

- ii. He is asking one of the brothers in the church to help lead them to the cross and make it a pattern for their reconciliation.

C. S. Lewis: *Real forgiveness means looking steadily at the sin, the sin...after all allowances have been made, and seeing it in all its horror, dirt, meanness, and malice, and nevertheless being wholly reconciled to the man who has done it. That, and only that, is forgiveness....*

Jesus has not called us to live a life that he has not lived himself. As our trailblazer, he first embraced the love and leadership of his Father by faith, and he then expressed that faith in loving servanthood. His entire earthly ministry had a single purpose: to pour himself out for the sake of seeing people and creation reconciled to a right relationship with God and one another. (Jimmy Davis)

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- Why did Paul consider reconciliation of the interpersonal conflict (Phil. 4:2) so important? Why isn't it a private matter?
- What is your typical response to conflict? How might this message have raised ways in which it needs to change?
- Are there people in the church you need to reconcile with? ... in your family? Do you need to ask another believer for help?
- Can you think of ways that utilizing the Lord's prayer consistently in prayer might help us live at peace with others?
- What are some ways you can make every effort to live in peace and to live in unity? Has this been as high a priority for you as it needs to be?
- Why does all reconciliation ultimately have its beginning in God? Why are the 3 types of reconciliation all connected?
- Read and discuss the quotes at the top of this page. Explain how each of them might speak to you specifically.

The Cross as a Pattern for Reconciliation

Jerry Cisar — August 2, 2015

Text: Philippians 4:2-3

Introduction: Spheres of Reconciliation

A. Euodia and Syntyche

Alfred Poirier: *"Unresolved conflicts between Christians have less to do with people being skillful and more to do with people being sinful."*

B. Reconciliation is changing the status in a relationship from that of enemies to friends.

i. Interpersonal reconciliation

ii. Corporate reconciliation

iii. Cosmic reconciliation

Unresolved conflicts work directly against what Christ died to create.

Reconciliation at every level has a direct line to the cross of Jesus and therefore *true reconciliation is only possible through the cross and is therefore a necessary pursuit of every Christian.*

I. Reconciliation and the Cross

A. God's reconciliation of all creation to Himself. (Colossians 1:15, 19-23)

i. Creator and creation (Christ's body) came together.

ii. God and all creation are reconciled through the cross.

Cosmic reconciliation is applied personally to all who trust in Jesus.

B. God's work in the Cross created *corporate reconciliation*.
(Ephesians 2:11-16; 3:6)

i. The Cross reconciled us to Christ so we are no longer separated and also reconciled us to one another so that we are no longer excluded and estranged from one another.

ii. All reconciliation finds its source in the cross!

Jesus died to create a unified people of God, and therefore in our interpersonal relationships we must never accept hostility toward one another. We must pursue interpersonal reconciliation.

- Psalm 34:4
- Romans 14:19
- Ephesians 4:3
- Hebrews 12:14

II. How God Acts in Reconciliation

A. God initiated the first and most important reconciliation.
(Romans 5:8, 10)

i. God initiated reconciliation while we were enemies.

ii. We too must initiate reconciliation with others.

B. Peter's Sermon in the Temple (Acts 3:12-26)

i. Act 3:13-15

ii. Act 3:19-20

iii. Act 3:26

C. The Disciples' Prayer in Response to Persecution
(Acts 4:27-30)

i. They are asking the Lord to love His enemies!

ii. Our God loves His enemies and acts decisively and lovingly to reconcile those enemies to Himself.

III. How We are to Act in Reconciliation

Paul's appeal is...

A. **...Rooted in instructions to the whole church.**

i. Philippians 2:2-4

ii. Philippians 2:5-8 The Cross is the pattern for how they are to act in reconciliation.

B. **...Demonstrated in his own testimony in chapter 3.**

i. vv3-7 What Paul could have clung to.

ii. v8 Why Paul did not cling to it.

iii. v10-12 Paul becoming a suffering servant for the benefit of others.

Paul is asking Euodia and Syn-ty-che to do the same thing he is asking the church and the same thing he has done himself.

These two ladies, and everyone else experiencing conflict unresolved, must be willing to let go of their position of "being right" and make themselves nothing, to take the nature of a servant, to humble themselves and become obedient to the cross God has given them... even to the point of dying to self!

C. We must allow the cross to be our pattern for reconciliation.

i. Paul is calling these two ladies to go to the cross to learn how to walk out reconciliation in their conflict.