

Restoration and Reconciliation

Restoration in every dimension of human experience is at the heart of the gospel. It is woven through both OT and NT Scriptures and should be kept at the forefront of the things we communicate. The **restoration** we have been examining recently is the return of the church (the Bride of Christ), to the majesty and glory God intended for her.

Restoration is already taking place, and God's **Spirit** is being poured out on all flesh. However, **restoration** is a process. Through a series of very distinct and diverse operations of the Holy Spirit, God is systematically restoring different aspects of His beloved church. And this present-day restoration is affecting all four spheres of our existence – the spiritual, emotional, physical and material.

However, the most profound aspect of restoration is the renewing of fellowship between God and His people. Our Heavenly Father has always desired to restore the **friendly relationship** He intended for all of mankind. That is, to re-establish the kind of fellowship He had with Adam in the Garden of Eden. But good relationships are never one sided. Both parties must desire to be friendly and intimate for any relationship to work.

God then took the initiative by sending Jesus to the cross, and in doing so, He demonstrated the greatest act of Fatherly love the world would ever know. God the Father chose to restore relationship through **reconciliation**. **Romans 5:10**, *"For since our **friendship** with God was **restored** by the death of His Son while we were still His enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of His Son."* The NIV says, *"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!"*

To **reconcile** is to **restore** *friendly relations* between two parties. The English Dictionary says reconciliation is the act of making friendly again (*after alienation*). Both these definitions can be applied directly to the fulfilment of the cross and the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Notice, there can't be reconciliation unless *friendly relationship* had previously existed between the parties.

In the heart of God the **Father**, there has always prevailed a friendly and intimate bond with His children. His amazing love for you and me is ever-present. And, in eternity past, fellowship and relationship between God and man was always intended. "While we were still His enemies" God chose to **reconcile** us (restore goodwill) by the death of His Son Jesus.

Colossians 1:19-21 talks of the supremacy of Christ, but it also highlights this very same truth, *"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. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. 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."*

God the Father wanted to have all His children restored to a place of **intimate union** with Himself, so He was prepared to sacrifice His only Son in order to make this possible. However, to establish reconciliation

and bring you back into His glorious presence, God needed to first *present you holy in His sight*. Therefore, the restoration of this incredible relationship, between God and man, is fashioned in **holiness**.

The Father wants you to stand in His presence free from guilt and condemnation (Romans 8:1), but He also wants you to be holy, just as He is holy (Leviticus 20:26) **Ephesians 1:4** says, “*For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be **holy** and **blameless** in His sight.*” **Hebrews 2:11** declares, “Both the One who makes men **holy** and those who are made **holy** are of the same family.” Notice, the *family of God* is characterised by holiness! Essentiality, restoration and reconciliation are about holiness. Without holiness there can be no true union. And without this union there are no real family ties – no family connections.

God is going about *restoring* His church by *reconciling* His **family**. God is **Father of all**, and it is His prerogative. Only the Father has the power to bring this about. He is busy reconciling us to Himself and this demands that both holiness and unity are set up. Maybe this is why we are experiencing His presence in such a unique way.

In **Ephesians 3:14-21** that Apostle Paul states, “*It is from the **Father** that every **family** in heaven and on earth gets its name. I pray that He will use His glorious riches to make you strong. May His Holy Spirit give you His **power** deep down inside you. Then Christ will live in your hearts because you believe in Him. And I pray that your love will have deep roots. I pray that it will have a strong foundation. May you have **power** with all God's people to understand Christ's **love**. May you know how wide and long and high and deep it is. And may you know His love, even though it can't be known completely. Then you will be filled with everything God has for you. For God is able to do far more than we could ever ask for, think or imagine. And He does everything by His **power** that is working in us.”*

The restoration and reconciliation of God's family has much to do with His power working in us. However, this wonderful passage also reveals 3 separate meanings concerning “family:”

- (1) All God's people in heaven and on earth should look to Him as **Head of the family**. Whether you have a ‘father figure’ or not, God is Father of all!
- (2) All of mankind **owe their existence** to Him – not only as individuals but also as families. Families on earth are the different nations, races, colours and creeds.
- (3) The Fatherhood of God **is the original**; it's the prototype of every other parental relationship. We take our measure from God who is in heaven.

The particular role of **God the Father** which the apostle Paul has revealed to us is, as the *Person* from whom the whole family in heaven and on earth **is named**. Therefore, the true identity of “family” is personified in God the Father.

From our own perspective, we always link the identity of a father, mother and children – or of a husband, wife and children – to their particular family name. This however, is only a one-dimensional identification. The true family identity has a much deeper root. “Family” is a word that was established **first** in God. God **is** Father! The word “family” also expresses itself in the way that God **relates** to His children. And the Bible reveals this aspect of God's nature in rich and varied use of family imagery. The most astounding being “Abba Father” – **Daddy**.

Your “Daddy” in heaven is reconciling you to Himself (*restoring an intimate and friendly relationship*). This means that complete unity and perfect harmony is also being restored. Such amazing love brings about deep intimacy between **Abba Father** and His beloved children. And, this unconditional love (*agape*) desires to establish a relationship that’s truly divine!

In His darkest hour, at the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus cried out, “**Abba, Father**, *everything is possible for you. Take this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will*” (Mark 14:36). Jesus knew the importance of this special kind of relationship. For it was the only time Jesus addressed His Father in this way.