

Coffee Connect | Reconciliation

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

reconciliation, God, forgiveness, Christ, ambassadors, relationships, humility

SPEAKERS

Blake Smith

Blake Smith 00:27

Hello, and welcome to Coffee Connect a Project Zion Podcast series where we share inspiring stories and thought-provoking reflections of life and ministry that remind us of God's loving presence in the world. I'm your host, Blake Smith. And today I want to share a reflection called Reconciliation that first appeared in my "From the Desk of ..." blog in November of 2020.

I'm not aware of anyone who has never made a mistake ...who has said something they shouldn't have, or done something they wish they hadn't. Even those who might be able to claim never having intentionally done something wrong or hurtful, have likely said or done something of which they weren't even aware, yet inadvertently caused harm to another individual or group of people.

Before camera phones and social media posts, one might have hoped that the mistakes made would have gone unnoticed, or that the person(s) wronged, would simply forget or at least forgive. Nowadays, that is less likely because almost everyone has a camera phone. And social media provides a vast number of platforms for people to tag "friends" in posts they might not otherwise have personally posted ... committing mistakes, to eternal memory. Things done as teens can come back to haunt folks later in life... cast a different light on their current stated values... raise questions about what they really believe. Things said and done (or not said and done) as adults can be just as harmful, affecting the lives of others and altering relationships that are important.

No doubt it would be easier, and more comfortable for everyone, if looking back was not an option... if the past couldn't be held against us. But what if the ability to look back offered a path to healing rather than ammunition to tear each other down?

Contrary to popular belief, the lasting presence of information from our past can be a good thing. It requires that we take account of where we have been and the ways we have grown or not grown. It requires that we constantly evaluate the relationships, ideologies, perceptions, stereotypes, and systems in and under which we operate. It requires listening to those who have been wounded by words and actions. Sure, what is spoken might not be comfortable. But it can be helpful. As long as we remember...

that we have all made mistakes, and stand in need of grace from God and from one another.

And as long as we remember...

that, although everyone does not change as they mature, everyone can change.

And as long as we remember...

that perception is a person's reality. What we meant is important, but it is not the final word if it is not received as we intended.

And as long as we remember...

that as Christians, we are called to be reconciled with God and with one another.

And as long as we remember...

reconciliation that leads to sacred community requires forgiveness, compassion and humility at a minimum.

In the Letter to the Ephesians we read, "Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ has forgiven you." (Eph. 4:31-32)

And to the Colossians, "Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience, bear with one another. And if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other, just as the Lord has forgiven you. Above all, clothe yourself with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." (Col. 3:12-14)

And to the Corinthians, "All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. That is in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ. Since God is making his appeal through us, we entreat you on behalf of Christ, to be reconciled to God." 2 Cor. 5:18-20)

May we become ambassadors of reconciliation, being willing to acknowledge those times we have made mistakes, to take responsibility for those mistakes, and to seek forgiveness where we have done harm. May we also be willing to extend grace to those who seek it, so that we might be reconciled to God and to each other?

Blessings to you as you seek to be an ambassador of reconciliation.