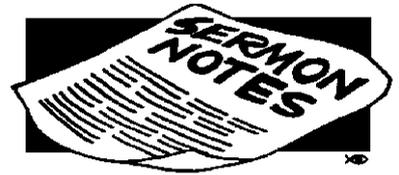


Reconciliation – Humanity’s Greatest Need



1ST READING: Colossians 1:1-23

TEXT: Colossians 1:19-23

By Pastor Geoff van Schie 13.9.15 AM
Wongan Hills

Outline: **ALIENATION FROM GOD**
 WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW.....
 RECONCILIATION THROUGH CHRIST

ALIENATION FROM GOD

Hot Topics in the News

- a) It seems there is always a GREAT HUMAN NEED held before us demanding an immediate and compassionate response..
Irish rock legend Bono held before the world and its leaders the great need of those who live in poverty in Africa. He called upon the 2007 G8 summit to be true to their commitments to retire the debt of poor African countries and to substantially increase humanitarian aid.
We remember the ‘Band Aid’ campaign of Bob Geldhof in 1984 for relief of poverty in Ethiopia Flowing from that in the United States the ‘We are the World’ campaign.
- b) This first week in September 2015 here in Australia has indeed been a tumultuous one..
➤ 4 brutal and very public murders in context of domestic violence
➤ Massive movement refugees in Europe & Australia accepted 12,000 extra displaced people from Syria
- c) While all of the above are important for the Church as social justice issues...
Christians NEED to ask ourselves what is the world’s GREATEST NEED.... And
How does our passion for that need compare to these other needs that grab the headlines?
“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We IMPLORE you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20)
- d) The Lord’s Supper brings us face to face with the greatest need that humanity faces
→ God’s drastic and mind-blowing action in having His only Son die for the sins of the world!!
Global warming/poverty in Africa/ Displacement of peoples/ Domestic Violence will end – but for most, alienation from God will be eternal
- e) Do we see reconciliation to God as the greatest need of humanity?
If so, what do Al Gore’s and Bono’s passion about their causes teach us?

The Former Life of the Colossians

- a) Text begins with statement that once Colossians were *alienated* from God
What does that look like?
“remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.” (Ephesians 2:12, NIV)
- b) 3:5-9 bears out this life of alienation which used to be the life of these Colossians Christians
“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices” (Colossians 3:5-9, NIV)
- c) Just an alternate lifestyle? God has **His way** He wanted them to live – they simply chose another
“Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.” (Colossians 1:21)
- d) Whose fault was it – this alienation from God?
The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness... For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. (Rom 1:18ff)

WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW

What about our World?

- a) That was how it was for the Colossians..... and the Ephesians..... and Romans – *the ancient world*
Jesus came to deal with that:
"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by 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!" (Romans 5:8-10, NIV)
- b) What about our world today, is reconciliation with God its greatest need?
- c) The answer lies in the answer to the question: 'Is our world alienated from God today?'
Let's look at Romans 1 again and see if it looks anything like our world
"Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless." (Romans 1:22-31, NIV)
- d) What do you think – does it look like the human race today?
- Perversion of sexuality
 - ☒ Same sex relationships
 - ☒ Adultery
 - ☒ Pedophilia
 - ☒ Sexual Harassment
 - ☒ Promiscuity
 - Breakdown of family life
 - ☒ Rise of divorce
 - ☒ Youth homelessness and prostitution
 - Violence
 - ☒ Murder
 - ☒ Aggravated assaults
 - ☒ Home invasion
 - ☒ Domestic violence
 - ☒ Rape
 - ☒ International conflicts and civil wars (*wars within nations*)

RECONCILIATION HUMANITY'S GREATEST NEED

Christ the Reconciler

- a) V.22 = **BUT NOW** → a changed situation
But now he has reconciled you...
- b) ← **1:19-20** - in Christ God working to reconcile world to Himself
For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.
- c) Lord's Supper reminds us of *God's* action in Christ which broke the alienation of the Colossians
→ a new status before God for these Colossians
"But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—" (Colossians 1:22, NIV)
- d) Let us understand again very clearly – the cross of Jesus Christ was and still is the world's greatest need!
It was and remains the *only way* alienation with God is broken and reconciliation is achieved!
- e) So, here we have Al Gore & Bono promoting their causes to the world – using ever last ounce of energy
Important as these causes, they have no eternal consequences
Here we KNOW what the world's greatest NEED is – *how passionate are we to let the world know?*
OK, not the world – nor even our nation/whole city of Perth – what about our immediate neighbours?

Has He reconciled ME?

- a) Let's be honest, we all know our own hearts: past failings, private thoughts – our daily struggle with sin
- b) A struggle made harder in a multi media age - sensual images thrust at us everywhere without warning
- c) Some may have come out of pretty dark places – some may even now not be in right relationship to God
Is it any use to believe that in Jesus we too can be reconciled to God?
"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you WERE. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, NIV)