



## RECONCILED

With Each Other  
Shane Philip  
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## SUNDAY MESSAGE QUESTIONS

The Crossing Church  
Las Vegas, Nevada

### OPENING

This week we are continuing our study called Reconciled. Last week we learned about being reconciled with God – this week we want to talk about being reconciled with each other. Gathering with family and friends and having wonderful meals and great conversation is so enjoyable, but sometimes it creates opportunities to air past resentments. God wants to remind us that He sent Jesus not only to reconcile us back to Him, but to repair past hurts as we forgive and return to each other. When this takes place we can experience the reason for celebration at Christmas. It is the one time of year when our hearts can soften and be open to mending other relationships, as well.

### SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>

**Matthew 2:13-23** When the Magi had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”<sup>2</sup> When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”<sup>3</sup> After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.” So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

**Romans 8:28** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all of our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

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<sup>1</sup> All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated

<sup>2</sup> Hosea 11:1

<sup>3</sup> Jeremiah 31:15

**2 Corinthians 5:18** All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

### **OBSERVATION**

When Jesus was born, we know that Mary rode seventy-five miles to Bethlehem on a donkey to give birth in a smelly stable where hygiene was near to impossible. About two years later, an angel told Joseph to escape to Egypt because King Herod the Great was seeking to kill Jesus out of fear that He would take his kingdom from him. During this effort, Herod ordered all male children under the age of two years were to be slaughtered. So much grieving and sadness and terror associated with Jesus' entry into our world. Not a Hallmark Christmas back then, but those terrible circumstances led to our salvation by Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Equally a story of deliverance through Joseph who was a slave and imprisoned in Egypt for twelve years, would come as he rescued his entire family from a famine in Israel. The result was reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers and a reunion with his father Jacob. But later, Egypt became a country of slavery and bondage for 400 years, but God delivered the Israelites during the exodus as He called them out of Egypt and slavery into a new land. Deliverance was a nation then – now it is a Person – Jesus.

**Question:** From what situations have you been rescued because God intervened? What trials did you have prior to that deliverance?

### **APPLICATION**

Today we look forward to Christmas idealizing it as a time of comfort and trouble free. We have images of sitting by the fireplace, sipping hot chocolate, a beautiful lighted tree in the corner with all shapes and sizes of packages under it and Christmas music in the background. Everyone is getting along famously. But often, with all of these expectations, we have stress, conflict worry, sadness and pain just as it was in the time of the first Christmas. We would never have written a Christmas story like the one in Jesus' time, would we? Yet it is Christmas again and we have to admit that our lives are messed up in one way or another.

**Question:** What plans do you have for Christmas this year? What concerns do you have about it?

**Question:** When have you looked forward to a joyful Christmas with family and friends only to find that past resentments are still festering among them?

One application of our scriptures today is that **God can use every trial and hardship for His purposes** - just as He did for Jesus and Joseph. Another application is that for some **God is sending us back to the place from which He delivered us**. Maybe He is calling us to make amends – to ask or to offer forgiveness. This word reconciliation means to make things right just as God made things right with us – through Christ. Now He has given us the ministry of reconciliation – it is our job to reconcile with one another. We can't say we want to accept His gift of reconciliation for us, but don't want to seek reconciliation with someone else. The way of envy and resentment has been tried before and it always leads to death. We need to look back over the recent weeks or months or even years to remember the people who have been on our minds. We all have someone we have injured or caused to feel pain. God is calling us to set that relationship on a new course of forgiveness. You know that it is impossible to love God if we don't love the people He created.

**Question:** Who is that person for you? Why have you hesitated to begin this process of reconciliation?

For some of us God has intervened to rescue us from addictions or destructive relationships or an affair or a financial crisis, or a sin that had a stronghold on us. Now He is working those situations out for good as we are uniquely equipped to help others who are going through the same situations today.

**Question:** For what have you been forgiven by someone else? When will you pay it forward?

**Question:** How have you been uniquely equipped to help others because of your experiences?

So, it wasn't a silent night, calm and bright, two thousand years ago – it was full of fear, grief, stress and confusion. But the power of God was there then, and it is here now. He uses all of those circumstances for His purposes. We need to recognize the global picture in God's mind as the entire Bible is a story about God restoring His relationship with broken people like us through our perfect Savior - Jesus.

**PRAYER** Heavenly Father, we all have those people in our past whom we have hurt in some way. Help us to overcome our fear or shame or pride to approach them with humility and repair those relationships. In Jesus' name. Amen.