

RECONCILIATION'S "STRAIT" PATH

Sin is the culprit. Man's sins, our sins, are the problem. Like Israel of old, *"... your sins have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear."* (Isaiah 59:2). Man's condition before the holy Creator and God is one of alienation, ignorance, darkness and unrighteousness. In sin a sinner is a stranger and an enemy to the Eternal One in whose likeness he is created. Once severed from God how can enemies make peace? How can friendship with God be built and restored?

Hope must be founded upon a secure foundation laid by the One whose mercy and grace we desperately need. The good news is that those at enmity with God can find peace through the Lord Jesus Christ – an unsurpassed peace that is not from this world but from above. *"Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."* (Romans 5:1, 10) God initiated reconciliation by sending His Christ to reconcile the world and in turn committed to faithful ambassadors the word of reconciliation, inviting all to be reconciled.

God's urgent plea – *"be reconciled to God"* (2 Corinthians 5:20) – infers that each receptive person of the gospel call must do something to stop being God's enemy – to exchange from enmity to friendship. God and man are not equals, and God has not changed. He has done no evil, no wrong. Rather, the Almighty has provided a way, a means that men may find that unsurpassed peace with Him. But it's not about God meeting us halfway! We must fulfill His terms because we're the guilty ones. Like the prodigal son (Luke 15:18, 20), we have sinned and must make the journey back to the Father.

This spiritual return to God is what repentance is all about. Reconciliation demands repentance. *"... unless you repent, you will all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:3). *"Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death"* (2 Corinthians 7:10). God is not far from any one of us. He can be found, but seeking God necessitates repentance. *"... God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness"* (Acts 17:30). Light and darkness have no fellowship. Thus, we must cease walking in darkness to commune with the Eternal Light. Repentance does God's will for reconciliation.