

Colossians 1, Part 2 (Conrad Bowman) (May 21, 2006)

It was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him. The word "fullness" is *pleorma*. *P-L-E-R-O-M-A* in the Greek. And it's a very special word because it means to completely, totally fill and satisfy. That's the word fullness.

19. It was the Father's pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in the Son.

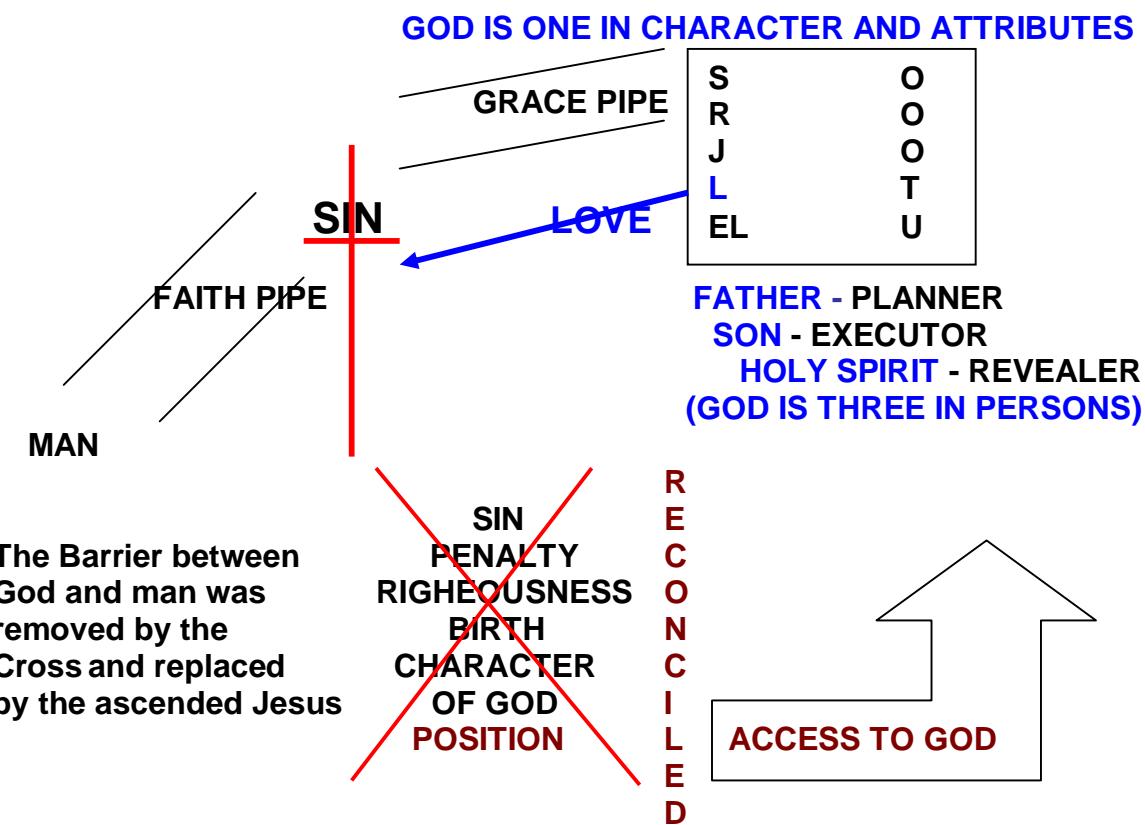
20. and through Him [the Son] to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Now, verse 19, said this is the Father's good pleasure. So we're doing things according to the will of the Father. Verse 20 says, that through the Son reconciliation was effective – now what is the Church been given ministry of? The Ministry of Reconciliation. What does that mean? That means that every single thing that separated man from God was removed by the cross. Nothing was left. "Sin" was removed. "Sins" were paid for. The penalty for sin was adequate and satisfied. The righteousness of God was given.

He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us in order that we might be made to be the righteousness of God in Him. [2 Corinthians 5:21].

That's in Corinthians. Now, now that that barrier has been removed, and we have been made righteous, if you can imagine, there's a pipeline from heaven called grace. [\[SEE BELOW\]](#) And through it flows the life and love of the Lord Jesus Christ. The love of God. And it flows earthward. Because of our standing in the cross, we have access to that pipeline. Now we access it by faith. And by faith we stand there, and this torrent pours from heaven. It's the grace and love of God. That's the fullness of Christ released to us. It's a torrent of living water. That's what He – that's what He hinted at when He stood in the courtyard and addressed Israel. That's what He was suggesting when He met the woman at the well. He said, "woman, if you had just known who I was, you could have asked of me, and I would have given you living water, and you could drink that and never thirst again." That's exactly what He was talking about. But they didn't understand it. Their eyes were closed. We, however, can understand this. This torrent of living water. Through Christ, every single thing that stands between

man and God was removed. The fence is down. All we have to do is exercise enough faith to know that that fence is down, and then step into God's pasture. It's amazing how few will do that, and how many will insist that they have to break the fence down even though it no longer exists. And they're working. They're getting their tools together. They're getting their hammers and saws, and they're going to break that fence down and show God that they're worthy. And they're working on a non-existent fence. That's completely crazy, isn't it? The world has been reconciled to God – in Christ. The only thing that stands between them and the Father that looks like a fence is the Lord Jesus, and He's standing there with open arms. But they can't see that, because they're too busy seeing themselves working on that fence. So through Him, it says in verse 20, He reconciled all things to Himself.



Now when Christ did His work on the cross, it was a complete work. There are no sins not paid for. There is no debt not paid and satisfied. There is no law not met. All of that's been done. That's what reconciliation is all about. He made peace through the blood of His cross. There it is. The ground of peace. When Paul opened this letter, he said, "grace and peace be to you." Grace is God's offer to

take you to Himself, because you're reconciled to Him. Peace is what happens as a result of that.

20. ... having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

He did it all. He reconciled it all. He didn't just reconcile the Church. He reconciled all of creation to God. That's how big His sacrifice was.

21. Although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds,

22. yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—

Now that's how much He loved you. Even when you hated Him, and had animosity toward Him, you were

alienated and hostile in [your own] mind, [you] engaged in [your own] evil deeds,

22. yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy ...

Is *hagios*, which means set apart. Blameless means flawless. There's no flaw there. And beyond reproach. You're not indictable by the law, because He satisfied that.

"If" is a first class condition. There are four conditions in the Greek.

First class is if, and its true.

Second class is if, and it's not.

Third class is if, and maybe it is and maybe it isn't.

Fourth class is if, and I wish it were but it's probably not.

This is a first class condition, better translated by our word "since." Not "if indeed you continue in faith," but "since you continue in faith –

23. ... firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

So that's a long sentence, isn't it? Since you continue in faith – "the" is not found there, by the way – since you continue in faith. That means that – when "the" is not there, it means the substance of the word or the character of the word or the strength of the word is what's emphasized. Since you continue in such a faith, "firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel." And the hope of the Gospel is that Christ is going to return and take us to be with Him. "That you have heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven." And that's the constant proclamation of the Gospel, "and of which I Paul was made a minister." So Paul has been made a minister of eternal truth, and that's the Gospel.

24. Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the Church, in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

And what this says is this: Christ's afflictions were taken on for every one of us. Every one of us. Every sin that we committed. Every ill that we've been subjected to – ill treatment. That's part of Christ's afflictions, because He bore every suffering – the Church has had. He bore the price of all our sins. And Paul says his work everyday is filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ. In other words, his suffering day by day is the fellowship of suffering that he endures in and for Christ. That's our job. That's why we're here. We're here for the fellowship of suffering. The world at large is not going to accept the saving Gospel of Christ. There will be fewer that accept it by far than there are that reject it. So Paul says he's doing his part. Because every affliction that he feels is one for which Christ died already. So in his body he says he's filling up that which is lacking in the afflictions of Christ.

25. Of this Church ...

The one for whom Christ died, and to which Paul has been placed as a minister.

25. Of this Church, I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me ...

And that word "stewardship" is economy of dispensation from God,

25. ... bestowed on me for your benefit [this purpose], that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God,

That's why Paul was placed there. That he might carry out the preaching of the Word of God. Preaching forth – Word of God here now, you have to remember, is not talking about the Scripture that we hold in our hands. We commonly refer to that as the Word of God, and when we read it on the page, we substitute that a lot of times. But that's not what it's talking about. It's talking about the **revealed Word of God. The revealed will of the Father. And that will of the Father is revealed has to do where we are. In time and space and history. The will of God for His Church today – closer to the Rapture.** Closer to the return of Christ for His Church is quite different than the will of God for the first century Church, when they were putting together the kind of Scripture, and He hadn't even finished talking yet to His apostles. He had a will then, and He's got a will now, and there're quite different. We need to pay careful attention. Just as that first century was waiting for God's will to be revealed to His apostles and expressed through them, so we too should we be waiting for God to speak through the Word He's already given us and through the leaders that He's placed over us. We need to hold them accountable, and we need to hold ourselves accountable, to search through what we're teaching and constantly reaffirm the truth as it's been revealed – first to Paul, and then to others. Timothy, Barnabas, Epaphras – and all the rest. And right down through that line of succession, through two thousand years, including the dark ages, including the Inquisition, including all the events that have happened until today – is His Word still evolving? Yes. Is it evolving differently than it did? No. We're not hearing new words. We're hearing new revelations from His Word – now we have to be careful with this. Because there are those that would say, I'm receiving revelations from God to the Church. And we hear that everyday – all you've got to do is turn the TV on. That's not what I'm saying. What I'm saying is, this Word is the living Word, and God is constantly feeding His Church through His will revealed about His Son, and through His Son, by the Spirit that's been here since the first Pentecost. Now, Paul says,

24. Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the Church, in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

That's his experience. Okay?

25. Of this Church, I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit in order that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God,

In other words, he wants to put it all together and put it out there for the Church.

26. that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been [revealed] manifested [revealed] to His saints,

So Paul said it. They didn't notice in the past. And now in this Dispensation God is revealing just what the Body of Christ is all about.

27. to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles,

And He said it before. For generations, His will had been revealed through Israel, and they rejected it. They took the Messiah, the Kinsman Redeemer, and killed Him outside the camp. They rejected it thoroughly. Now comes the prophecies of the Old Testament into fulfillment. The mystery which has been hidden from the past Ages and generations, but now has been revealed to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles.

27. ... which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

And there's the mystery. No one knew what union with Christ was all about. Not one saint in the Old Testament has enjoyed that, nor will they. Union with Christ is peculiar to this Dispensation. And it's a permanent condition.

28. We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.

And there's the whole story of the Church. Our job is to be on site when the Spirit draws men to Him. Our joy is to see that happen. So together with Paul we proclaim Christ – admonishing every man. Teaching every man with all wisdom. Here's *sophia* again. We're all *sophia*. That we may present every man complete in Christ. And that's our message. Brother, if you want to be complete, you've got to be joined to Christ. Your union with Him is essential. And,

29. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

I love that word “power.” *Dunamis*. It’s the word we get dynamite from. It’s explosive. It just blows things away, and a beautiful, beautiful term to describe what happens when the Gospel comes in and fills your life. Together with Paul we can say that.

28. We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom,

With all wisdom. Understand that. Study is hard work. Coming to know Christ is hard work. Getting your brain filled with *epignosis* is hard work. You’ve got to work at it. It takes time. There is no instant maturity. You have to grow, and test it. And try it again. And compare it with other believers. And have a brother come along side that’s willing to tell you what his experience has been like, and share your experience with him.

29. For this purpose also [Paul says] I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

And that’s the end of chapter 1.

[TAPE ENDED]. [This recording was transcribed on a tape recorder, and transmitted to a digital format. The earlier recordings, of which this is one, were made on a tape recorder. Some are more audible than others].