



## LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

### “UNITE: Our Call to Reconciliation”

Ps. Rice Broocks - Feb. 15, 2015

#### WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- If you could travel to another country, where would you like to go? Why?
- What is your favorite international food?
- If you could learn another language, what would it be?

#### WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at <http://www.bethelworld.org>

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (ESV) *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

If God had counted our transgressions against us, reconciliation would not have been possible. God was willing to reach out to us in mercy, truth, and grace before we were sorrowful and repentant for our offenses against him. God committed to take our sins away in Christ while we were still his enemies.

If a people or an individual counts the wrongs done against them, reconciliation between them and those who sinned against them could never take place. Reconciliation is only possible when someone is willing to not count the transgressions committed against them. This is possible when we look to God, who sent his Son to carry our sins, nailing them in his body to the cross. If God could choose to not hold all our mountain of sins against us but instead reach out to us in a spirit of reconciliation, then we can and should do the same toward others. Our sins against God are far greater than we can imagine, yet God has dealt graciously with us. Let us therefore emulate Christ and genuinely give ourselves to reconciliation with others.

#### **Five Principles of Reconciliation**

1. Each believer is given the ministry of reconciliation.
  - Every person who is reconciled to God is given the ministry of reconciliation by God.
  - This privilege and responsibility doesn't simply belong to churches and organizations, but to individuals. It belongs to each and every Christian.
2. God so loved the world that he gave his Son to reconcile all peoples to himself.
  - If the seven billion people of the world were illustrated with seven representative people, then they would be as follows: three Asians (including one Chinese and one Indian), one Latino, one Middle-Eastern, one Caucasian, and one African.

- We are called to take the love God has shown each of us and give it to all people, not just those who are like ourselves.
3. God sends us into all the world to preach the Gospel to all peoples.
    - We are to be deliberate and proactive in taking the Gospel to the nations of the world.
    - We can do this by praying for and giving to others who are serving with the Gospel of Jesus in other nations. And if possible, we can also go on short-term trips ourselves. Some of us are called to go longer term, perhaps for a year or even a lifetime.
  4. The world of diverse peoples is also all around us.
    - There are internationals all around us. There are second generation children of immigrants all around us. There are people of other ethnicities all around us. The world is in our backyard.
    - We are to deliberately reach out to all these people in our local communities with the love and Gospel of Christ.
  5. Only the Gospel can truly reconcile people.
    - Ephesians 3:6-11 (ESV *This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord...*)
    - True reconciliation is more than tolerance. It is love and unity among a diverse people. It takes place not merely at a public gathering, but in our homes.
    - Christ came to reconcile people of all ethnicities and backgrounds to God and to one another. A truly loving, reconciled people of diversity is a testimony to the wisdom, goodness, and greatness of God's plan of redemption in Christ. It speaks as a witness to everyone who sees and hears of it.

### **PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)**

**Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.**

- What challenges have you faced in working through issues of reconciliation between yourself and others?
- What has softened your heart to be able to forgive those who have sinned against you?
- Is there anything hindering you from reaching out to someone in an attempt to either reconcile them to God or to you?

### **PRAYER (10-15 minutes)**

**Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.**

- That God will open our eyes afresh to all that he has forgiven each of us because of Jesus Christ.
- That God will open our eyes to all the opportunities around us to reach out to people of other ethnicities and nationalities with the Gospel, and that he will specifically show us individuals we should befriend.
- That God would continue to grow and build our church as one of great ethnic and national diversity, and that he would show each of us what we can do to bring that about.