

CHRISTIAN'S LIFE"

3

"RECONCILIATION: ENEMIES NO MORE"

ROMANS 5:9-

II CORINTHIAN 5:

INTRODUCTION

THE YEAR WAS 1968 AND AMERICA WAS A TROUBLED NATION. THAT SUMMER THE INNER CITIES OF AMERICA'S GREAT CITIES BURST INTO FLAMES.

THAT FALL AMERICA'S CAMPUSES WERE FILLED WITH PROTEST AGAINST THE WAR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

AS THE TIME FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION NEARED, IT SEEMED AS IF THE ENTIRE NATION WAS UNRAVELING AT THE SEAMS, THAT WE COULD NO LONGER GET ALONG, THAT WE COULDN'T TALK TO EACH OTHER ANYMORE.

THERE WAS SOME THOUGHT THAT AMERICA COULD NOT EVEN SURVIVE.

ONE OF THE TURNING POINTS CAME DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, WITH A STOP IN A LITTLE TOWN CALLED DEXLER, OHIO.

THERE A PHOTOGRAPHER HAPPENED TO CATCH A MOMENT WHEN A LITTLE 13 YEAR OLD GIRL PICKED UP A PLACARD, THAT SOMEBODY ELSE HAD PRINTED, FROM THE SIDE OF THE ROAD.

SHE FOUND IT, AND AS THE MOTORCADE PASSED SHE RAISED IT OVER HER HEAD. THE PHOTOGRAPHER CAPTURED THAT MOMENT AND IT WENT ACROSS THE NATION AND CAPTURED THE IMAGINATION OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. IT BECAME, INDEED, THE SLOGAN FOR THAT CAMPAIGN.

ON THAT PLACARD FOUR WORDS HAD BEEN WRITTEN: BRING US TOGETHER AGAIN.

A FEW YEARS AGO WHEN MR. SHAMIR AND MR. RABIN AND YASSER ARAFAT, REPRESENTING THE NATION OF ISRAEL AND THE PLO, MET FOR THE SIGNING OF AN HISTORIC PEACE TREATY.

AND WHEN IT WAS SIGNED, SOMETHING LIKE RIOTS AND TUMULT AND UPHEAVAL SPREAD ACROSS THE TINY NATION OF ISRAEL. HOW COULD YOU DO SUCH A THING? HOW COULD YOU SELL US OUT? HOW COULD YOU DARE TO SIGN A TREATY AND MAKE PEACE WITH OUR ENEMIES?

MANY OF THE PEOPLE IN ISRAEL FELT THE PLO WAS HISTORICALLY COMMITTED TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL AND SO PEOPLE WANTED TO KNOW HOW THEY COULD DO SUCH A THING BY SIGNING THIS TREATY.

TO THIS, MR. RABIN GAVE THE ONLY POSSIBLE ANSWER. "YOU DON'T MAKE PEACE WITH YOUR FRIENDS. YOU ONLY MAKE PEACE WITH YOUR ENEMIES." AND THE SIGN SAID: BRING US TOGETHER AGAIN. WE LIVE IN A FRAGMENTED WORLD. WE LIVE IN A WORLD THAT TO THIS VERY DAY IN MANY WAYS SEEMS TO BE COMING APART AT THE SEAMS.

THOUGH IT IS TRUE WE ARE THE MOST TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED GENERATION THIS WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN, AS WE COME TO THE SEVENTH OF THE 21ST CENTURY IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT THIS IS THE BLOODIEST CENTURY IN WORLD HISTORY.

FOR ALL OUR INTELLECT AND ALL OUR EDUCATION AND ALL OUR AMAZING TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS, IT SEEMS ALL WE HAVE LEARNED HOW TO DO IS KILL EACH OTHER BETTER, FASTER, CHEAPER AND MORE EFFICIENTLY.

AND SO IT IS TODAY THAT WARS AND SKIRMISHES RAGE RIGHT NOW IN 20 DIFFERENT PLACES ACROSS THIS GLOBE.

AND WHO IS THERE TO SAY THAT AS WE HAVE HAD WORLD WAR I AND WORLD WAR II, BY THE END OF THIS DECADE, JUST THREE YEARS FROM NOW, WE WILL NOT HAVE WORLD WAR III?

AND IF WE DO, THERE WILL BE NONE OF US IN THIS ROOM WHO WILL SURVIVE IT.
WE ARE LIVING IN A BROKEN AND DIVIDED WORLD.

WE ARE DIVIDED RACIALLY. WE ARE DIVIDED ETHNICALLY. WE ARE DIVIDED NATIONALLY, RELIGIOUSLY.

WE ARE DIVIDED INTO THE HAVES AND THE HAVE NOTS,

THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE MONEY AND THE PEOPLE WHO WANT SOME MONEY. WE ARE DIVIDED BY LANGUAGE, BY THE WAY WE LOOK, BY THE COLOR OF OUR SKIN. AND MORE THAN THAT, WE ARE DIVIDED PERSONALLY AND SPIRITUALLY, ONE FROM THE OTHER. I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, BUT I FOR ONE AM SO TIRED OF TURNING ON THE NEWS AND HEARING ABOUT PARENTS WHO PUT THEIR OWN CHILDREN TO DEATH AND CHILDREN WHO IN RETALIATION HAVE KILLED THEIR PARENTS.

I AM TIRED OF READING ABOUT DRIVE-BY SHOOTINGS AND THE KILLING OF POLICE OFFICERS.

I AM TIRED OF HEARING ABOUT THE KILLING IN IRAQ, TIRED OF THE WARFARE AND THE BLOODSHED.

AND I KNOW THAT TOMORROW MORNING THERE WILL BE MORE, AND THE DAY AFTER THAT THERE WILL BE MORE, BECAUSE WE ARE DIVIDED PEOPLE. WE LIVE ON A DIVIDED PLANET. AND THE SIGN SAID: BRING US TOGETHER AGAIN. IT IS SO POIGNANT BECAUSE IT SEEMS TO BE SO FAR FROM REALITY.

HUSBANDS HATE THEIR WIVES. WIVES HATE THEIR HUSBANDS. HUSBANDS CHEAT ON THEIR WIVES AND WIVES CHEAT ON THEIR HUSBANDS.

CHILDREN HATE THE PARENTS AND PARENTS HATE THE CHILDREN. ADULT CHILDREN HATE THEIR OLDER PARENTS AND OLDER PARENTS HATE THEIR ADULT CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN.

FRIENDS BREAK UP OVER THE MOST TRIVIAL THINGS.

WE HATE THE PEOPLE WE WORK WITH. WE HATE THE PEOPLE WE GO TO SCHOOL WITH.

WE REALLY DON'T CARE MUCH FOR THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE DOWN THE STREET FROM US. WE REALLY DON'T CARE ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE ACROSS THE STREET OR IN ANOTHER COMMUNITY BECAUSE THEY ARE DIFFERENT FROM US. AND THE SIGN SAID: BRING US TOGETHER AGAIN. IT SEEMS LIKE A CRUEL JOKE. THE WORD FOR TODAY IS RECONCILIATION.

IN THE GREEK THERE ARE THREE PRIMARY WORDS THAT ARE USED FOR RECONCILE AND RECONCILIATION.

THE CHIEF ONE THAT IS USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS THE WORD KATALASO.

IT IS A WORD THAT LITERALLY MEANS TO CHANGE COMPLETELY.

WHEN YOU RECONCILE TWO PEOPLE, YOU ARE CHANGING THEIR COMPLETE ORIENTATION.

WHERE ONCE THEY WERE FAR APART AND SEPARATED, NOW YOU HAVE CHANGED THEM COMPLETELY SO NOW THEY ARE FRIENDS AGAIN. IN THE BIBLE, WHENEVER YOU FIND THE WORD RECONCILE OR RECONCILIATION, IT ALWAYS IMPLIES AT LEAST TWO THINGS. 1) RECONCILIATION BETWEEN PEOPLE, NATIONS, RACES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS AND GOD. RECONCILIATION ALWAYS INVOLVES FIRST OF ALL A REMOVAL OF THAT WHICH CAUSED THE ENMITY IN THE FIRST PLACE.

RECONCILIATION IS IMPOSSIBLE UNTIL YOU DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM THAT CAUSED THE SEPARATION, THAT HAS FORCED PEOPLE APART, THAT HAS FORCED THE WEDGE BETWEEN.

RECONCILIATION, THEN, IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT DEALING WITH THE SIN AND FAILURE THAT DIVIDES US AND PUSHES US APART. 2. RECONCILIATION ALWAYS INVOLVES THE RESTORATION OF A RELATIONSHIP OF FRIENDSHIP AND CONCILIATION.

WHENEVER YOU SEE THE WORD RECONCILE OR RECONCILIATION IN THE BIBLE, WHETHER BETWEEN PEOPLE OR PEOPLE AND GOD, IT ALWAYS INVOLVES THE REMOVAL OF THE PROBLEM AND THE RESTORATION OF FRIENDSHIP.

DR. LEWIS PERRY CHAFER, DISCUSSING RECONCILIATION BETWEEN MAN AND GOD, LIKED TO EXPLAIN IT THIS WAY.

HE SAID THAT IN THE BEGINNING, IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN, GOD AND MAN WERE CLOSE. THERE WAS NOTHING BETWEEN THEM. THEY HAD A CLOSE, PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP. NOTHING COULD COME BETWEEN THEM AT ALL.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN WAS THAT WHEN ADAM AND EVE SINNED, THEY CHOSE TO STEP AWAY FROM GOD.

THEY TOOK A STEP AWAY FROM CLOSE, INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP.

WHEN MAN TURNED AWAY FROM GOD, GOD TURNED AWAY FROM MAN.

GOD CANNOT HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH MAN WHEN THERE IS SIN IN BETWEEN. SO WHEN MAN TURNED AWAY, THEN GOD TURNED AWAY. BUT THEN, DR. CHAFER SAID, SOMETHING ELSE HAPPENED, THOUSANDS OF YEARS LATER, WHEN A LITTLE BABY WAS BORN IN A PLACE CALLED BETHLEHEM.

WHEN THAT HAPPENED, GOD TURNED BACK TOWARD MAN AGAIN. THAT IS THE MEANING OF I CORINTHIANS 5 WHICH SAYS THAT GOD WAS IN CHRIST, RECONCILING THE WORLD TO HIMSELF.

THIS SITUATION IS EXACTLY THE SITUATION WE HAVE IN THE WORLD TODAY, THAT GOD IN CHRIST HAS RECONCILED THE WORLD.

HE HAS TURNED BACK TOWARD MAN. BUT MAN IS STILL TURNED AWAY FROM GOD.

THIS IS THE SITUATION THAT SO MANY PEOPLE FIND THEMSELVES IN.

GOD HAS DONE ALL THAT IS NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH A RELATIONSHIP WITH MAN, BUT NOW WHAT HAS TO HAPPEN IS THERE HAS TO BE A TURNING ON THIS SIDE.

THERE HAS TO BE A BELIEF IN WHAT JESUS CHRIST HAS DONE.

WHEN A PERSON WILL SAY, "YES, I BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST DIED ON THE CROSS FOR ME," THEN AND ONLY THEN IS MAN FINALLY RECONCILED TO GOD.

GOD HAS TURNED BACK TOWARD MAN, BUT THE SITUATION OF THE WORLD TODAY IS ONE OF BEING TURNED AWAY FROM GOD. WITH THAT AS BACKGROUND, I READ THE FOLLOWING VERSES. ROMANS 5:9 SAYS, "SINCE WE HAVE NOW BEEN JUSTIFIED THROUGH HIS BLOOD, HOW MUCH MORE SHALL WE BE SAVED FROM GOD'S WRATH THROUGH HIM? FOR IF, WHEN 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? NOT ONLY

IS THIS SO, BUT WE ALSO REJOICE IN GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THROUGH WHOM WE HAVE RECEIVED RECONCILIATION." THEN TURN TO THAT CENTRAL PASSAGE IN II CORINTHIANS 5. "ALL THIS IS FROM GOD, WHO HAS RECONCILED US (KATALASO - TO CHANGE COMPLETELY) TO HIM THROUGH CHRIST AND HE GAVE US THIS MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION, THAT GOD WAS RECONCILING THE WORLD TO HIMSELF IN CHRIST, NOT COUNTING MEN'S SINS AGAINST THEM. AND HE HAS COMMITTED TO US THE MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION. WE ARE, THEREFORE, GOD'S AMBASSADORS, AS THOUGH GOD WERE MAKING THIS APPEAL THROUGH US, WE IMPLORER YOU ON CHRIST'S BEHALF, BE RECONCILED TO GOD." THE PROBLEM, OF COURSE, IS SIN. SIN IS THE GREAT DIVIDER.

I AM SURE YOU'VE ALL SEEM THOSE LITTLE CHARTS CONTAINED IN THE NAVIGATOR BOOKLET.

IT PUTS MAN ON ONE SIDE OF THE CLIFF AND GOD ON THE OTHER. IN BETWEEN IS THE GAP, THE CHASM, THE PIT CAUSED BY SIN.

ISAIAH 59:21 SAYS, "YOUR SIN HAS SEPARATED YOU FROM GOD."

THAT IS THE WAY WE ALL ARE APART FROM JESUS CHRIST. WE ARE ALL OVER ON ONE SIDE AND GOD IS ON THE OTHER, AND SIN HAS SEPARATED US FROM GOD. THAT IS THE WAY IT HAPPENED IN THE BEGINNING. THERE WAS ADAM AND EVE, AND THERE WAS GOD. THEY WERE TOGETHER IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

BUT WHAT HAPPENED? EVE WAS TRICKED BY SATAN AND ATE THE FRUIT, THEN SHE GAVE IT TO ADAM. ADAM WASN'T TRICKED; HE KNEW EXACTLY WHAT HE WAS DOING.

ADAM ATE THE FRUIT AND SIN ENTERED INTO THE HUMAN RACE. AND WHAT IS THE VERY FIRST THING ADAM AND EVE DID ONCE THEY REALIZED THEY HAD SINNED? "SUDDENLY," THE BIBLE SAYS, "THEIR EYES WERE OPENED AND THEY COULD PERCEIVE GOOD AND EVIL."

THEY REALIZED THEY WERE NAKED BECAUSE SIN HAD ENTERED INTO THE RELATIONSHIP AND THEY WERE ASHAMED AND WENT AND HID THEMSELVES. AND GOD CAME WALKING IN THE COOL OF THE DAY AND CALLED OUT, "ADAM, ADAM, WHERE ARE YOU?" WHAT WAS THE MATTER? DIDN'T GOD KNOW WHERE ADAM WAS?

NO. GOD KNEW EXACTLY WHERE ADAM WAS. HE CALLED OUT LIKE THIS BECAUSE HE WANTED ADAM TO KNOW WHERE HE WAS.

SIN ALWAYS DIVIDES AND THE FIRST DIVISION WAS BETWEEN MAN AND GOD. GOD ASKED ADAM WHAT HE HAD DONE. AND WHAT WAS ADAM'S ANSWER? "THE WOMAN YOU GAVE ME GAVE ME THE FRUIT."

HE TRIED TO LAY IT OFF ON HER AND ULTIMATELY ON GOD.

SO SIN FIRST CAUSED A SEPARATION BETWEEN MAN AND GOD AND THEN BETWEEN MAN AND WOMAN.

THEY WERE CAST OUT OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN AND GOD SAID THEY COULDN'T COME BACK IN BECAUSE SIN DOESN'T BELONG IN PARADISE.

HE PUT THE CHERUBIM WITH THE FLAMING, FLASHING SWORD GOING TO AND FRO BECAUSE SIN HAD BROKEN MAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. SO ADAM AND EVE WERE CAST OUT OF THE GARDEN AND ADAM KNEW EVE AND THEY HAD CHILDREN.

THEY HAD A BOY NAMED CAIN AND A BOY NAMED ABEL.

ABEL OFFERED SACRIFICES THAT WERE ACCEPTED BY GOD, BUT CAIN'S WERE NOT ACCEPTED. WHEN CAIN SAW THAT, HE WAS JEALOUS OF ABEL AND HE KILLED HIM. SO NOW SIN HAS PASSED DOWN TO THE NEXT GENERATION. AND IF YOU COME DOWN THE GENERATIONS IN THE BIBLICAL RECORD TO GENESIS 6, THE GREAT FLOOD, ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH EXCEPT NOAH'S FAMILY WERE DESTROYED, SHOWING THAT SIN HAD SPREAD.

IT HAD NOW SEPARATED MAN FROM CREATION. IN GENESIS 9 YOU COME TO THAT STRANGE STORY OF NOAH AND HIS DRUNKENNESS.

REMEMBER HOW SHEM AND JAPHETH WOULD NOT LOOK ON THEIR FATHER'S NAKEDNESS, BUT HAM DID.

A CURSE CAME DOWN. THE BIBLE SAYS THAT FROM SHEM, HAM AND JAPHETH COME ALL THE RACES, ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD. FROM THAT HAS COME RACIAL ANTAGONISM AND ETHNIC HATRED AND ETHNIC STRIFE WHICH WE SEE RIGHT HERE IN NEWARK, IN IRAQ, IN IRAN. AND IT ALL GOES BACK TO GENESIS 9. CONTINUE ON TO THE STORY IN GENESIS 11. THEY WANTED TO BUILD THE GREAT BIG TOWER.

THEY WANTED TO SHOW HOW GREAT AND POWERFUL THEY WERE.

THEY ALL SPOKE ONE LANGUAGE, BUT WHEN GOD SAW WHAT THEY WERE GOING TO DO, HE CONFOUNDED THEIR SPEECH SO THEY COULD NO LONGER TALK TO TEACH OTHER.

ONE LANGUAGE GROUP WENT OVER HERE AND ANOTHER LANGUAGE GROUP WENT OVER THERE AND THAT, MY FRIEND, WAS THE BEGINNING OF NATIONAL ANTAGONISM AND INTERNATIONAL STRIFE WHICH CONTINUES TO THIS VERY DAY. WHAT STARTED OUT AS A SEPARATION BETWEEN MAN AND GOD WENT TO A SEPARATION BETWEEN MAN AND WOMAN, THEN TO A SEPARATION BETWEEN BROTHER AND BROTHER, BETWEEN MAN AND HIS CREATION, BETWEEN THE RACES AND ETHNIC GROUPS AND ULTIMATELY BETWEEN ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH. AND ALL THAT IS JUST IN THE FIRST 11 CHAPTERS OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT WHENEVER SIN COMES IN, IT NEVER BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER, IT ONLY FORCES THEM FARTHER APART. WE COME NOW TO THE STORY OF JESUS CHRIST, WHO IS THE GREAT UNITER.

IF SIN IS THE DIVIDER, JESUS CHRIST IS THE UNITER.

WE COME ACROSS THE CENTURIES TO THAT EARLY MORNING HOUR IN BETHLEHEM WHEN THE SHEPHERDS HEARD THE VOICE OF THE ANGEL. AND WHAT DID THE ANGELS CRY OUT AS THEY SANG TOGETHER, ANNOUNCING THE BIRTH OF THE SON OF GOD?

PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN, THUS SIGNALING THAT SOMEBODY HAD COME TO THE WORLD WHO WAS GOING TO AT LAST REVERSE THE EFFECTS OF THE FALL.

AT LAST GOD HAD DONE SOMETHING THAT WOULD PROVIDE A LASTING SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM THAT STARTED SO LONG AGO. READ IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST AND YOU KNOW THE ONLY PEOPLE JESUS EVER CONDEMNED WERE THE RELIGIOUS HYPOCRITES.

WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE DID JESUS CHOOSE FOR HIS FOLLOWERS? HE CHOSE FISHERMEN, FARMERS, POLITICAL ZEALOTS, TAX COLLECTORS.

IN FACT, THE BIBLE SAYS JESUS LIKED TO HANG AROUND THE DRUNKARDS AND PROSTITUTES AND TAX COLLECTORS SO MUCH, THEY CALLED HIM A GLUTTON AND A DRUNKARD, ASSOCIATING HIM WITH THE KIND OF PEOPLE HE FELT COMFORTABLE WITH.

AND WAS IT NOT OUR LORD JESUS WHO SAID, "I MUST NEED GO THROUGH SAMARIA?"

BUT THE SAMARITANS WERE THE HATED HALF-BREEDS AND THE JEWS COULDN'T STAND THE SAMARITANS AND THE SAMARITANS COULDN'T STAND THE JEWS.

THE JEWS WOULD DO ANYTHING TO AVOID GOING THROUGH SAMARIA. BUT JESUS SAID HE MUST GO THROUGH SAMARIA, THUS ESTABLISHING THAT HE IS THE ONE WHO CAN BRING THE RACES TOGETHER.

HE IS THE ONE WHO CAN BRING THE ETHNIC GROUPS TOGETHER.

HE IS THE ONE WHO CAN BRING THE NATIONS TOGETHER.

WHEN WILL WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE ANSWER TO THE DEEPEST PROBLEMS THAT WE HAVE IN THE WORLD TODAY IS NOT TO BE FOUND IN WASHINGTON?

IT IS NOT WITH THE REPUBLICANS, IT'S NOT WITH THE DEMOCRATS, IT'S NOT WITH THE INDEPENDENTS, IT'S NOT WITH THE GENERALLY CONFUSED, IT'S NOT WITH ANY OF THOSE PEOPLE UP THERE.

THE ANSWER IS WITH JESUS CHRIST, WHO CAME 2,000 YEARS AGO NOT TO SEPARATE BUT TO BRING PEOPLE BACK TO GOD AND TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER WHO HAVE BEEN SEPARATED BY SIN. THE BIBLE SAYS THAT GOD WAS IN CHRIST, RECONCILING THE WORLD TO HIMSELF AND HE HAS GIVEN TO US THE MESSAGE AND THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION. THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST ARE TO BE PEOPLE WHO BRING RECONCILIATION INTO THE WORLD. THE SIGN SAID: BRING US TOGETHER AGAIN. AND IN A FRAGMENTED, BLEEDING, DYING, HATE-FILLED WORLD, WE ARE TO BE MESSENGERS OF RECONCILIATION. WE ARE TO TAKE THE MESSAGE OUT OF THIS PLACE ONTO THE DANGEROUS STREETS. WE ARE TO TAKE IT TO THE RICH AND TO THE POOR.

WE ARE TO TAKE IT TO THOSE WHO WILL LISTEN AND TO THOSE WHO WON'T LISTEN.

WE ARE TO TAKE IT TO THOSE WHO WANT TO HEAR IT AND TO THOSE WHO DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT.

WE ARE TO GO OUT AND TELL THEM THERE IS A BETTER WAY. YOU DON'T HAVE TO HATE EACH OTHER. YOU DON'T HAVE TO KILL EACH OTHER. YOU DON'T HAVE TO CALL EACH OTHER NAMES. THERE IS A BETTER WAY.

AND IT HAS TO START WITH YOU AND WITH ME. IT HAS TO START IN THE MOST PERSONAL AREAS OF LIFE.

IT IS NOT ENOUGH JUST TO COME TO CHURCH AND SAY WE BELIEVE THESE THINGS. WE HAVE TO GO OUT AND BE AGENTS OF RECONCILIATION IN A HURTING WORLD.

THAT IS WHY JESUS SAID, "BLESSED ARE THE PEACE MAKERS, FOR THEY SHALL BE CALLED THE CHILDREN OF GOD."

WHY? BECAUSE IN A HURTING, WAR-TORN, EVIL, FRACTURED, DIVIDED WORLD, WE HAVE THE MESSAGE THAT CAN BRING PEOPLE BACK TOGETHER AGAIN.

IT IS THE MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. THERE IS SOMETHING I WANT YOU TO DO. I DON'T THINK IT IS ENOUGH FOR ME TO PREACH THIS TO YOU. I THINK WE HAVE TO MAKE IT MORE PERSONAL THAN THAT.

WE HAVE TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT THIS. THERE ARE AREAS WHERE RECONCILIATION MAY BE NEEDED IN YOUR OWN LIFE.

THINK ABOUT WHERE YOU NEED TO MAKE SOME CHANGES, WHERE YOU NEED SOME RECONCILIATION IN YOUR OWN HEART. MAYBE IT IS RACIAL RECONCILIATION, . MAYBE YOU HAVE BEEN GUILTY OF RACIAL HATRED, OF SAYING THINGS THAT HAVE DRIVEN PEOPLE APART.

MAYBE YOU HAVE BEEN PART OF THE PROBLEM AND IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO BECOME PART OF THE SOLUTION TO THE RACIAL TENSION IN OUR COUNTRY TODAY.

MAYBE YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR SCHOOL, IN YOUR HOME, WHERE YOU WORK. HOW ABOUT MARITAL RECONCILIATION? I CAN TELL YOU THAT I KNOW RIGHT NOW THERE ARE SOME FAMILIES WHO ARE JUST TEETERING ON THE BRINK OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. SOME OF THEM ARE GOOD FAMILIES, TOO. THERE IS SO MUCH ANGER. THERE HAS BEEN SO MUCH SIN, SO MUCH DIVISION AND SEPARATION.

IT'S LIKE THE MAN WHO RODE IN MY CAR THIS WEEK. HE WAS DIVORCED YEARS AGO. I ASKED HIM IF HE HAD TALKED TO HIS EX-WIFE. HE SAID HE HADN'T IN YEARS. I ASKED HIM WHY AND HE SAID, "IT'S HARD. I CAN FORGIVE, BUT I CAN'T FORGET." NO WONDER WE HAVE PROBLEMS. SOME OF US NEED TO TAKE THIS MESSAGE BACK HOME INTO OUR MARRIAGE.

HUSBANDS, BE RECONCILED TO YOUR WIVES AND WIVES, BE RECONCILED TO YOUR HUSBANDS. WHAT ABOUT IN YOUR FAMILY? THIS IS THE AREA I HAVE BEEN THINKING ABOUT A LOT. MY OWN FAMILY, MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY LOVED ONES. IS IT WHAT IT OUGHT TO BE?

HOW ABOUT IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST? WHAT ABOUT IN YOUR WORK? MAYBE YOU ARE SEPARATED AT WORK FROM SOMEBODY YOU JUST CAN'T STAND. GOD HAS CALLED YOU TO GO BACK INTO THAT SITUATION AND BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL OF GOD. WHAT ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL, YOUR TEACHERS, FELLOW STUDENTS?

WHAT ABOUT OTHER CHRISTIANS?
WHAT ABOUT OTHER RELATIONSHIPS OF YOUR LIFE?

MAYBE YOU HAVE BEEN SEPARATED FOR A LONG TIME FROM SOMEBODY ELSE BECAUSE THEY SAID SOMETHING AND YOU HAVE NEVER FORGIVEN THEM.

THEY DID SOMETHING TO YOU AND YOU HAVE NEVER GOTTEN OVER IT. MAYBE THERE IS A RELATIONSHIP BROKEN IN YOUR LIFE.

WELL, LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING. BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS BLOCK THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD.

IF WE SAY WE BELIEVE IN RECONCILIATION, THEN WE HAVE TO BELIEVE IN IT MORE THAN JUST A THEORETICAL SENSE.

IT HAS TO WORK DOWN INTO THE DEEPEST AREAS OF LIFE. MAYBE YOU ARE IN THAT GROUP RIGHT NOW AND YOU RECOGNIZE IT, BUT WHAT YOU REALLY NEED IS RECONCILIATION WITH GOD.

YOU CAN HAVE THAT. RECONCILIATION MEANS THAT GOD IS SATISFIED WITH JESUS, WITH HIS DEATH AND HIS RESURRECTION.

GOD IS SATISFIED WITH WHAT HIS SON DID.

ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH WHAT JESUS DID?

IF YOU WILL SAY YES, AND OPEN YOUR HEART, IF YOU WILL SAY, "COME IN, LORD JESUS. THANK YOU FOR DYING ON THE CROSS FOR ME.

I BELIEVE THAT WHAT YOU DID WAS ENOUGH," AND IF YOU OPEN YOUR HEART TO THE LORD JESUS, YOU CAN HAVE PEACE WITH GOD RIGHT NOW. I URGE AND BEG YOU TO DO IT.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS, LET US BE DETERMINED TO GO OUT AS AGENTS, AMBASSADORS, AND MINISTERS OF RECONCILIATION.

THERE IS ALREADY ENOUGH HATRED, KILLING AND BITTERNESS.

WE NEED A FEW AMBASSADORS TO GO OUT AND IN JESUS' NAME BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER AGAIN. AMEN.