

The Identity of Reconciliation

- Philemon Series Overview

- “I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ. Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the people.” -Philemon 1:6-7

-

- Themes across different pastors

- CS Lewis, Sports Cards, Corrie Ten Boom

- Corrie ten Boom Story

- “When we confess our sins,” I said, “God casts them into the deepest ocean, gone forever.”
- “But since that time,” he went on, “I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. Fräulein” - again his hand came out- “will you forgive me?”
- For I had to do it—I knew that. The message that God forgives has a prior condition: that we forgive those who have injured us. “If you do not forgive men their trespasses,” Jesus says, “neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”
- For a long moment we grasped each other’s hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God’s love so intensely as I did then.

- There is no one in this room that has been rescued from something like the horrors of the holocaust and concentrations like Corrie ten Boom.

- Corrie reiterates over and over again in her writings and speeches- The true rescue of God isn't the rescue of our horrors and hardships, but the rescue of our hearts.
- Reconciliation
 - Overview of def.
 - Reconciliation is not our mission, it's our identity.
- The story of Micah
 - "My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me. I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery." Micah 6:3-7
 - "With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression the fruit of my body?"
 - Here's how Israel tries to address the issue with hot button religious fixes:
 - Bow down
 - Burnt offerings
 - Year old calves
 - 1,000 rams
 - 10,000 rivers of olive oil
 - Here's how we fix our failures, disobedience, complacency with hot button religious fixes:
 - I'm gonna start coming to church again.
 - God, I'm gonna start being nice to this person.
 - God, I'm gonna **pray** for this person.
 - God, I'm gonna read my Bible every morning now.

- “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. **And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.**” Micah 6:8

- Act Justly (Matthew 22:36-39)

- The bible defines justice as fulfilling mutual obligations in a manner consistent with God’s moral law.
- Essential, this means doing the right thing, and the word normally is associated with helping someone in need and being an advocate for one whose rights are being violated.
- Justice originates and flows from God because God’s identity is just.
 - Matthew 22:36-39

- Love Mercy (1 Timothy 1:15)

- Love grace, and identify with the “undeserved” part. Don’t weaponize it.
- Love when someone receives “unfair” forgiveness. Love it in yourself, in how you give it, and how you see it.
 - 1 Timothy 1:15

- Walk Humbly with your God

- Look at others through the lens of how God views you.
- Our refusal to forgive, reconcile, or our active support of broken hearts and relationships elevates ourselves above God.
- Bryan Stevenson overview
 - Story
 - “There is a strength, a power even, in understanding brokenness, because embracing our brokenness creates a need and desire for mercy, and perhaps a corresponding need to show mercy. When you experience mercy, you learn things that are hard to learn otherwise. You see

things you can't otherwise see; you hear things you can't otherwise hear. You begin to recognize the humanity that resides in each of us.” — **Bryan Stevenson**, Just Mercy

- Closing:
 - Reconciliation isn't necessarily “right” or “fair”.
 - Yearn for the unfair love of God.
 - It's our identity as followers of Jesus: we were broken sinners saved by the undeserved grace of Jesus Christ which sets us apart. How can we fight for a world where everyone gets what they deserved when we have not? What right do we have to hold grudges of wrongs done, when our wrongs are at the bottom of the sea? What goodness is there in slandering others when our God stands against those who come against his elect? We should be champions of grace, stewards of forgiveness, and a church who celebrates and urges brokenness becoming whole again, because that is the story of you and me.