**Position in Christ - BD03\_02**

We are not born with God’s viewpoint, but we find that by natural birth we have just the opposite. 1 Corinthians 2: 14 tells us that the natural man, that is the unsaved man,” receiveth not the things of the spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.” When an unbeliever is brought face to face with what God thinks, he can be a very intelligent, very discerning, very perceptive man, very educated man, having great skills, great abilities, great natural endowments, but when he comes up against what God thinks, it sounds foolish to him. In the case of the Christian who is out of fellowship, the Christian who the Bible calls the “carnal Christian,” the Christian who has negative volition toward what the Bible says, who has a questioning mind, who has reservations and doubts about what he’s told the Bible has to say, that Christian has a hostile attitude toward the word of God.

Romans 8: 7 says, “Because the carnal mind is enmity, hostile, against God, for it is not subject to the Law or to the teachings of God, neither in Thee can be.” So then they that are in the flesh, that is carnal Christians living in unconfessed sin, cannot please God. Verse 6 says, “For to be carnally minded is death, to be separated, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” To be separated from blessing if you are carnal. To be united with blessing if you are spiritual.

So how do we get spiritual insights? We are not born with them, but we receive them as the result of somebody giving us some instruction. So it is that 1 Corinthians chapter 4 Paul says in verse 7, “For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? That thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hast not received it?” And that is the position in which all of us are this morning. None of us have anything except that which we have received from another. This is God’s system of working. It is our system to collect from every source, from every teacher, from every possibility of understanding, that which is indeed the truth concerning the Word of God.

Our modest little interest in the cassette tape ministry that we have here at Berean is an attempt to share, again, what we have learned from others, to share that in turn with somebody else. For you to take what you have learned from others, and thereby through the tapes to share with somebody else. But it is again sharing that which we have received so that you may share in turn.

Our call before God is to make these spiritual things that we have received, our own. We enter into them, and then we pass on God’s viewpoint in our own way and in our own place. Philippians 4:9, Paul says, “For those things which ye have both learned and received.” Now notice those two words, ”the things that you learned,” this is what you took with your mind. This is the understanding that you receive. In the Greek language, there is the word “gnosis” that this may be comparable to. That’s knowledge. But the next word says, “the things you learned and received.” The things you accepted, the things that you went positive toward. There’s another interesting Greek word that’s comparable to this and that’s called “epignosis.” “Epignosis” is “full, deep, grasped truth.” This is what you have down there in your human spirit. This is what you have up there in your mind.

Now Paul says, “Somebody’s going to teach you, and you’re going to receive from somebody else, that which you’re going to learn, and which you will then in turn receive, that’s what will do you some good. And heard,” and you hear it by sitting under instruction, “and you have seen in me, do, and the God of peace shall be with you.” Here’s the key to happiness. Those things which you have both learned, and then went positive toward, receive, and you learn them because you heard them being taught, and you have seen them in practice, these are the things you should do. The God of peace will be with you and blessing will be upon you. So we pray for this understanding. This is the thing we pursue. This is the thing we seek, God’s viewpoint and our desire to share it.

Shall we pray. “Our heavenly Father, we want to thank Thee for this Thy word, and asking Thee that the God the Holy Spirit may instruct us and make it clear to our hearts, and may we be receptive to it. For we pray in Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Now very briefly let’s review as we come now to the final block in the great wall separating man and God. The wall between God and man, number six in this series. The first block was sin. We were sold in the slave market of sin. God redeemed us, that removed the block. The second one was the penalty of sin which was spiritual death because of the sin which had been imputed to us from Adam. The solution that God provided was expiation which wipes out our sin. So the penalty is removed. The next block was physical birth which gave us an old sin nature. Therefore we were born spiritually dead, and God gave us regeneration, the new birth, and that removed that block. Then we were confronted with the block of the character of God that stood in our way. The character of God consisted of His justice and of His righteousness. Justice was solved by propitiation. That is God’s justice was satisfied by the death of Christ. His righteousness was removed by imputation. The result of imputation was justification. Imputation means that we have received to our account all the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Therefore, God says we are just.

**Position in Adam**

Now we have one more problem. That’s this one here that we’re going to look at this morning, and that is that we are in Adam. How are we to remove the problem of our being born in the wrong place? The block of man’s position in Adam. So we begin with looking at Adam, the first Adam, in the Garden of Eden as the head of the human race. You see, God sees all of humanity in just representative man. As God looks upon humanity, He sees everybody under two heads. One, is Adam. The other is Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:22 tells you about this. “For as in Adam all die,” that’s one head, “even so, in Christ,” the second headship, “shall all be made alive.” Adam, as the head of a fallen and spiritually dead race whose destiny is hell. Some of you here this morning may be in God’s view in Adam. Jesus Christ, as the head of the new creation of redeemed, spiritually alive people. Their destiny is heaven.

Now everyone who is born into the human race begins in this position in Adam. So, consequently, he separated from God by this particular block. Now the Bible always treats Adam as a historical character. It builds on the fact that he actually lived and he actually sinned. He is called, “the first Adam” in his role as the representative of the human race. That is, when he acted, God was looking upon him as the federal head who was acting for all of us, who were yet unborn, in Adam. Now Adam was created by God, you remember, as a living soul and a living spirit.

The origin of human life is given to us in Genesis, the very first chapter, in verse 26. This is always a fascinating subject. Where did life come from? Well here’s the answer. Genesis 1:26, “God said, ‘let us make man in our image and after our likeness.’ “That is God is immaterial. God’s likeness is that He is three persons, so we are three parts. “‘And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.’ So God created man in His own image. In the image of God, created He him, male and female, created He them.” Man created with a personality comparable to God’s. We are told of the details of this creation in Genesis 2:7. “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostril the breath of life,” or as it is in the Hebrew plural, “lives”, because he got soul life and spirit life, “and he became a living soul.”

Now all of life originates with God. Human life, and as you check through this creation record, all other life. Life does not originate with this fraud called evolution. It is very difficult to look upon intelligent, educated, highly reputed scientists who stand up and speak of evolution as the answer to the origin of life. I find that Christians, I’ve had Christian kids, smart kids, but they were brainy and had a pretty good background in the Word. I’ve have had them raise questions to me that reflected in their thinking a wonderment if maybe the scientists weren’t right? How could these smart men be so completely wrong? How could they go for a fraud if that’s what evolution is? You see the problem is that evolution is totally lacking in scientific proof. It is difficult for us to remember that there is not one iota of what is called “scientific proof” for evolution. Secondly, evolution violates proven natural laws. We can’t go into that this morning. But some of the best scientists in this country have demonstrated that laws that are beyond any question, natural laws, are such that they preclude any possibility of the idea of one thing evolving into another form.

One very interesting confirmation of scriptural truth is the latest studies on the radioactive carbon method of dating. This method, the carbon 14 method, has been refined, and has been placed under extensive study. The latest scientific paper on it has indicated some amazing results. Because we’re more confirmation of the dates by which they knew, by which they can match up the system of dating by the radioactive carbon 14 technique, they have discovered of all things, that the oldest fossil life on earth is no farther back than 10,000 years. Which is exactly is keeping things well within the bounds of spiritual records.

So Adam was created a mature human being. He was part of what God called, “His perfect creation.” Now when this man, Adam, began, he was viewed as the federal head. He was acting for all of us who were yet unborn. I want to show you how there is a divine principle how this operates if you’ll turn to the book of Hebrews, chapter seven. Hebrews 7 explains to us this principle by which God views humanity. Hebrews 7:9, “And as I may so say, Levi,” which was the head of the priests of that which became the priestly tribe from which Aaron and the Aaronic priesthood descended, “and as I may so say, Levi also who receiveth tithe, paid tithes in Abraham, for he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. Melchizedek, without going extensively into the story this morning, Melchizedek was a priest of God which predated the Aaronic priesthood of Moses and Aaron. Melchizedek met Abraham as Abraham had come back from a military expedition in which he had rescued his nephew Lot. Because of the victory that God gave him, Melchizedek was honored by Abraham by the paying of tithes to Melchizedek. Hebrews 5:10 “Called of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek,” this speaking of Jesus Christ. The priesthood of Melchizedek was a type of the priesthood of Jesus Christ which was to come later. In other words, the priesthood of Christ was of the order of Melchizedek.

Now when Abraham bowed down to Melchizedek and paid him his tithes, he was indicating that Melchizedek was a priest and as God’s representative was the superior to Abraham, God’s servant. Years later, out of the loins so to speak of Abraham, came the posterity of the Levitical priesthood. The writer of Hebrews says, “You Jews are very proud of your priesthood, of your Aaronic priesthood. But I want to tell you that the Aaronic priesthood is inferior to the priesthood of Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Long before any of you were born, every one of you bowed down in your father Abraham to the priesthood of Jesus Christ.” So don’t talk to me about the superiority of the Aaronic priesthood because that is number two priesthood with God. Number one, is the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

Now here’s the principle. That this man was superior because he was met by Abraham and what Abraham did, he acted on behalf of all of the Jews who were to be descended from him. Hebrews 7:22, “By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.” So the argument of this book is that what Jesus Christ has to offer as a priest is better than the Aaronic priesthood.

Now the same principle applies with what Adam did in reference to sin. His sin is imputed to the whole human race because all of us who were unborn in him were viewed by God as acting in Adam. So sometimes people say, “Well the reason I die is because of what happened in the Garden of Eden.” That’s right. They say, “Well that’s not fair, I wasn’t there.” Yes you were. Under God’s reckoning, you ate of the fruit. Everyone in this room bit it when Adam bit into it. He acted as our federal head. So we die spiritually because we are born with an old sin nature. You get that directly from your parents. The reason you are spiritually dead, is because of what you inherit from your parents. But the reason that you’re going to die physically someday, is because of what you did in the Garden of Eden with Adam. You inherit physical death directly from Adam. Without it going through your parents, it’s directly from Adam. But you inherit spiritual death through your parents from the old sin nature that they give you.

Romans 5:12 therefore says, “Wherefore as by one man, that is Adam, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned.” Then he goes on in this passage and says what he means by, “for all have sinned.” You might say, “Well sure, everybody does something wrong.” But that isn’t what this means. Because he goes on in this passage and says, “I want you to notice that everybody dies- even infants. Incompetents, people who are mentally incompetent to know right from wrong, everybody dies because they sin.” Now they could not be an infant and can’t be accused of dying because of something he did wrong by a negative act of his volition. Why does an infant die? Because that baby sinned with Adam. Adam is our federal head.

This is what we mean when we say we’ve got a big problem this morning because we are born here in Adam. It is a hopeless position that will separate us from God. But, the other part of 1 Corinthians 15:22 declares that there in another headship. “And as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.” As in Adam all are spiritually dead, so in Christ, the last Adam, all are made physically alive and spiritually alive. 1 Corinthians 15:45, “For so it is written the first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a life-giving spirit.” Be careful that you don’t call Jesus Christ the second Adam because “the second” leaves open the suggestion that there may be another Adam after Him. He is called the last Adam because the work is so completely done that there isn’t going to be anybody else following.

There is the first Adam. That’s the federal head through whom all of us die. The last Adam is the federal head through whom we all live. Kind of an easy thing to slip into. Alright, so we’re born again by our spiritual regeneration. This is the result of believing in Jesus Christ who redeemed us from sin’s slave market. So God sees you and me in a new position. This thing is blocked out. How does He block it out? God gives you a new position. He gives you a new position in Christ. That is a very exciting solution.

Here is how it works. Let’s draw a big circle. This circle we call “eternal fellowship.” In it, we enter by faith in Jesus Christ. That’s what Acts 16:31 tells us. Now when you enter in this circle, this is a position. It is a position in Christ because that’s what the eternal fellowship circle amounts to. You can never get out of that circle because you are His. You are what the Bible calls, “as in the Beloved.” That’s a great relief to know. On the other hand, there is an inner circle called, “temporal fellowship.” This is our day by day walk. When you are born again, you are in that inner circle. When you sin, you come out of that circle. When you confess, you come back into the inner circle.

The inner circle is a place where God the Holy Spirit leads and blesses. As long as you are out of this inner circle, you’re saved, you are going to Heaven, you can never leave that eternal fellowship, but God is nothing for your life. He gives you no direction. He gives you no leading. He gives you no understanding. He gives you no information. If you are ignorant of the Word of God, you have a pretty hard time staying in the inner circle. This is why the vast majority of Christendom, and I’m talking about genuinely born-again Christians, the vast majority of Christendom spend their entire lives here on Earth out here in the outer circle of fellowship. Only rarely do they come into the inner circle of blessing, mainly because they don’t know anything about it.

The most important verse in the life on an unsaved person, of an unbeliever is John 3:16. The most important verse in the life of a believer is 1 John 1:9. You make an interesting experiment. You just go around among Christians, especially Christians who have extensive backgrounds in church attendance. You ask them how important is 1 John 1:9 in the life of a Christian? What does it mean? Rarely will you find one that understands how crucial it is to all of eternal reward. Every reward you have in heaven, every reward, for services hung on your being in here. You don’t get one speck of reward for being out here in this outer circle- not one speck. Isn’t it sad to think of some man, some woman, some young person- you spend your whole life working away, raising a family, doing hard labor exercising your brain, saving, making plans, and all of it when you get to heaven you’re a pauper. They see you coming the fellow in charge up there presses the button to open the door to the poverty program. That’s all they have in heaven for you- the spiritual poverty program because you’ve frittered away your lifetime here in this circle.

Now this is what we’re talking about. We have a position in Christ which is something fantastic as the solution to the problem of what separated us from God. Every time God looks at you, Ephesians 1:6 speaks about His Son as “the Beloved.” We are declared to be in Him, and therefore we are “in the Beloved.” Christians are therefore accepted by God because they’re in Jesus Christ. This is what we call “positional truth.” God views us as in Christ, so we’re no longer in Adam. You can be in the inner circle of this diagram. You can be outside of the inner circle, but you will always be in the position of “in Christ.” You enter into this position through the baptism of God the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:13 tells us how we get into this eternal fellowship circle. “For by one spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bound or free, and have all been made to drink into one spirit.” Now if you have read any of the book of 1 Corinthians you will find that it’s a book filled with sin. The Corinthian church was not a very nice church. It was a very carnal church, and yet here, Paul can say that all of us in this church here in Corinth have been baptized by God the Holy Spirit with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Now we’re not going to deal with this doctrine this morning, but I want to warn you once more that there is an extensive college campus activity group in the nation now, which I’ve noticed in its recent literature, is making regular reports on how many people not only wanted to be saved, but how many people as the result of their student contacts and witness have requested to be baptized by the Spirit of God. Now this is the mistake of Pentecostalism. Baptism of the Holy Spirit comes the moment you’re saved. Some 30 odd things happen to you the moment you are born again. One of them, is this placement in Christ. It is the baptizing of the Holy Spirit that puts you in there. He baptizes you into Christ and there is where you remain.

So this is the doctrine of positional truth. We entered at salvation through the baptism of the Holy Spirit and it protects the believer from every kind of divine judgment possible. It qualifies you to live with God forever because it gives you eternal life. It gives you the imputed righteousness of Christ. You are made a new creature, and it guarantees you the security of heaven. Why? Because you are in this circle. I want to remind you something about positional truth. This is what your position is. Now some of you are sitting here and you are bothered by the fact that you don’t act up to your position. That’s right, here’s where you are supposed to live-in that inner circle. But most of us are constantly popping out of that circle, and that’s bad, but it’s even worse when you don’t know how to get back in. It’s even worse when you do know how to get back in, and you’re so stubborn, and you’re so negative, that you won’t confess and say, “God this is what I did,” and get yourself back into a place of usefulness and blessing.

I’ll remind you of certain characteristics of positional truth. One, it is not an experience. To be in Christ has no emotion, has no feeling, has no ecstatics. It’s just something that God does for us and you believe it because He tells you He does this. Secondly, it’s not progressive. You can’t improve on your position in Christ. You don’t get a better position. You don’t keep jockeying around for a better standing with Him. Third, this position is not related to any human good or merit. Nothing that your old sin nature can do is involved with this position- either getting you in, or taking you out. This position is eternal in nature- you can’t change it, neither can an angel. Not even God Himself, because He has committed Himself to keep you secure in this circle. Positional truth is only known from the Word of God. You wouldn’t know the security you have except by the Word. You obtain it at the moment of birth.

Now here is a couple of marvelous things that take place because of our position. The results of positional truth, one- is that we have received adoption into the family of God. Please turn to Galatians 4:4, verses 4 and 5. Paul says, “But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Now this word “adoption” in the Greek is “hiothesia.” This word means “to be placed as a son.” Now it does not mean what we usually mean by the word “adoption.” When we speak about somebody that is adopted, we mean somebody that is not tied to a certain person by blood ties, is made a legal heir of that individual. Now the Bible sometimes speaks of that relationship, but this is not the meaning “adoption.” As a result of our position in Christ, we are adopted into the family of God. We are placed into the family of God in a certain position.

In the ancient world, a son, a boy was not called his father’s son or heir until he came to a certain age. Then, the father performed a certain legal ceremony called the “hiothesia.” As a result of this ceremony, this boy was now declared to be an adult in the family. Once he was an adult in the family, he got the keys to the chariot, and he got freedom of access of certain privileges that he had not had until then. He was placed in a certain position of independence, and he was treated with adult privileges and honors. Up to then, he was treated like a servant. The Bible says, “He was told where to go, when he could go, where to come.” He was checked in and checked out. The time came when he became officially the heir.

Now this is what God has done to us. We are born into the family of God by the new birth, but at the same time, God declares something about us. Immediately, He declares us to be full adult sons with full privileges shared with Jesus Christ, His son. So we become as it were the “brothers of Christ.” This is the only brotherhood the Bible knows anything about. This is the only fatherhood that the Bible knows anything about. It is a very bad thing for us to go along with the idea that everybody in the world is brothers. I don’t take it too fondly when people who are non-Christians call me “brother.” The world likes to use this word loosely.

Now we are only brothers by the fact that we are all descended from Adam, and we don’t want to make too much of that because it’s not too good a heritage. But the brotherhood that the Bible recognizes is this one. Yet every now and then we have famous men in religious influence who receive a “Brotherhood award” from the organization of Christians and Jews who love to give “brotherhood awards” to people who promote “brotherhood” under the “fatherhood of God.” This is a denial you see of the Word of God to even condone such an idea.

Now God the Holy Spirit gives us an assurance. Galatians 4:6 tells us that the Spirit of God gives us assurance that we are in this position. “And because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying ‘Abba Father’, wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son. And if a son, then an heir of God through Jesus Christ.” Now the full manifestation Romans 8:23 says that the full significance of this position is going to be shown when we are resurrected and we experience fully what He has done for us. Romans 8:14 you have the contrast of these two positions. Romans 8: 14, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” This is the word “huios.” It’s a word for the Christian and his position of adult standing. Verse 15 says, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, ‘Abba father.’“ There’s the position of adult sons.

Now the Spirit Himself in verse 16 bears witness with our spirit that we are the “children of God.” This is a different Greek word. This is the Greek word “???” which means “to be born, one who is born into a family.” Verse 17 says, “and if we are children, then heirs, heirs of God, joint heirs of Christ, so be that we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified together.” We have experienced because of this position, the work of adoption. You have full claims and privileges in the family of God as a spiritual Christian. Therefore, don’t let any man come along and impose legalism on you. Don’t let anybody come along with their taboos and say, “Here you are Christian, you can’t do this and you can’t do that. Do you want to please God? Then do this and don’t do that.” But on the other hand, don’t think that grace gives you the freedom to do what is wrong. Grace only gives you freedom to do what is right. But as an adult son, God says, “You are a priest, you exercise your own priesthood, but if you abuse it, and use my grace to do what is wrong, I’ll deal with you. If necessary, I’ll take your life and I’ll take you to heaven, but I’ll deal with you.” It’s a great thing to be an adult son as well as a child of God.

There’s another thing we experience, and that is sanctification. This is a word that is abused. Very briefly, it doesn’t mean a lot of things that people implied it means. It simply means “to set apart.” The word “sanctification” or “holy” means “to set apart to God.” It’s used of things, it’s used of people. When it’s used of things, it has no moral implications. The things are just special because they are devoted to divine use. When it’s used of people it has three meanings that are important. You have this morning three sanctifications. One is in position. You have positional sanctification. Hebrews 10:10 tells you that you have a permanent position of being set apart to God. “By which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.” You are forever set apart from the point of believing. Now this doesn’t imply that you are absolutely holy and right in all that you do in your practice.

You see again we speak of the Corinthian church, in the very first chapter of the book of Corinthians. 1 Corinthians 1:2 “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus.” He’s speaking to a church body and he calls them, “sanctified, set apart to God.” Now take a look at what kind of people they were. Beginning later in the book he describes the things that they did, and as you run your eye through this book, you’re appalled, and you’re almost embarrassed to think that these were Christians, and the things that they were doing all in the Lord’s name. Yet God says that this carnal church is sanctified. They are set apart.

There’s another experiential sanctification. This is your daily walk. In Romans 6:13 tells us that you can walk in a way that you yield your life to the Lord’s use. “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” So your daily experience you can more and more come to the position where you control sin, where you are free of it, never completely. You can find that you have a positive reaction to the will of God. You can find a certain freedom from sin. God wants you to have fellowship with Himself. You maintain confession, and the fellowship is there. You can’t say that you don’t have a sin nature. You can’t say that you don’t sin. The book of 1 John tells us. By taking in the Word of God, you can grow spiritually. All of these things will advance you in your experience to living more and more the way God wants you.

Finally, the third part of sanctification is ultimate which is going to be when we are directly together in the Lord’s presence. Ephesians 5:27 tells us about this complete sanctification. So this morning, we conclude this series on the wall of separation between us and God. The only thing that stands between you and God this morning is Jesus Christ. The issue is what will you do with Him? Sin is no longer any issue because every one of these blocks has been removed. The removal in Scripture is called “reconciliation.” This is what we’ve been talking about all along. This is the work of reconciliation, the removal of this wall. You and I have now been reconciled to God. All we have to do is cross over the line. We have been potentially reconciled to God now we have to accept this and to be willing to be reconciled, He has made us savable. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chaffer used to delight in the fact that he discovered the word “savable” as the word to describe the condition of reconciliation. You are now savable. There is nothing that stands in your way.

So let’s summarize this doctrine of reconciliation that we’ve been looking at for several weeks by turning to 2 Corinthians 5:14. We’ve been coming back and forth from here. Let’s read it through once more as we close and see if you understand a little better what he’s talking about now in reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:14 “For the love of Christ constraineth us,” that is it presses in upon us, “because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all sinners.”Since Jesus Christ has died for every human being, it follows that every human being was spiritually dead. Verse 15, “And that He died for all, that they who lived should not henceforth live unto themselves.” You Christians, He died for all. You who are Christians, henceforth, are not called to live unto yourselves. You now have a purpose in life. The person who lives unto himself, is the poor, sad Christian who ends up floating around here in this circle of fellowship and never staying in the inner circle. You have been called to a purpose in life. “But unto Him, not to live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again, to live unto the Lord Jesus Christ.” Verse 16, “But wherefore, henceforth knowing no man after the flesh,” we no longer look at people in the way that we used to look at them.

Every human being you ever see now, divine viewpoint tells you to look at him from the point of reconciliation. Here is a human being for whom all of this wall has been removed. You don’t look at people with all the rottenness and with all their contemptuousness, and with all their sin, but you look at them as people whom God has reconciled potentially to Himself. “We know no man after the flesh, yea though we have known Christ after the flesh.” We don’t even look at Him the same way. Now we look at Jesus Christ as someone that we are co-heirs with. “Yet now henceforth, we know Him no more. Therefore,” verse 17, here’s that famous verse, “if any man be in Christ,” and that’s the position of which we are speaking of this morning. When we are in Adam, we are separated from God. In Christ, we have been brought to Him. “He is a new creation, old things are passed away.”

What are the old things? Are they not your bad habits? Ever since I’ve been a child, I’ve been taught this verse means that “old things are passed away” are your bad habits. So here’s some fellow that keeps on smoking, and he’s a Christian and somebody says that this is kind of a sign that he’s not a Christian because the old things have not passed away. I used to explain this to people very carefully. Every time I’d find something funny about them, I’d explain that the old things should have passed away and something was wrong. These are not the old things, these are the old things of the old sin nature you see. The things of the old sin nature go right on with you. All of your bad habits go right on with you as a Christian. You can control them, you can remove them, but what he’s talking about as “old things” is this. Sin, the slave market, penalty, spiritual death, the old sin nature because of physical birth, the character of God is unsatisfied justice and righteousness, position in Adam, these are the old things. These have been done away. “Behold all things have become new.” And the new thing is that new position in Adam. “The old has passed away.” “Passed away” is the aorist tense in the Greek which means it’s once and for all. There isn’t anybody that can ever build this wall up again, not including yourself. God has provided “all things new” to remove these.

Verse 18, “and all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ.” He did it alone, nobody helped Him. “And hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.” The result is that all we who have been reconciled to Him now have the ministry of reconciliation. What is that? Verse 19 says, “That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. Not imputing their trespasses unto them and have committed to us the word of reconciliation.” God through Jesus Christ has reconciled the world by removing the blocks. He hasn’t imputed anyone’s sins to anybody because He has removed them. We have the word of reconciliation. This is what should come readily to the lips of every Christian. The story of reconciliation. The story of how God removed the wall of separation. There’s all kinds of things you could tell people who are unbelievers that this is what God says they should know. The great sense of relief that can come to a person who will listen and pay attention a little bit and who will grasp that God has removed the problem. So step right up across that line, friend, because that’s all you need to do to get eternal life. The barrier is no longer there. It is to you that He hath committed this word of reconciliation.

So verse 20, “Now then, consequently, we are ambassadors for Christ.” An ambassador represents an individual personally. “As though God did beseech you by us, we beg you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” What do you think Jesus Christ would say to the unbeliever if He were here? How do you think He would beseech him? That’s what we are to do. He’s not here to do it. Therefore, we beseech him. Now I don’t care whatever calling you have in life. Don’t you ever forget that your livelihood, you kids who are going to school, planning a livelihood someday, don’t you ever forget that that livelihood is simply incidental to your performance of your ambassadorship of reconciliation. If you don’t get that, if you go out and think that that particular profession or calling that you’re going to follow, that that’s the big thing to preoccupy your life, you’re going to join poverty row up in heaven, I’ll guarantee you. But God said, “I have committed to you the word of reconciliation the only reason I give you a livelihood is to finance yourself in exercising your mouth in one way or another, in explaining to people how the wall has been taken down.

Finally, verse 21, the climax of this passage, reads “For He hath made Him,” that is God hath made Him, Jesus Christ, “who knew no sin,” hath no old sin nature, “to be sin for us.” That refers to our guilt. “That we, “we believers, “might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” The expression might be made is in the Greek aorist which indicates that it is a permanent condition. We are permanently mad this. “The righteousness of God” is the absolute righteousness of God. This we have achieved in Him, that is in Jesus Christ. This is our message. This is our ambassadorship.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971