

Audio Transcript of Sermon
November 18, 2023
Ministry of Reconciliation

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. It seems we live in a world without hope for reconciliation. The current situation goes well beyond enemies fighting enemies or being weary of them. Acts of violence are on the rise with crime being reported more frequently than in the past. It makes no difference who you are. In the United States even members of Congress are carjacked, and politically, while we expect members of competing political parties to have disputes with members of other political parties, we are now seeing disputes within political parties. Instead of coming together in unity we are seeing a fracturing that begs for reconciliation, and yet reconciliation seems like an impossible dream.

Biblically, there is a need for mankind to be reconciled to God as in the beginning it was mankind who chose to leave God. It all began with an act of deception by a serpent in a garden with unsuspecting people as the marks. The serpent told the two who were there that day that God had lied to them, that they wouldn't die by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but that they would become like gods knowing good and evil. At that moment not only was a lie told, but a huge wedge was placed between mankind and God. Genesis three verse one.

Genesis 3:1-24

- 1. Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?**
- 2. And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:**
- 3. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.**
- 4. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:**
- 5. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.**
- 6. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the**

fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

7. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

God knew the two had accepted the lie over the truth shared with them, and when directly asked about it, the woman openly shared that the serpent had tricked her into making the choice while the man denied any responsibility. Verse eight.

8. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

9. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

10. And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

11. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

12. And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

13. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

Because of the trickery, the serpent was cursed above all animals. At that moment in time, God already knew of the need for reconciliation between the people and Him, and also knew it was not yet time for that reconciliation, promising the woman's seed would bruise the head of the serpent while the serpent would bruise the heel of this future male descendant, whom we have come to know as Jesus Christ. Verse fourteen.

14. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

15. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

16. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

17. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

18. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

To signify the magnitude of the estrangement that eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil caused, and to prevent unwarranted access to the tree of life, God had the man and woman expelled from the Garden of Eden. Verse twenty.

20. And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

21. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

22. And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever:

23. Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

24. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Where there is estrangement, there is a need for reconciliation, and when Jesus came to earth in the form of a man, He did come so that our sins could be forgiven. But, He also came so that we could be reconciled with God the Father. Sending Jesus for this purpose was briefly mentioned by God in the Garden of Eden, and it is through Jesus Christ we are reconciled to God. As a result we who focus on the Gospel of the Kingdom of God have this ministry of reconciliation.

Unless one is reconciled to God, there is no Kingdom of God for that person, just a lake of fire and a very quick death. We have been given that message of reconciliation knowing that at the very end of time, only those who are reconciled to God will be part of New Jerusalem. It is through Jesus we are reconciled as our sins are passed to Him so that we can have righteousness. Second Corinthians five verse sixteen.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

16. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

17. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

18. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19. To wit, 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.

20. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

If we are not convinced that God will only have those who are reconciled to Him in His Kingdom, we only need to consider why so many Gentiles are called to be of the Christian faith when the Jewish Faith centered around the Children of Israel. Explaining this to the Romans, Paul showed that the Gentiles were reconciled because the Children of Israel were cast away as they rejected Jesus. Paul then showed that all who are reconciled to God are holy to God, without regard to lineage and genealogy. He even explained that those who had rejected Jesus could still be reconciled to God, much like a natural tree branch can easily be grafted onto the same type of tree. Romans eleven verse thirteen.

Romans 11:13-24

13. For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

14. If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.

- 15. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?**
- 16. For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.**
- 17. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;**
- 18. Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.**
- 19. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.**
- 20. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:**
- 21. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.**
- 22. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.**
- 23. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.**
- 24. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?**

Earlier in that same letter, Paul explained that is through the death of Jesus Christ we are reconciled to God and through His resurrection, we are saved by His life. Paul then added it is through Jesus Christ we have received the atonement. Whether the word is translated as reconciled or atonement, the same Greek root is used showing that atonement is a reconciliation. Romans five verse eight.

Romans 5:8-11

- 8. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**
- 9. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.**
- 10. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.**

11. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

The Ephesians were told that it was through the blood of Christ that they as gentiles were brought close as aliens. In other words, through the blood of Jesus, the gentiles, who previously were not the people of God, were reconciled to God and now had access to eternal life. Ephesians two verse eleven.

Ephesians 2:11-18

11. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

12. That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

13. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

It is through Jesus Christ all of mankind can be reconciled to God. Prior to the death of Jesus only the nation Israel had access to God and only on the Day of Atonement when the high priest was required to breach the middle wall of partition as part of his duties on that day. Enmity of the flesh was replaced with peace, peace that stems from the tree of life and gives us hope of eternal life and the Kingdom of God as we have access to the Holy Spirit. Verse fourteen.

14. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

15. Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

16. And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

17. And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

The Colossians were told to give thanks to God knowing they were partakers of the eternal inheritance made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus, Who is not only the head of the church but through Whose death reconciliation was made possible. Prior to this reconciliation we were separated from God through wicked works, and now through the death and resurrection of Jesus instead of being separated from God we are reconciled with God as Holy, without blame, and without correction provided we continue in the faith and not move from it. Colossians one verse twelve.

Colossians 1:12-23

12. Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

13. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14. In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

15. Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

16. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

18. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

19. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

20. And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

21. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

22. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight:

23. If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

In Hebrews we are told that Jesus took the form of man as a descendant of Abraham so that Satan could be defeated and the only threat he could hold over

us, death, would be removed. Wherever there is fear, there is something akin to bondage as fear can and will paralyze most people. With that fear removed, we no longer are paralyzed by spiritual inaction, we are no longer paralyzed by evil that we see in this world as we live for a world that will be established through the Kingdom of God, and all of this comes through the death of Jesus which brought about a reconciliation with God, a reconciliation of the sins of the people. Hebrews two verse eleven.

Hebrews 2:11-18

11. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

12. Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

13. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

14. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

15. And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

16. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

17. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

18. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Knowing we are living in this time of reconciliation, how is it that at times we seem to be unreconciled with others? For those not of the faith it is easy to understand because they do not understand this spiritual reconciliation. Looking around in the world in which we live, it seems like we are so far removed from reconciliation, it seems like we are almost waiting for this world to erupt in another world war. That's how tense things seem on a global scale.

But for those of us within the faith, how is it that at times we seem to be unreconciled with others? Go back thirty years in time and a great fracturing of

the Church of God occurred and with that fracturing came fear, a fear that fuels mistrust and an inability to reconcile amongst ourselves, and yet it is the Church of God that has been given this ministry of reconciliation to bring people to Jesus Christ, God the Father, and eternal life in the Kingdom of God. When we remain unreconciled amongst ourselves, how effectively can we implement a ministry of reconciliation? If we choose to spiritually live in fear, we will not be part of a ministry of reconciliation where there is great hope for all mankind. Instead, we will be part of a ministry of fear, and that ministry comes with no hope for any of us.

So starting with ourselves individually, what can we do to promote this ministry of reconciliation and do away with that which is based in fear? It begins by how we treat other people, not through what is just noticeable and maybe just for show, but how we truly are within our heart and mind. We can begin on this road to reconciliation through forgiveness. Every spiritual opportunity and advantage we have been given came through the forgiveness of our sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus did not die on the cross sterilely just doing His job without any regard for mankind. Jesus lived a life full of natural affection for people, unlike the time we live in now where there is a lack of natural affection for people in these perilous times. As Jesus died so we can be forgiven of our sins, we need to be forgiving of other people, kind with each other, and tenderhearted. Ephesians four verse twenty-five.

Ephesians 4:25-32

25. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

26. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

27. Neither give place to the devil.

28. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

30. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

31. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

In this ministry of reconciliation we cannot allow ourselves to be unreconciled with each other. Whatever it is that causes any type of division among brethren needs to stop. We need to take great effort to be reconciled to people of the faith knowing that not all people will want to be part of this reconciliation. Matthew eighteen verse fifteen.

Matthew 18:15-17

15. Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

16. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

17. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

Having this ministry of reconciliation, we cannot allow ourselves to be angry with others without cause or to be judgmental. We cannot truly hope for reconciliation with God whom we have not seen if we are unwilling to seek reconciliation with other people whom we have seen. Matthew five verse twenty-one.

Matthew 5:21-26

21. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

22. 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, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

23. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

24. Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

As much as is possible, we should be living peaceably with all people never seeking to be avenged. We need to be overcoming evil with good. Romans twelve verse sixteen.

Romans 12:16-21

16. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

17. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

18. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

19. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

20. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

21. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Hebrews tells us to follow peace with all men and holiness or we will not be part of the promise of eternal life. We are also told to do this diligently to avoid falling short and to avoid any root of bitterness. Whenever we sense we are bitter about anything, even if we feel we have been wronged, that needs to signal us to go back to diligently seeking peace and holiness. Hebrews twelve verse fourteen.

Hebrews 12:14-17

14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

15. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

16. Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

17. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

This ministry of reconciliation should make us aware that we have forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ knowing we are sealed through the Holy Spirit, and have hope of this promise that is before us. All of us in the faith share this hope and must be willing to extend forgiveness to others. Ephesians one verse three.

Ephesians 1:3-14

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8. Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9. Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12. That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

13. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Jesus reminded his disciples that our calling is not an easy calling to have and that even though we are loved by God the Father and Jesus Christ and should have love for each other, that we will not be loved by all of mankind. We might even be hated. Luke six verse twenty.

Luke 6:20-42

20. And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

21. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

22. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

23. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

Jesus explained that having an abundance in this life does not mean we are spiritually rich. We cannot confuse the two. Verse twenty-four.

24. But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

25. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

26. Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

Jesus does tell us to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us, to bless those who curse us, and to pray for those who spitefully use us. We are to be merciful as God is merciful, because before we were called by God, God extended mercy to us and all of mankind through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Mercy is part of that ministry of reconciliation and something we must have for each other today. Verse twenty-seven.

27. But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

28. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which spitefully use you.

29. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also.

30. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

31. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

32. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

33. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

34. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

35. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

36. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

That ministry of reconciliation focuses our attention on what we are doing, not on what others are doing. Knowing our sins are forgiven and that forgiveness of sins is for all people, we have no need to be in judgment of others. We stay focused on what we are doing so that we do not fall short or allow a root of bitterness to grow within us. Verse thirty-seven.

37. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

38. Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

39. And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

40. The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.

41. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42. Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

Within the many parables of Jesus is the parable of prodigal son that teaches us about reconciliation. In this parable the younger son of a father asks for his inheritance up front and then spends every last cent on a lavish party lifestyle. Facing the prospect of no more money to support this lifestyle, and knowing there was no more inheritance to be sought, the younger son returned to his father willing to work as a servant to support himself. Luke fifteen verse eleven.

Luke 15:11-32

11. And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12. And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13. 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.

14. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

19. And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

His father noticed him returning when he was still quite a distance from the house, and ran to welcome his younger son home. To celebrate the return, the father told the servants to prepare a feast and to honor him like a long lost friend. Verse twenty.

20. 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.

21. 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.

22. 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:

23. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

24. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

The reconciliation did not sit well with the older brother who had been supporting the family business while the younger brother was off having a party lifestyle, and

the father explained to the older son that because he had always been doing the family business, there was no need for his reconciliation, but with the younger brother there was a need for reconciliation explaining that reconciliation should be a cause for joy, not frustration. Verse twenty-five.

25. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.

26. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

27. 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.

28. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

29. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

30. But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

31. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

32. 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.

The father was celebrating that his younger son who was for all purposes dead and lost to the family was now alive and found again. Before our calling there was a time in each of our lives when we were also dead and lost, and now through the reconciliation that comes through Jesus, we are alive and found. Being dead or alive is a choice we continue to make through the rest of our physical life on earth as everything we do leads to the future Kingdom of God that culminates in the new heaven and new earth. Revelation twenty-one verse one.

Revelation 21:1-8

1. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

8. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Those who overcome all things, overcome through reconciliation, and those who reject the opportunity for reconciliation do so because of fear, lack of belief, and because they perpetuate acts of evil and idolatry. The Church of God has been given a ministry of reconciliation, a ministry that is for today and that leads to the Kingdom of God on Earth. This ministry of reconciliation has been needed since the Garden of Eden and is made possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We live in times where the hope of reconciliation seems to be lost, but for us we know the hope of reconciliation is very real as we are called not only to be part of the faith we have, but to be part of the ministry of reconciliation through the Church of God.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.