

The Gospel Is the Message of Reconciliation, 2 Cor 17-20; Problems Resolved by Reconciliation: Sin, Penalty of Sin, Physical Birth, Relative Righteousness

7. The prosperity referred to here is invisible since it defines a mental attitude free of anxiety but becomes visible as the believer remains composed, grace oriented, and tranquil in all circumstances of life.
8. Reconciliation is what results when a person places his personal faith in Jesus Christ for salvation and eternal life. Having freely received these magnificent gifts from God, the believer should be active in communicating this good news to others.
9. As a royal ambassador, the believer is under divine mandate to assume a ministry of reconciliation:

2 Corinthians 5:17 - If anyone is in Christ [**current positional truth: at salvation, we are baptized into the resurrected Christ and possess all the things He possesses: righteousness, eternal life, sonship, heirship, royalty, priesthood, election, destiny, and sanctification**], he is a new creature [κτίζω, *ktizō*: a new spiritual species: trichotomous and part of the body of Christ on earth and with a resurrection body in the future]; the **old things** [ἀρχαῖος, *archaios*: ancient: from ἀρχή, *archē*: origin or beginning; refers to original sin and the imputation of it to every person at selection resulting in spiritual death (Romans 5:12)] **have come to an end; behold, a new thing has come [a new spiritual species]**.

2 Corinthians 5:18 - Now all these things [the doctrines in verse 17] are from the source of God Who has reconciled us [removed the barrier of enmity] to Himself through the agency of Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation [**personal evangelism to the unbeliever**],

v. 19 - namely, that by means of Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses [παράπτωμα, *paraptōma*: specific sinful acts] against them, and having entrusted to us the message of reconciliation [the gospel of peace with God through faith in Christ].

v. 20 - Therefore, we keep on being ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us, we are begging you on behalf of Christ, "Be reconciled to God!"

10. The doctrine of reconciliation identifies six problems possessed by every person which are humanly irresolvable but which are solved by the work of Jesus Christ. Those who believe in Christ for salvation are reconciled to God because of the Lord's finished work.
11. The problem of **sin** is resolved by **redemption**. Two words help define this solution: (1) λυτρόω, *lutroō*: to have one's ransom paid by another resulting in one's release from bondage, and (2) ἀγοράζω, *agorazō*: to be freed from a liability. Faith in Christ allows God to redeem you from the slave market of sin.

12. The problem of the **penalty of sin** is resolved by **expiation**. This word is taken from the Latin *expiatus* and means “to extinguish the guilt incurred by someone else.” Jesus Christ’s substitutionary spiritual death solved this problem, canceling our debt.

Colossians 2:14 - Having canceled the certificate of indebtedness consisting of decrees against us [mankind was created perfect and sinless and we owe God this status quo which we are unable to pay] and which was hostile to us [the sinful nature], He removed it permanently out of the way [**expiation**], having nailed it to the cross.

13. The problem of our **physical birth** is resolved by **regeneration**. After Adam fell he not only passed his sinful nature along to his progeny but his spiritual condition along with it. We are born physically alive but spiritually dead. Adam’s original sin is imputed to the sinful nature of every person at birth (Romans 5:12). The absence of a human spirit makes it impossible for a person to comprehend the infinite thought of biblical truth (1 Corinthians 2:14). Thus we must be regenerated, an event described by our Lord in:

John 3:3 - Jesus answered and said to him [Nicodemus], “Truly, truly, I say to you [ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, *amēn amēn legō soi*: “I am telling you the truth.”], unless one is born again [γεννηθῆῖ ἀνωθεν, *gennēthēi anōthen*: born from above; spiritual birth through faith in Christ] he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

14. The problem of man’s **relative righteousness** is resolved by the **imputation** of God’s righteousness to the believer and resultant **justification** before the Supreme Court of Heaven. No matter how moral a person may be, how widely he is respected, or how great a reputation he may have earned, he still does not measure up to the perfect righteousness of God.
15. Consequently, the righteousness of even the best of men is found wanting when compared to the perfect righteousness of God. But this is resolved by God when the sinner expresses faith in the Person and work of Christ for salvation. Since the expiation of Christ removed our sin debt then God is free to impute to the believer His righteousness.

Romans 4:4 - Now the one who works for salvation, his earnings are not credited to his account [οὐ λογίζομαι, *ou logizomai*: not to reckon a settling of accounts] according to grace but according to debt that he owes.

v. 5 - To the one who does not work [for salvation] but believes on Him [Jesus Christ] Who justifies the ungodly, his faith receives credit [λογίζομαι, *logizomai*: to reckon a settling of accounts] as righteousness.

16. Our debt is settled by divine reckoning; our sins were transferred from our account to that of Christ. Our faith allows God to then credit our account with His righteousness.
17. The fact that faith in Christ enables God to reckon the believer righteous allows justice to vindicate the believer. No debts remain on his account since sin is removed as an issue. Righteousness is imputed to the believer. Thus justice may declare the believer justified:

Galatians 2:16 - Knowing that a man is not justified by means of the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we [**Paul and Peter**] have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.