Then and Now 3.1.09

[21] And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, [22] he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, [23] if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. Colossians 1:21-23 ESV

"And you" Connector phrase showing how what was said in v. 20 specifically applies to followers of Jesus.
"who once were" Past tense. Description of their previous state.
"alienated" lit. estranged, cut off, separated (Eph. 2:12).
"hostile in mind" lit. hateful, enemies with God.
"doing evil deeds" The natural outworking of being alienated and hostile in mind.

P: Before we begin to follow Jesus, we are in a desperate spiritual Condition (v. 21).

We are sinners by birth. (Rom. 5:12)
We are sinners by choice. (Mt. 22:37-39)
It is worse than we think! (Ps. 51:1-2)

Our natural tendency is to think:
1. We really aren't *that* bad…
2. These terms should be reserved for *really bad* people.

Do I recognize the gravity of this spiritual condition? Have I dealt with this condition?

P: How well we understand our alienation from God determines how much we appreciate our reconciliation to God (v. 21-22).

"he has now" Verbs show this is something that has taken place. Present reality.
"reconciled" Enemies of God have now been made friends.

P: We were once enemies of God, but have now become friends.
When is the last time I stopped and meditated on this fact?

"in his body of flesh" Likely a counter to false teaching about Jesus/redemption.
"by his death" The way that God made this reconciliation possible.

P: The literal, physical death & resurrection of Jesus matters.
P: Our sin is such a serious offense that somebody has to pay.
Is the value of the cross expanding in my life?

"in order to present" He begins to lay out the ultimate purpose.
"holy" Consecration and devotion.
"blameless" Without spot or blemish, OT word.
"above reproach before him" Free from accusation.

P: The ultimate purpose for our reconciliation is our holiness—both now and then.
In anticipation of that day, am I living out of the Gospel? Am I seeking holiness today?

P: God uses everything in our lives to make us holy (like Jesus.)
Do I recognize this is what is going on in the difficulties of my life?

"if indeed you continue in the faith" Encouragement to and assumption they will.

P: All who have truly turned from sin and trusted in Christ will persevere in their faith.

P: Our responsibility is to continue to believe and live out our faith in the strength God gives us.

"stable and steadfast" Same thought as Jesus describing building on the rock.
"not shifting" Lit. settled, firm resolve to stay the course.
"from the hope of the gospel that you heard" They are part of something larger.

P: The Gospel is a message of hope—both for eternity and now.
Am I hoping in the Gospel both today and for eternity?

"which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven" Throughout the earth.
"and of which I, Paul, became a minister." Editorial comment.

P: The Gospel is for everyone everywhere.
Am I sharing in the Mission of God to see that the Gospel goes out?

Works Consulted: *Expositor's Commentary, Life Application Bible, MacArthur Study Bible, ESV Study Bible, Messages by Steve Hart, Jonathan MacIntosh, John Piper, Tim Keller*