are a threat to me. I would be better off without you.

And these words are just exactly what Jesus hears when we allow division between us and another. That's exactly what Jesus is hearing us say when we have this anger towards a brother. We have this attitude, I don't need my brother in the church.

And it's what causes division. And if we would eliminate all of this attitude of the church, the divisions would come together. Brothers and sisters would seek each other in the aisle.

There would be a meeting of the hearts. There would be a crumbling before one another. There would be an embracing before one another.

There would be a melting down before the Lord. There would be a seeking of each other's faith if we did not think this about each other. And the reason why we don't do verses 23 and 24 in this chapter is because verse 22 is standing in our way.

The Bible says here, Leave there thy gift. Leave your gift. Go thy way.

Seek this brother. First be reconciled. First be reconciled.

Then come and offer thy gift. Go thy way. A man came to our community several months ago.

A man in our community, not a part of our congregation. He's in the community. He's known to be a thief.

He's known to be a bum. He's known to not pay his bills. He's known to not be able to hold a job.

He's known to float from place to place. He tried to build a house. He built this house out of bamboo poles.

He had part of it covered with black plastic. He had part of it covered with a slab of wood that comes off of a log that he got at a sawmill someplace. That was part of it.

Part of it was boards. Part of it was pieces of old tin. And all this stuff he used to build a house.

The floor was dirt floor. He used bamboo poles for the rafters, put tin on there, tried to nail the nails down through there. You know a nail does not hold in bamboo.

If you know anything about bamboo, nails pull right out of a window, pull the nail right out of a bamboo pole. And so his house was wet. And it's a mess in there.

And so he got someone to saw some boards for him with a chainsaw to make a little bit better house. And he didn't have money to pay the sawyer with a chainsaw. And he came to me and asked me to borrow the money necessary to pay this man.

And I didn't have the money to loan him. I told him it would take me some days to get it. But I told him that I think we should work on another plan.

I think there's a better way for him to get the boards he needs to build a house without me giving him the money. And so I was trying to help him without putting him into debt. I wanted to help him get his boards paid for without him needing to be in debt when he was done.

And I had a plan to do that. Some weeks later I found out that he was offended at me. Some weeks later I found out that he was seriously against me.

Well, I said, I'm sorry, what is wrong? Well, this and this happened. I said, thank you. And so I went to see him.

I knew that there was trouble. I knew that he was feeling bad toward me. Whether he had any reason to feel bad or not has nothing to do with it.

That's not what Jesus said. I knew that he was feeling a bad feeling towards me. I went to see him.

It was a Saturday night, around 8 o'clock. I sat down at his little house. His wife was there.

They're three children. His name is Vidal. I said, Vidal, I want you to tell me all about it.

What happened? What did I do? I did something wrong? I'm sorry. What did I do? I want to get this right. How do you think I could preach this sermon tonight if I would not have done that? How do you think I could pray with a clear heart if I had not done that? And how can we go on in our Christian experience and our church life if we have division with people in our own brotherhood who are part of our congregation and sit with us in the pews and if we don't do that? Leave there thy gift and go thy way.

I didn't say it was your fault. Jesus didn't say it was your fault. It might not be your fault.

He said go your way and be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift. You say my case is different. You say it doesn't apply to me.

Jesus doesn't give you the right to argue. You only have one choice to make. Get up out of your seat and go be reconciled to your brother first and come and offer your gift.

You have no other choice. You have no decision to make in the case. You don't need to analyze it, scrutinize it, decide about it.

You just go and do it. Get up out of your chair, get in that automobile, turn that ignition switch, head down the road. What am I going to say when I get there? Joe.

Go there and say I heard there's a problem and I believe it's true. I've sensed the wall between us. I've sensed that you might have looked at me after the service.

I see there might be trouble getting together. I must have done something wrong. I want to know what it is.

We want to get this straightened out. I come and ask you for your help. We want to reconcile this.

I must have done something wrong without knowing it. I'm a very offensive person. I'm very aggressive.

I can be very abrasive at times. Sometimes I can fight for ways. I can easily believe that I offended you.

Why is it so hard for us to believe that we made a mistake? Why is it so hard for us to believe that we may have made a mistake? It should not be hard for an honest man to know, a spiritual man to know that he made a mistake. In many things we offend, though if any man offended another, he's seen himself as a perfect man. Well, where did that man in this audience stand up? Where does that man in this audience stand up, that perfect man who doesn't offend at all? Where is that man? Why is it so hard for us to believe that we may have made a mistake? Be reconciled.

To God, division is heresy. You have that in your Bible in 1 Corinthians 11. I'll show it to you.

To God, division is heresy. Verses 18 and 19. But first of all, when you come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you, and I partly believe it.

For there must also be heresies among you. The word there is the same word, 18, 19. There also must be heresies among you, that they which are proved may be manifest among you.

Division is heresy. Division is an alien doctrine. Division is a doctrine that Christ does not know.

Division between brethren is something that is not part of the Christian church. It's heresy. Division between brethren, division between congregations, division between God's people, it's heresy.

It's false doctrine. You wouldn't think of coming up here to an altar this morning, to tonight, to a statue, and bow down to Mary made out of yesol, made out of ceramic, and kissing her feet before you took your seat. You wouldn't think of breaking a stone of a cloth in your forehead and your chest before you sit down to pew tonight.

You wouldn't think of praying to the Virgin in order to get through to the throne room of glory. You wouldn't think of wearing some St. Christopher medal around your neck to protect you as you drive through something on the highway. You wouldn't think and believe the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

You wouldn't believe those doctrines. But heresy is false doctrine. Or division is false doctrine.

How many excuses we offer for not obeying Christ, but each excuse is saying only one thing. I have no need of that rickhack. I have no need of that fool.

And our anger turns to bitterness. And when our anger turns to bitterness, the Bible says, many shall be defiled. And many are being defiled.

And so there's a gospel mandate for reconciliation. The gospel demands that we reconcile. God can have it no other way than the building of a bridge, than a humbling of myself, than a looking for the restoration with my brother.

3. According to the Bible that we have in our hands tonight, there are only two brotherhood relationships. There are only two brotherhood relationships. I want to show them to you in 1 John 3. I read here from verses 10-16.

1 John 3, verses 10-16, And this, the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. Whosoever doth not righteousness is none of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother, and wherefore slew he him, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we loved a brother.

He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.

We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. And before we comment on these verses, I'd like to read in chapter 4, verses 10-12. Herein is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the perpetuation for our sins.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

And I've already read verses 20 and 21, but I'd like to read them again. If any man say, I love God, and hate his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also.

And I said tonight that there are only two brotherhood relationships. We either love our brother, now are you listening? Or we find some culturally acceptable way to murder our brother. It is as simple as that.

We either love our brother tonight, or we find some culturally acceptable way to assassinate our brother. That is what we read tonight. I just put it in slightly other words, but that is what we read in the Bible tonight.

And when we do that, we are as Cain. And the Bible says that Cain was that wicked one. He was of that wicked one, and he slew his brother.

And when we have this attitude, even as it was said of Cain, it must be said of us that there is something about us that is evil. Why did he do it? The question is there. Why did he do that? Because his own works were evil.

Why do I assassinate? Why do I gossip? Why do I choose to live with that? Why do I let that wall build up? Why do I say I don't need him? Why? Now, let's go a little bit deeper in this passage. If we do not love our brother, if we, I do not love my wife. My relationship with my wife is so bad that now the division is there.

Others see it. My children see it. Little boys and girls see it.

The neighbors see it. Division with my wife. Division with a brother in the church.

Division with my father and mother. Division with the parents and the children. Division.

Where am I that that exists in my experience? Now it tells you, verse 14. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. That's where we are.

It's death. We are in death. We are without eternal life.

No wonder we cannot be reconciled. No wonder there is no reconciling power. No wonder there is no leaving of the gift at the altar and going our way first being reconciled to our brother.

They come in offering our gift. No wonder, because we don't have the life to do it. We are in death.

We are abiding in death. And abiding here means a decision to remain there. It's a choice that was made.

The brother used that term tonight. It's a choice to be there. Wherever we abide, we chose to be.

You're sitting at Benson's and boy, he'll do church. He chose to be there. There he is.

Where you're abiding tonight, you chose to be there. And here we are in death. Abiding in death.

And we choose to allow this separation between us and the brother. And we choose to not be reconciled. We choose to let it go year after year after year.

Get used to that. That's what makes division in the church. Verse 15 says, no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

And he's not talking about knives and shotguns. He's not talking about wars with Iraq. He's not talking about missiles.

He's not talking about razor blades. He's not talking about drugs and sleeping pills. He's not talking about poisoning the food.

He's not talking about arsenic. He's talking about the hate that murders. He's talking about the unlove.

He's talking about I'll tolerate him, but I will not love him. He's talking about bitterness in the heart. And he's saying no one that is that way hath eternal life abiding in him.

And when this desire for reconciliation is not burning in our hearts, there is a lack, a serious lack of spiritual life. We are abiding. Chapter 4 verses 12 and 13 tells what is necessary before we can have reconciliation.

No man hath seen God in a time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. And that is necessary first.

God must dwell here. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his spirit. And without this, it can't be done.

Without this, there is no love. Without this, there is no reconciliation. Without this, all things remain as they were.

And we sing this hymn. I love thee, Lord. And as we sing, we're estranged from our brother, and we're lying as we sing, the Bible says, because we don't love the Lord if we are estranged from our brother.

We cannot sing, I love thee, Lord. It is not the truth. It is a lie.

And while we're sitting here, God knows how it is with us. You see, God is not deceived about this. What will love do to seek reconciliation? How far will love go? What is the extent to which we should be willing to go to be reconciled to a brother? What should we try to do to get this bridge built, to get these relationships restored? To what extent should we go? Let us see.

Let us see. John chapter 17. Let us look at the attitude of Jesus in reconciliation.

The attitude of Jesus. John 17 verse 20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe in me through their word, that they may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

In the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them endow me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me. I told you last night about Maximo.

After he came to my home at seven o'clock on a Monday morning, he told me what his decision was and how he had prayed in his home the night before and how he wanted a meeting with the church. He wanted to reconcile with the brethren and he wanted to make his things right and ask forgiveness. He wanted to be restored to the church.

He told me all that and I was blessed with that, but I said, Maximo, I just have a question for you. I have a question. Are you listening tonight? You heard the story of Maximo last night.

I said, I have a question for you. I'd like to know what kept you away. We prayed for you so long.

God was working in your life. You received one blow after another. You had one hard experience after another.

What kept you away from God? And if his head turned it towards the window of my house and pointed to a house right in front of my home, he said, it's over there. He said, I know how they talk. I know how they live.

I know how they get along with the rest of the brethren in the church. And I made a serious mistake. I looked at them.

He said, looking at myself. And I saw how they were. But, Brother Dale, something has happened to them and I see they've changed.

I see a different attitude. I saw in them a different spirit. And when I saw that, I couldn't wait no longer.

I could preach to you for another two hours if I began to tell you the story of what happened to bring that change in that home that he was pointing to at that moment. And proud and haughty, we are always right. No one ever comes to our home and corrects us.

Always have a sassy, sour answer. Always can defend ourselves. We always have a reason for what we do.

And God being the chip on that spirit because he wanted to save Moxie Mosambala. God did the work. And the depths to which that home fell.

The serious tragedy that came upon that home, I would want none of you to experience. But I thank God for the holy change that was brought. And when God's people come together and these attitudes are melted down and we are united together in love, the world sees.

And then they can come to Christ. And it will not happen until then. If there's division between you and someone else in the church tonight, you're keeping some sinner outside the door and his blood is on your hands.

I'm very sorry. There's some sinner someplace that would like to come to Christ tonight. What did it cost Jesus to reconcile the world to himself? What did it cost Jesus to fulfill this prayer? What did it cost Jesus to make this happen? Start reading chapter 18, you'll find the answer.

Read chapter 19 and look at him hanging in agony. Look at him sweating drops of blood. And when we're willing to give our lives for a brother, as the Bible says, love will do, we will be reconciled to our brother.

There's no reason for this thing to remain estranged and tense and divided. But I'm willing to die for my brother. And that is the spirit of reconciliation.

That is our mission. And to that we are called. And I ask you to turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 5. 2 Corinthians chapter 5. I'm going to show it to you here.

Verses 18 and 19. 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 it 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.

It's our message. It's our witness. It's our responsibility.

And what Christ did is what we must do. You don't reconcile yourself to your brother by going to him and showing him all that he did. Yes, truth must be told, and love it must be said.

For love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth. Love tideth a multitude of sins.

Love goes and takes upon himself the blame. Takes upon himself the wounds. Takes upon himself the nails.

Takes upon himself the spears. Takes Takes upon himself the thorns, takes upon himself the suffering, takes upon himself the shame, takes upon himself the disgrace. That's what it takes.

That's the attitude of Jesus in reconciliation. What do we need to be a reconciling brotherhood? To heal any and all broken relationships. What was the elder son lacking? He could not reconcile himself with his brother.

What was he lacking? What was wrong with the elder brother? What do we lack? Dear brother and I, I'm sorry to tell you this, but I'm going to have to tell you this. You live here in the northwest of this country. You live here in Oregon.

You live here in one of the most beautiful valleys in all the world. This lush, green valley. Plenty of rain, beautiful water, the Willamette River flowing down through and up through your valley.

Flowing to the north, they told me. You have a beautiful place to live, but you live amongst broken relationships. And would you listen to these next words with much care.

There are too many moving vans going from one church community to another with broken relationships on board. Do you know why that is? Because somebody was not first reconciled. Somebody left it go.

Someone said, if he wants to move, let him move. We'll probably have peace around here after he goes. The one part of the body says to the other part of the body, I have no need of thee.

And Christ is grieved. His spirit withdraws. His heart is heavy.

He died for the one as well as for the other. And needed the one as much as the other. But I didn't need him.

He needed me, but I don't need him. Dear brother, would you listen to this next thought. Instead of reconciling ourselves one with another, we're changing area codes.

And that is not correct. That's not what Christ taught. I'm not saying it's wrong to move.

I moved to Costa Rica. It's not wrong to move. It's wrong to move instead of healing relationships.

If we don't have what we need to hold a church together, if we don't have what we need to hold a family together, if we don't have what we need to hold a marriage together, if we don't have what we need to hold brethren together. And I ask you, where are we going to get it? When is it going to start? Where is this going to begin? When will this new healing start taking place? It starts where the broken relationships are. There's where it must start.

Now I must soon stop this message. But there are some very important things to tell you yet. That I tell you from the very bottom of my heart.

And I tell you with all the love that I can muster in my weak spirit to speak to you. But would you please listen. The same lack of power that left the last family or the last brother unreconciled.

The same lack of power that was unable to reconcile in the last need that came up in the church. Is the same lack still present among us tonight. That is to say that if we did not have the power to minister to the last need, to restore the last lost one, to bring back in the last lonely one, to break down the walls between the last divided ones.

If we didn't have the power to do that, that's the same amount of power we have now. And very, very soon the next test is going to come. And even now as we're sitting here, the next test is on the way.

It's gaining momentum and coming towards us. And that's all the strength we have with which to meet it. Do something about it.

We must cry out to God for the spirit of reconciliation. We must repent and believe the scriptures on this subject. We must repent and believe what God says.

About this matter. We must be reconciled to God first. We must have our own hurts healed first.

We must be free of bitterness ourselves first. We cannot heal others with our own self-protection, with our own neuroses. We cannot heal ourselves if we're trying to divide ourselves and protect ourselves from others.

So we're not vulnerable to other people. We will not be able to heal others that way. We will not be able to restore and reconcile others that way.

The spirit of reconciliation is one of deep brokenness and of humility. The spirit of reconciliation will build bridges. The spirit of reconciliation will tell the truth in love.

The spirit of reconciliation will see the value in every needy life. While it is still undone. And still unclean.

And one thing more. Still very, very alone. The spirit of reconciliation will see the value of that life and do all it can to reach out its heart to it.

And bring that one back. The spirit of reconciliation is willing to lose as long as we can gain our brother. And so we will leave the ninety and nine.

And we will go searching. We will leave and go and be reconciled and return with rejoicing. And the neighbors will come.

And they will see the rejoicing. They will see the strength. And they will know how it happened.

They'll just see the results. And they'll see that love is flowing in the brotherhood. And they will say, we want to be part of the fold too.

And we will go. And we will be reconciled to our brother. I know you think this story has an untruth in it.

But it is a true story. This story helps understand what the spirit of reconciliation is. And it helps me to show you what you need to be able to reconcile with your brother.

With your sister. With your neighbor. With your wife.

And until this element is beautifully and gracefully portrayed in our lives, division will surely stay exactly where it is. But this is the spirit of Jesus. This is the spirit of God's church.

And all those that abide in Him have this spirit. And those that abide in death do not have this spirit. And all those who love have this spirit.

And all those who assassinate do not have this spirit. But now listen to the story. It happened in Greenland.

And there the weather is cold. And there the snow flies. And the man was a drunkard.

And he would come home at night in drunken fits. He would come home at night with uncontrollable rage. And his wife lived with him day after day and year after year.

And she was a Christian. And she was patient. And it was her desire to win him.

And so it was that on one of those cold nights, he came home in one of his fits. And because something did not suit him in the house, he picked up a gas lantern and threw it at his wife. And the lantern exploded upon her body and set her body ablaze.

She was carried to a local hospital. The story rapidly spread. The policeman captured her husband.

The policeman came into her room in the hospital. She was in great agony. She could hardly breathe.

Her lungs were burned. Her tongue was scorched. The doctor saw very little hope for the future.

And the policeman said to the doctor, We've got to talk to her. We need a witness. We need to have her testimony.

We have to write this down. And there was the drunken husband, but now sobered by the experience and now sedated. And now there he was with his head hanging.

And there she saw him as she tried to open her eyes, standing at the foot of her bed. And the policeman said, Tell us. Tell us what happened.

Tell us what happened. And she saw him standing there. And she was in great agony and she was dying.

And her last words were, It was an accident. We wouldn't have that attitude towards the hurts that we have in our hearts towards brothers and sisters. And towards church leaders and towards church problems.

We wouldn't have that attitude. We'd be meeting each other. We'd be reconciling our differences.

We'd be crying out to God together. And then he would hear from heaven. And he would forgive our sin.

And he would heal our land. Let's bow our heads and pray. Our gracious Father, we thank you for the reconciling love of Jesus.

We thank you for the cross of Calvary that speaks of blood and speaks of love and speaks of pardon and speaks of forgiveness. And speaks of reconciliation to God. And Father, now we are called upon to go into this world and reconcile men to thee.

And reconcile men to each other. Reconcile husbands to their wives. Reconcile parents to their children.

There are needs all around us, Father. There are needs for reconciliation in this church tonight, O God. There are needs for reconciliation in our homes, in our congregations.

Would you give us the faith to believe your word tonight. That we should first be reconciled. We cannot do without our brother.

Fill our hearts with love. Melt our pride, O God. Humble us in your presence, O Lord.

Speak to us tonight, Father. Gain victories in our lives tonight. Heal broken relationships tonight, Father.

Heal broken relationships in this place, O God. Heal broken relationships in this beautiful valley, O Father. Be glorified in this meeting, we pray in Jesus' name.

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