

Col. 1:21-23 “Formerly Hostile”

For the Children: If two young people treat each other badly, they might end up enemies. If, later, they forgive each other and become good friends, that is a good thing. No one would want to go back to being enemies again, to being treated badly, hating the other person for the way they treat you, and being hated by them in return. It is even more unthinkable that a true child of God would want to go back to their old sinful ways. For then they make *God* their enemy! No one who has come to know God as their Father, Creator, Saviour and Friend, would want that! **Questions:** Why do you think some people in the church do go back to their old sinful ways? How does Paul describe the old way of life? How does he describe the Christian's present and future life?

Introduction:

First Point: Your Past

- 1) **Were or Would Have Been:** Many of Paul's readers were formerly pagans. But even for those who have grown up in the covenant, you can understand what you *would be* apart from Christ. The whole human race is by nature alienated from God, since the Fall
- 2) **Hostile Aliens:** “Alienated” means a stranger to God, His church and the Truth. The natural man is hostile to God as well, even when he isn't consciously at war with Him. The “former way of life” also involved engaging in evil deeds. Even deeds that were more noble in character were contaminated by sin and unacceptable to God – not being done for His glory
- 3) **Don't Go Back!:** The memory of that alienated, hostile, evil life should be enough to convince us not to go back to it

Second Point: Your Present

- 1) **Reconciled by Christ:** That determination – not to go back – becomes even stronger when we see what we have in Christ. We have been reconciled with God through Christ, by His death on the cross in His human nature, once and for all. This brings us forgiveness, a cleansed conscience, peace, life and hope. We are also reconciled to others of His people
- 2) **Engaged in the New Life:** This reconciliation also results in us living a new life, instead of being continually engaged in evil and unacceptable deeds. We can begin to serve the Living God. The stark contrast between the life of faith and the “former” life helps strengthen our resolve not to go back to the former way

Third Point: Your Future

- 1) **Holy, Blameless and Beyond Reproach;** In contrast to the alienation, hostility and evil deeds, Paul sets forth our triple hope for the future - for the final verdict God will make in regard of us on the Day of Judgement. For Christ's sake, He will declare us to be holy, blameless and beyond reproach. For this is His verdict upon His Son
- 2) **If Indeed:** The assurance of this verdict is, however, only for those who have a genuine faith. Genuineness of faith is indicated in part by perseverance in it (v. 23). Genuine faith is founded on Christ and is therefore not shaken or moved away from our Christian hope. That does not mean that the assurance of faith is uncertain for the true believer, or that it depends ultimately on the believer himself. It does mean that our faith, a gift from God and preserved by Him, must be genuine. This truth also helps strengthen the resolve of the faithful, not to go back to their old ways

Conclusion: