

Jesus and was destroyed. Zacchaeus accepted Jesus and was reconciled not only to God but with everyone by giving fourfold from whom he took unjustly. From that day celebration of reconciliation began in Zacchaeus's life. This is what Christian life is all about. It is an eternal celebration of God's love in all joy. We can rejoice always no matter where we are because the joy of the Lord becomes our strength. There is always celebration in heaven whenever a sinner is reconciled to God. God has made us His ambassadors by giving the message of reconciliation so that we go forth and beg people to be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:23, 24) so that there will always be continuous celebration of God's love. May God help us to be God's ambassadors of reconciliation!

Life Application:

1. Only through Christ we can be reconciled to God.
2. To all those who are reconciled to Him God has given ministry of reconciliation.
3. Let us all join in this work of God and be partakers of the Celebration of reconciliation which God has started.
4. If you have never made an attempt to study the book of Romans please do during this Lenten season that begins from 22nd it being Ash Wednesday. To appreciate the book, have a study note book and copy in it, the outline of the book from three or four different study Bibles and see how much this brings blessing to you and then use many resources in the net.
5. Some of the books that may be studied during this season are
1. "The Cross of Christ by John R.E.Stott. 2. The signs of Life by Dr. David Jeremiah 3.Captured by the grace by Dr. David Jeremiah.4.Purpose Driven Life by Dr. Rick Warren. Another exercise I recommend is write the outline of one Bible book a day referring to any study Bible or resource available. At the end of the forty days see how much you will be blessed.
6. For those who want study further see the other three great passages on reconciliation. 1. Ephesians 2:11-20. 2. Colossians 1:15-20. 3. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

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19-02-2012

Celebrating reconciliation with God and Creation

(Genesis 33:1-17,Ps 34,Romans 5:1-11,Luke 19:1-6)

Solomon who did an extensive research in various angles on human life said that God made man upright but they had sought out many schemes (Ecc 7:29).This scheming began when Adam and Eve made clothes of leaves to cover their newly found shame after eating God forbidden fruit (Gen 3:7).This is also an example of the usual nature of human beings to cover their sins. When God made everything including Adam and Eve to rule over all His creation it was very good. The relationship between God and man; man and man were perfect and harmonious in every way. But from the day Adam and Eve sinned there started friction in the otherwise harmonious relationships. Adam who earlier called Eve bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh, (my darling) started calling Eve "the woman" after. In the fields of human life which were supposed to bring harvest of eternal life full of fruit of the spirit of goodness etc, thorns and weeds of the deceitfulness of riches and cares of the world started growing. Just as the whole creation was subjected to futility and bondage to corruption human lives which are destined to achieve fulfillment were subject to lifelong slavery through all sorts of fear including the major fear of death. Satan is the culprit for this state of affairs because he started making the beautiful Eden of God's world a desert (Is 14:17).

However it was God's pleasing will to reconcile to Him in Christ by the Cross all things whether on earth or in heaven (Col 1:19-20).That's why God has sent His only begotten Son into the world in the form of flesh and made Him perfect through suffering (death on the cross) so that He (Jesus) could bring many of His children to glory. He forgave the sins of his children because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ and reconciled them to Himself. This is today's Epistle lesson. When we get reconciled to God by confessing our sins like Jacob in today's Old Testament lesson then God make even our enemies, friends. This will of God to reconcile to Himself everything was possible only because of the death of Christ on the Cross. When one invites Jesus into one's life like Zacchaeus, there begins the unending celebration of life of reconciliation .This is today's Gospel lesson.

The Epistle lesson: Romans 5:1-11
Reconciliation with God is possible only through Jesus

Those who take their spiritual lives serious should study the book of Romans wholeheartedly. In the New Testament we find Jesus telling

who will inherit the Heavenly Kingdom of God. Let us mark those verses and memorize as a spiritual table with caption "Entrance to Heaven" just as we memorized multiplication tables in our child hood.

Entrance to Heaven

1. Mathew 5:20 Our righteousness should exceed that of Pharisees. (Do you have that righteousness?)

2. Mathew 7:21 We should do the will of God (Do you know what is that will?)

3. John 3:,3,5,7 We must be born again? (When is your spiritual birthday?)

The book of Romans tells us how we can have righteousness that exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees. The key word of this book is "Righteousness". (Find out how many times does it occur?)

Having shown in the first three chapters (1-3:22) that all including Jews and the gentiles are sinners, Paul goes on to show in the rest of the chapter 3 how God justifies sinners because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the Cross. In chapter four he illustrates this principle in the life of Abraham. In Chapter 5 Paul elaborates and explains this principle. Chapter 5 is one of the greatest chapters of the Bible on reconciliation in which we also find the answer to the question how did death come into the world? (Find where the answer is) .Here is what Late Dr.John R.W.Stott in his excellent treatise on the Cross of Christ (See that this book is in your Church Library) said about reconciliation

"The first thing that has to be said about biblical gospel of reconciliation is that it begins with reconciliation to God and continues with reconciling community (we can call brother hood in Christ-these are my words).Bible does not use this to describe "coming to terms with oneself", though it does insist that it is only through losing ourselves in love for God and neighbor that we truly find ourselves.

Reconciliation with God then is the beginning. This is the meaning of atonement. The word atonement alludes to the event through which God and human beings previously alienated from one another are made "at one" again. (That's what happened between Jacob and Esau in today's Old Testament lesson-these are my words of explanation) The word atonement occurs only once in the NT(Authorized KJV) namely in the statement that through Christ "we have now received atonement"(Rom 5:11), that is to say "reconciliation". It is significant that in Romans 5:9-11, which is one of the four great passages on reconciliation in the NT, to be reconciled and to be justified are parallels."

Since we have now been justified by His blood" is balanced by "if when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of His son". The two states, though both were affected by the cross are not identical, however. Justification is our legal standing before judge in the court; reconciliation is our personal relationship with our Father in home. Indeed the latter is the sequel and the fruit of the former .It is only when we have been justified by faith that we have peace with God (5:1) which is reconciliation"

The parable of prodigal son teaches us that one has to come back to the Father and confess one's sins in order to be reconciled in his to God. Late Dr.Thompson in his Chain Reference Bible compared the blessings one receives when one is reconciled to God to eight precious stones in the ring the Father gave to his son. These blessing are 1.Peace 2.Access 3.Joy in hope 4.Joy in suffering 5.Perseverance 6.Character 7.Hope 8.Love. (If you want theses come to the Father who is waiting for you with open hands -Is 65:2)

Once a sinner repents and comes back home God himself calls for celebration like the Father in the parable of prodigal son. Father protects all His children who have returned home to Him. When God asked Jacob his name he was showing Jacob his sins and Jacob confessed his sins because he told God his name. Then God changed his name to Israel. After this experience we find in today's Old Testament lesson how both the brothers Jacob and Esau were reconciled.

The Old Testament lesson: Genesis 33:1-17 When we are reconciled to God, He makes even our enemies friends

We find in 32nd Chapter of Genesis Jacob had yet another vision of God. In that vision Jacob realized his sinful state. He confessed before God that He was a deceiver. We all know how Jacob had cheated his brother twice. Therefore when Jacob found that his brother Esau was coming towards him, he thought that was his last day. As a matter of fact earlier Esau was bent on killing his brother. It is only God I feel changed Esau's heart that day. Both brothers were reconciled to each other. Jacob reached Shechem unharmed and we find Jacob building an altar for God and praising Him. I think there might have a great celebration time. In the same way when Jesus came into Zacchaeus house there began a great celebration. This is today's Gospel lesson.

The Gospel lesson: Luke19:1-7; We can never be reconciled to any one without first reconciling with God

God reveals Himself to those who desire to see Him wholeheartedly. We find in Luke's Gospel both Zacchaeus and Herod desired to see Jesus (Lk 23:8). God granted both their wishes. Herod did not accept