



6/21/2020
Colossians 1:21-23

BIG IDEA

The remedy of grace for hostile hearts.

LOOKING BACK

As your group time begins, review last week's passage.

- Briefly review the characteristics of Christ that Paul gives in Colossians 1:15-20. Take care to remember who Christ is in the big picture as we turn to this week's passage and learn who we are in relationship to Christ.

LOOKING IN

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

In the previous passage, Paul is speaking to the Colossians about the Christian life, then he interjects this beautiful, poetic exaltation of Christ.

| **Past Kingdom and Disease:** Have a volunteer read Colossians 1:21.

Paul turns to address the Colossians specifically, addressing them as "you" to remind them of their lives when they were outside of Christ. We were alienated—foreigners to God's kingdom. Paul then reminds that that they were "hostile in mind." Being hostile in mind is both a condition and an attitude. Every person once held the status of enemy of God and was doing evil deeds. Before we entered into relationship with Christ, we did not have a neutral position toward God. • Why was it important for Paul to remind the Colossian believers of their past lives?

- If we really understand the status of unbelievers as Paul has explained this, how does this verse change your view of evangelism? If we think of the unbeliever's status as "neutral" before God, are we less compelled to tell them of the Good News? If we see people's status before God as that of the enemy of our King, does this make evangelism seem more urgent?

| **Remedy of Grace:** Have a volunteer read Colossians 1:22.

Paul gives a bleak but honest description of what our lives outside of Christ were like. But in verse 22, Paul tells us that God acted toward us in grace while we were still in open rebellion to change our status from enemy to son or daughter of the King.

Spend time discussing this chart from the sermon and reflecting on all the ways that our status has changed before God because Christ sacrificed himself as our substitute on the cross.

↓	Reconciled	Justification	Redemption	Forgiveness	Adoption
	Far off	Guilty	Slave	Debtor	Stranger
	Brought Near	Righteous	Freedom	Forgotten	Son

But what was the instrument of this reconciliation? It was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ! It is only through his death on the Cross that we can be brought close into a right relationship with God.

- In what ways are you tempted to believe that you are reconciled by other means than by Christ? Perhaps you live your life as though you are striving to reconcile yourself to God, perhaps by serving the church, raising godly children, or achieving success at work. In what ways do you find yourself believing the lie that you can contribute to your reconciled relationship with God?

Paul has taken great care in his letter to the Colossians to remind them that reconciliation is only through Christ, so that we can be presented as holy and blameless before God. While religious people will try to earn their status before God, fruitful people remember that God's grace is the only remedy for a hostile heart.

| *Present and Future Kingdom: Have a volunteer read Colossians 1:23.*

In verse 23, Paul explains that, after our reconciliation, we will only be presented holy and blameless if we "continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard." We know that Christ will finish the work he began in us at our salvation (Philippians 1:6), but this verse serves to remind us that we have to be faithful Christians to make it to the end. Our abiding in relationship to Christ and continuing in the faith is the mark of the saved.

- Do you ever find yourself indulging sin and justify your actions based on your justified status and confidence that you Christ will persevere you to the end?

If this rings true in your life, this should be a huge red flag to signal a problem in your spiritual life. If you regularly justify sin to yourself by remembering that your status as "saved" will not be changed, examine yourself honestly to see if your faith is genuine. Verse 23 explains clearly that if we do not continue in the faith, pursuing godliness, and abiding in relationship with Christ, then we will not be presented blameless before the Father. The way you live your life matters. One theologian said it this way: "no continuation, no presentation."

- What is the difference between trying to earn favor with God, and obeying his commands through living a faithful Christian life? What happens when we confuse these two things?
- Have a volunteer read Matthew 7:22-23 which was referenced in the sermon and open up a discussion.

The reality is that you can have a religious resumé and not be in relationship with Christ.

- How do you know if you going through the motions of a Christian life, or if you are truly abiding in relationship with Christ?

LOOKING FORWARD

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

- We have to see our sin honestly and not sugar-coat our shortcomings. We were once enemies of the King, but now we are adopted and transferred into a his kingdom. As you go throughout the week, remind yourself of the reality of sin as you fall short and experience a renewed, unbridled gratitude for the work of Christ. Remember these words from a song we have often sung together: "Once your enemy, now seated at your table. Jesus, thank you!"

FAMILIES

This passage is a clear description of the gospel. Take the opportunity to discuss what the Gospel is with your children. Explain to them the reality of sin the unbeliever's status as an enemy of God and teach them again, or for the first time, what Christ's death means for the Christian and how we can now have relationship with the King of the universe!