

God the Reconciler

The story of Hosea and Gomer tells the tale of an unfaithful wife and an outrageously committed husband, and it illustrates the lengths to which God was willing to go to reconcile our relationship with him. We are the adulterous wife. God is the faithful husband. Though we haven't deserved it. Although he deserved much more, Jesus paid the price for us on the cross.

We've looked at several aspects of God's character over this series that we, as humans, could never emulate. God as Reconciler, however, is different. When we become part of God's family, we become reconcilers like our father. It's our family motto. It's foundational to who we now are.

God reconciled the world to himself through Jesus, and God has entrusted us with his message of reconciliation. This isn't a message we simply speak aloud, telling others what Jesus has done for us. It's a message that we also demonstrate by how we reconcile with others.

Our world wants us to fixate on how we've been wronged. As Christians, we fixate not on what others have done to us but on what Jesus has done for us.

Questions

- Read 1 Corinthians 5:15-21. What stands out to you in this passage?
- How do you think the world encourages us to view others? How does this differ from the way God encourages us to view others?
- Read Matthew 18:21-35. What stands out to you in this passage?
- Forgiving someone is harder when they hurt us over and over again. What coping strategies might be able to help us forgive even when we've been repeatedly hurt?
- We talked about three practical pieces of advice Jesus gives us in Scripture to help us handle conflict with one another well: Talk about issues quickly. (Matthew 5:21-24) Talk about the issue with the person concerned directly. (Matthew 18:15) And if you need to in order to repair the relationship, get someone else involved. (Matthew 18:16) Which of these would you find most difficult and why?
- Dr Henry Cloud, a Christian psychologist, gives these five tips for having good difficult conversations, listed below. Out of these 5, which of tip would you find most difficult?
 1. Remember all you can control is yourself.
 2. Get clear about what you are feeling and what matters to you.
 3. Recognize and sort your emotions before you enter the conversation.
 4. Practice beforehand — field through all of the hard questions that may come up.
 5. Recognize what you want the outcome to be (i.e. You want to keep relationship with the person you're speaking to.)

- What other advice have you received that has helped you mend your relationship with someone?
- How can we help and encourage one another in our “ministry of reconciliation”?

Suggested reading

About God’s Character

Incomparable by Andrew Wilson

None Like Him by Jen Wilkin

About our Relationships with One Another

Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking when the Stakes are High by Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, Switzler

Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life by Dr. Henry Cloud and John Townsend