

*Outside the Bulletin Insert...*

Pat Dillon comments on meaning of the Greek word that is translated 'reconcile':

If you really dig into some research into this word, you will find out that the word 'reconciliation' has three lexical areas.... It has three centers of meaning, and the first center of meaning is to restore harmony.... How do you reconcile man to God? Where is there reconciliation between light and darkness? How do you take two things that are irreconcilable and bring them together? That is what God has done on the cross, isn't it? That is what He has done through the death of His Son....

To reconcile also means to restore purity, to absolve or to cleanse.... God was in Christ reconciling us to Himself, and He not only brought us into conformity with His standard, but He also purged us and purified us and gave us His righteousness.

There is a third area of meaning lexically if you are going to talk about the word reconciliation. It not only means to restore harmony, and it not only means to purify or to cleanse, but it also means to bring into a state of submission.

2 Corinthians 5 - Salvation in a "Nutshell", and John 3:16

<p><sup>16</sup> Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.</p>	<p>The phrase 'according to the flesh' refers to "forming an estimate of someone on the basis of human standards," as Linda Belleville states.</p>
<p><sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.</p>	<p>We note, as Hodge so deftly instructs, that the phrase 'in Christ' is the Scriptural shorthand to denote the persons who are in a saving connection or union between Christ and His people. These people, to be sure, are those who believe and are baptized.</p>
<p><sup>18</sup> Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,</p>	<p>Loved one, please think about the radical nature of our God. Our holy God, who rightly is offended by our sin, takes our sin away bearing the burden Himself in Christ. Not only that, but this holy God attaches us to Himself through reconciliation in Christ. Not only that, but He also has given us the privilege of declaring this wonderful news to others. What a God!</p>
<p><sup>19</sup> that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.</p>	<p>The Greek word that is translated "imputing" was used in the world of commerce and referred to the calculation of the debt that a person owed. In not imputing our trespasses to us, God is mercifully and graciously choosing to reconcile us to Himself and not count our trespasses against us.</p>
<p><sup>20</sup> Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.</p>	<p>In the ancient world as happens in our time, an ambassador had the official duty to represent the interests of his nation in a foreign land. We as Christians are strangers in a strange land putting forth the glorious news that our sins are not held against us, and that God graciously has forgiven our sins for Christ's sake.</p>
<p><sup>21</sup> For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.</p>	<p>Christ was not made a sinner, nor was He punished for any sin of His own. Instead, the Father treated Him as if He were a sinner by charging to His account the sins of everyone.... All those sins were charged against Him as if He had personally committed them, and He was punished with the penalty for them on the cross, experiencing the full fury of God's wrath unleashed against them all. It was at that moment that "Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying... 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'" (Matt. 27:46). It is crucial, therefore, to understand that the only sense in which Jesus was made sin was by imputation. He was personally pure, yet officially culpable; personally holy, yet forensically guilty. But in dying on the cross Christ did not become evil like we are, nor do redeemed sinners become inherently as holy as He is. God credits believers' sin to Christ's account, and His righteousness to theirs.</p>