
Sermon Notes

January 25, 2015

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Reconciled in Christ

Colossians 1:15-23

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

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.

The Supremacy of Christ

- ❖ As Paul extols the supremacy of Christ, he gives us a lifetime (even an eternity!) of stimulus for knowing Christ, proclaiming Christ, and worshiping Christ
- ❖ Thoughtfully engaging with this text will fill us with an increased hunger to know Christ and to make Him known

The Creator of All Things (vv. 15-16)

- ❖ Jesus is God, the perfect, absolutely, accurate image of God
 - humans were created in the image of God but were not designed to have God's incommunicable attributes (*e.g.*, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, immutability, etc...)
 - as God, Jesus is the full, final, complete revelation of God
- ❖ By calling Jesus *the firstborn of all creation*, Paul points to Christ's preeminence over everything He has made
 - all things were created through Jesus and for Jesus
 - in heaven, on earth, visible and invisible

The Sustainer of All Things (vv. 17-18)

- ❖ Christ did not create everything and then walk away, leaving things to run on their own
 - He is both the agent of creation and the source of creation's preservation
 - Jesus is the power behind every consistency in the universe
- ❖ He holds the universe together... He holds the church together!

The Reconciler of All Things (vv. 19-23)

- ❖ By virtue of His sacrificial death (*the blood of the cross*) Jesus offers us peace with God, access to God, and adoption as God's children
- ❖ Reconciliation = the restoration of friendship through the resolution of conflict
- ❖ Since sin entered the world, humanity's relationship with God has been characterized by a state of alienation, broken fellowship, misunderstanding, and mistrust
 - a state of war between God and us (Col 1:21, Rom 8:7)
 - we are born into this, there is no escaping it
- ❖ By His grace, God takes the initiative in bringing about reconciliation
 - God does not offer us a partial change
 - He offers us a total change
- ❖ Five facets of salvation
 - **justification**, we are guilty & condemned but, because of Christ, God declares us righteous (Rom 8:33)
 - **redemption**, we stand before God as slaves of sin, but we are granted freedom (Rom 6:18-22)
 - **forgiveness**, we stand before God as debtors, but our debt is paid and forgotten (Eph 1:7)
 - **reconciliation**, we stand before God as enemies, but, by His grace, we become His friends (2 Cor 5:18-20)
 - **adoption**, we stand before God as strangers, but we are made His children (Eph 1:5)

God's Long-range Plan for Reconciliation

- ❖ God's plan is *to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven* (Col 1:20)
 - we live on a cursed planet in a cursed universe, but God's plan is and always has been to reverse that curse
 - as all things are reconciled to God through Christ, tremendous, dramatic changes will occur (Rom 8:21)
- ❖ Even more dramatic than God restoring a fallen, broken universe to Himself is the way God chooses to reconcile fallen, broken sinners to Himself
 - Jesus dies the death we cannot die in order to pay the debt we cannot pay
 - the good news of what Jesus has done and is doing is the message we are called to proclaim as we make Christ known
 - everyone who is reconciled to God has the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:17-20)

Personal Application

1. What new insights about Christ do you gain as you study Colossians 1:15-23?
2. Are you completely convinced that God has reconciled you to Himself? Why or Why not?
3. If you are reconciled to God, how are you fulfilling His call to partner with Him in the ministry of reconciliation?