

All Things Are Of God

2 Corinthians 5:18



Rock Hill Baptist Church
605 Rock Hill Road
Lexington, Tennessee 38351

Pastor David Buffaloe
731-845-6104
online at bibleteacher.org

FOCAL Read Together 2 Corinthians 5:18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

Have you ever had a Reader's Digest Publisher's Clearing House[®] van pull up to your house? If so, see me after Church. I'm going to try to talk you into putting some of those winnings into the Lord's work! Alright, here's another couple of questions: How many of you like the preaching of Charles Stanley? How about Adrian Rogers? Most people have been blessed by listening to these wonderful men of God. Now let me ask: The last time you were sick or in the hospital, did either of these men (yes, I know Adrian is with the Lord) visit you? Raise your hand if they came and sat with you – or someone you know – when you visited the hospital, or lost a loved one? No one? Probably not. There's several reasons for that, but the prominent reason is that the Pastor's function in the local Church is not to please its members. The Bible clearly defines the role of the Pastor in **Ephesians 4:11-13**, where we are told – and I paraphrase: **“God gave Pastors and Teachers**

Ephesians 4:12-13 ... for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, {13} until we ALL reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ's fullness”.

The Pastor is to **train the saints (saved sinners) in the work of the ministry**, to teach you what you should be doing for the Lord. You see, a local Church - along with

its Pastor - is not an industry, nor is it in the people pleasing business. A local Church is a Body of Believers – born again servants – all working together to please the Lord Who saved us. The Pastor's job is to equip you for that service – not to be your doormat or your waiter. The Deacon's job is to tend to the *physical needs of the local Church* so that the Pastor can do his job. The Pastor serves the Church while pleasing the Lord. The Deacons serve the Church while pleasing the Lord. The members of the Church *grow up together* until they learn to serve the Church while pleasing the Lord. This is our function – we are a Society of Servants, loving one another, serving one another, while pleasing the Lord!

The reason that Rock Hill Church is growing is because we have a *maximum number of servants* in our Church Assembly. Praise God for that! We will continue to grow while we have a *servant mentality one toward another*.

The local Church that dies always dies because somehow it become polluted with the idea that *one or a few can bear the burden of the ministry*. This is contrary to the teaching of Scripture. **“ALL things are of God, who hath reconciled US to himself by Jesus Christ, and HATH GIVEN TO US the ministry of reconciliation”**. Our allegiance is to the Lord Who saved us. God reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ. Divine Mercy allowed the precious Son of God to be punished in our place. We who belong to Christ should spend every moment of every day praising God, for who among us deserved such a great gift? We sin and grieve the Lord, but **He giveth greater Grace (James 4:6)**. No matter how great our sin was or is, no matter how loathsome the

offense, the Lord's Grace is sufficient (**2 Corinthians 12:9**). Let our sins be as a river, and His Grace will be as the ocean that the river runs into. Let our separation from God be as wide as the Grand Canyon. What is this to the God Who created infinite space? His life swallows up our death, His love meets our every needs. What a Mighty God we serve!

God has given the Christian **reconciliation**. We who were enemies are now – by the Blood of Christ – adopted into the family business. What is the family business? **To seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10)**. Each Christian from the moment of salvation is given equipment to work in this family business. The Pastor, Deacons, and Teachers of the Body train its members in the disciplines of Ministry of the Word and Prayer so that each member can learn to lead others to Christ. God has given us – together – the **ministry of reconciliation**. This is what consumes the local Church on fire for God, the leading of souls to salvation by faith in Christ!

God has given us a wonderful illustration of our joint **ministry of reconciliation** in the Old Testament **“Cities of Refuge”**. Once Israel was settled in the Promised Land God ordered that the **Priests set apart six cities to be Cities of Refuge**. If someone inadvertently killed another person the spilled blood had to be avenged. The “Blood Avenger” would chase the offender, who ran along the King's Highway of salvation. If the offender reached the City of Refuge before the Blood Avenger caught up with him, then his life was spared as long as he *stayed in that city*. It was the priests job to manage not only the Cities of Refuge, but they were also to **clear**

any stumbling blocks along the King's Highway that might cause the fugitive to fall. Sign posts marked the way to the Cities of Refuge so that the fugitive would not become disoriented. The fugitive had a clear road to the Refuge, or else the priests were to be blamed.

Dear friends, the City of Refuge is an Old Testament shadow of God our Refuge. The road to the City is an Old Testament shadow of Faith in Jesus Christ. The Bible says:

Psalms 94:22 But the LORD is my defense; and my God is the rock of my refuge.

and again,

Matthew 7:14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Some will get on a road that will not lead to the Refuge, but the Blood Avenger will not be deterred. We who are in the Refuge are **ministers of reconciliation**. We want to clear the path for the sinner, and we surely do not want to cast any rocks into the Way. There are but two steps unto Heaven. The first step is out of self and into Christ, and the second step is out of Christ and into Heaven. Let us who are His remain focused on that blessed Ministry that He has given us.

1. Let The Bride Awaken To Her Blessed Calling

FOCAL 2 Corinthians 5:18 And all things are of

God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

Our text tells us that **all things are of God.**

Everything, be it mountains, valleys, Heaven, earth, stars, galaxies – it all belongs to God. This God Who owns all things has **reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ**. We belong to God because of that precious shed Blood of Calvary. But then the Bible makes the statement **He has given to us – to US – the ministry of reconciliation!**

I heard a man once say that he thought it would be a good thing to marry a rich woman. I don't believe that, in the human sense, that is necessarily a good thing. Often people marry, not for love, but for position or money, and live to regret it. But I do believe one thing: we who are Christians have privilege and position because of *Who* we have married. We are married by faith in Christ to God Himself. We are His Bride and His Body. We were but like Cinderella, alone and undesirable before we came to Christ. We were dead in our trespasses and sins, paupers before the Almighty God of Creation, and yet He called us with love in His heart. We came and, though none of us have earned or deserved it, we are

Ephesians 5:30 ... members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

We are, dear believers, *married to God by faith in Christ*. This is the most important truth that you will ever

encounter as believers. Heed it!

The Christian and the local Church have position and you have power *together* because of Jesus Christ.

You have allegiance over the gates of Hell, for Christ has said:

Matthew 16:18 ... upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Satan is a defeated foe because we are together in Christ. As our text states **God hath given TO US the ministry of reconciliation**. It is not given to one, it is not given to several, but this ministry is given to the glorious Bride of Christ, the local Church! A Church is only effective for Christ when it works together with Him *and with one another*.

One of the greatest stumbling blocks on the King's Highway is the local Church that is in disarray, in confusion, and in fighting! This is why Satan will often plant *wolves* in the flock to scatter it – if you let them.

I thank my God that Rock Hill is not such a Church, but let us ever be vigilant against this evil that can creep among us! Some local Churches fight over *musical instruments*, over the use or no of percussion instruments as opposed to the more traditional organ or

piano. Though I could quote a number of Scriptures that show us that God cares little about our use of musical instruments (**1 Chronicles 13:8; 15:15-16; 15:28; 2 Chronicles 5:12-14; 29:26-28; Psalm 98:4-6; et al**), and though I could point out that these texts mention *horns, trumpets, harps, timbrels, drums*, I will not do so. What I will point out is that the first century Church had absolutely *no musical instruments*. Neither organ nor piano were introduced into the Church until sometime after 300 AD. On this point our Church of Christ friends are correct. Where the Church of Christ goes overboard is when they demand that *no Church use musical instruments* at all in imitation of the early Church but these people still *build Church buildings!*

Dear friends, the first century Church had no musical instruments. Furthermore it's hymnbook was the **Book of Psalms**, it had *no buildings to meet in*, there was *no pulpit nor pews*, there was certainly no *hymn of invitation* played on the Day of Pentecost. The early Church met from house to house, from family to family, and certainly *never* put a sign out on the highway.

To do so was to invite certain death. The early Church had one thing that the local Church has always had. **We had one another**. This has never changed. Though the Lord in His Grace has allowed the local Church to develop and to add things that were not there in the beginning – things like a *carpeted sanctuary and a fellowship hall* - these things do not define the Church. The local Church is a unified Body of Believers bound

together with a common love toward God and toward one another.

God chastised the Corinthian Church when He stated:

1 Corinthians 1:9-10 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. {10} Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye ALL SPEAK THE SAME THING, AND THAT THERE BE NO DIVISIONS AMONG YOU; BUT THAT YE BE PERFECTLY JOINED TOGETHER IN THE SAME MIND AND IN THE SAME JUDGMENT.

We are saved because **God is faithful**. The Lord allows His children to develop, to grow, to add new things to the services, to praise Him in a variety of ways. As parents you know the joy of hearing one of your children singing. It matters little to you if that child has a *pretty voice* or not. It is your child, and you love him. In the same way

God loves to hear His children and His Bride singing together in one accord. He loves to hear our worship, our *unified worship*.

This is so important for a local Church to understand. When our Lord Jesus Christ prayed for His Church just before going to the Cross He said:

John 17:21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in

us: THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU HAST SENT ME.

The world will not believe that the claims of Christ are true unless the world sees a unified Church.

The **ministry of reconciliation** that our Lord has given to us suffers when we cease to be the US. What a terrible stone many Churches cast on the King's Highway, a stone of stumbling that drives away the unbeliever.

The Apostle begged the Corinthian Church, a much fragmented and divided Body:

2 Corinthians 6:1, 3 ... that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. {3} GIVING NO OFFENSE IN ANY THING, THAT THE MINISTRY BE NOT BLAMED:

Christians are commanded to **speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among us**. We are commanded to *keep the main thing the main thing*. On secondary issues, issues not specifically condemned by Scripture, the laws of Love and Liberty reign. If any believer begins to bring divisiveness into the Bride of Christ – the local Church – then God has ordered:

Romans 16:17-18 ... MARK THEM WHICH CAUSE DIVISIONS AND OFFENSES CONTRARY TO THE DOCTRINE WHICH YE HAVE LEARNED; AND AVOID THEM.... for they serve not our Lord Jesus

Christ...

The local Church must awaken to the truth that the Ministry of Reconciliation belongs to US. We who are His are commanded to walk in unison, loving one another, being

Ephesians 4:32 KIND ONE TO ANOTHER, TENDERHEARTED, FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Shun the divisive, bind together as one, and the Lord will use you, dear Church, to win many to Christ.

2. Let The Local Church Remember It – And It's Ministry – Belong To God

FOCAL 2 Corinthians 5:18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

Look once more at our focal text: **All things are of God** - everything belongs to God. **God has reconciled US to HIMSELF by JESUS CHRIST.** Our ministry, and the salvation plan that we offer, belongs to God. It is His possession though **God has given to us the ministry of reconciliation.** It is His Gospel though we, as His Bride, share in it's glory.

There are a number of Churches who, like the Church at

Galatia, depart from the Gospel of Christ and move into preaching *another gospel*. What did the Apostle say to the Galatians? He said:

Galatians 1:6-9 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: {7} Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. {8} But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. {9} As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

On of the greatest stumbling blocks on the King's Highway of salvation is our *additions and subtractions* from the Gospel of Christ.

In the Church at Galatia some unsaved and unsavory people crept in and began to teach “You must be circumcised in order to be saved”. This caused quite a stir in this predominantly Gentile Church, for circumcision was not commonly practiced among these people. The Bible does not say **God has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ and by circumcision.** What does it say?

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Jesus Christ did the work of salvation at Calvary. When He cried out

John 19:30 ... It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

there was not one thing left to be added to the work of salvation. No rite nor ritual saves a person, but the Blood of Calvary.

The King's Highway is FAITH IN CHRIST, not faith in what I do. Salvation means to cease leaning on self, and to lean wholly on the Rock of Ages, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Blood of Calvary saves the believer, but the Resurrected Savior *keeps us saved*. The Bible says:

Hebrews 7:25 Wherefore HE IS ABLE also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

You, dear believer, are **saved to the uttermost**. The finished work of Calvary made payment for your sins. The Risen Savior continues to *intercede in prayer* for your continuing failures before God. Christ Jesus supplies our reconciliation. It is He Who is the ever flowing conduit from which Grace is poured. When the sinner brings his empty pitcher to Christ and holds it to His supply the pitcher is filled by Grace. Though my hand tremble, though my faith be little, I am nonetheless

saved because of what flows from Him.

John 1:16-17 And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. {17} For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

The Christian is released from the Mosaic Law and the Levitical Priesthood, for our High Priest is Christ. From Him we receive Grace and Truth. In Him we trust! My eye turns from me to Him, and upon Him I dwell if I am saved. And it is to such a worm as I – and as you – that He has given the Ministry of Reconciliation.

God saves the Believer, no matter how heinous his sins are. I have heard people say “I can't come to Church because the ceiling would fall in on me”. How foolish!

God saved the Apostle Paul, though Paul murdered Christians prior to his conversion. God saved Mary Magdalene, though she was possessed with *seven demons* prior to her conversion. There is none that God will not save, if that person would but call on the Name of Jesus.

Do not, dear believers, ever say of God “He will not save that one”. God will save any who call upon Him. The Scripture cries out **whosoever will**.

Matthew 16:25 For WHOSOEVER WILL SAVE HIS LIFE SHALL LOSE IT: AND WHOSOEVER WILL LOSE HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE SHALL FIND IT.

There is no sinner who will not be blessed if he or she will **lose themselves in Christ**. The precious and holy text says:

John 3:16-17 For GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. {17} For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

God so loved *the world*. God sent His Son so that the *world might be saved*. There is no sinner too grievous to whom God cannot reconcile them to Him through His dear Son. **Though your**

Isaiah 1:18 ... SINS BE AS SCARLET, THEY SHALL BE AS WHITE AS SNOW; THOUGH THEY BE RED LIKE CRIMSON, they shall be as wool.

What sin have you committed? Have you murdered? Come unto Him for the **”blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”**(1 John 1:7).

ALL sin, not SOME sin. Put your sin under that fountain filled with Blood, trust Jesus, and you shall be saved. Have you follower after sexual sins? God saves all, and forgives ALL sin. Just come, dear friend, just come.

Believers often manipulate the clear message of the

Gospel and add their own preferences to that which is already perfect. Dear friends, clear such stumbling blocks from the King's Highway! I have heard people say **“unless you believe *hard enough* or repent *earnestly enough* you cannot be saved”**. Show me such a passage in the Scripture – you will not find it. The Bible teaches that we were all equally dead – DEAD – in trespasses and in sins. The Apostle told the Colossians:

Colossians 2:13-14 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; {14} BLOTTING OUT THE HANDWRITING OF ORDINANCES THAT WAS AGAINST US, WHICH WAS CONTRARY TO US, AND TOOK IT OUT OF THE WAY, nailing it to his cross;

God saves those who are **dead in sins and in the uncircumcision of our flesh**. A dead thing cannot be slightly alive. Dead is dead!

All we can do to be saved is to call upon the Name of Jesus. The faintest cry brings the most sound salvation. We are to merely **believe on Jesus**.

Romans 10:11 For the Scripture saith, WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH ON HIM shall not be ashamed.

We are commanded to believe, but God does not tell us *how hard* we must believe. Though our faith be no more

than a spider's web, it is the Rock that anchors us, not our faith. As **C.H. Spurgeon** said:

“it is not the thickness of this cable of faith, it is the strength of the anchor which imparts strength to the cable, and so shall hold thy ship in the midst of the most fearful storm. The faith that saves man is sometimes so small that the man himself cannot see it. A grain of mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds, and yet if thou have that quantity of faith, thou art a saved man.”¹

It is not merely the cable, but the anchor beneath the waves that holds the ship in place.

Do not forget that the woman with the issue of blood was saved – not by clinging to Jesus or wrapping her arms about Him – but by just touching the fringe of His robe as He passed by. The slightest touch of faith causes Jesus to say:

Matthew 9:22 ... be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole.

You who are Christ's, do not put a stumbling block on the King's Highway of salvation by believing that a certain person cannot be saved.

In the history of Christianity there has been *no one* –

¹ From his sermon *The King's Highway Opened and Cleaned*, sermon number 293, preached January 8, 1860, at Exeter Hall, Strand.

absolutely no one who has come to Jesus and been cast out.

Hasn't Jesus said:

John 6:37 ... him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Let the Lord save the sinner, and He will clean up the sinner. We who are given the Ministry of Reconciliation need not preach “get clean, then come to Jesus to be cleaned”. No Beloved, God owns the message.

Though we have been given the Message of Reconciliation, the precious Gospel that **Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost**, we have no right to modify that message. We must not add to nor take away from that message.

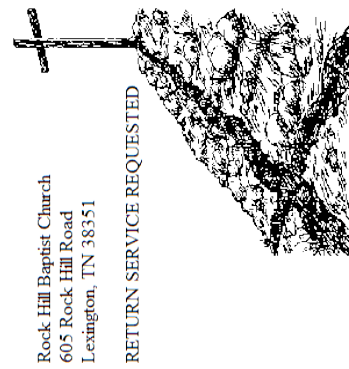
I beg you, tell others about Jesus. Tell people of color about Jesus. Tell the drug addicted about Jesus. Tell those who have grievously harmed themselves through wrong life choices about Jesus. God has given to us the Ministry of Reconciliation Tell them that God loves them so much that He laid down His life for them. Tell them that **“whosoever believeth in Christ shall be saved” (Acts 2:21)**. Tell them **“in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20)**. Tell them

John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath

everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

That which curses is failure to believe in Jesus. Bring them to Jesus, and the Lord will reconcile them to God and to us!

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



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