

Peace Through His Blood

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[0 : 00] Open up your Bible to the book of Colossians. And you did part of the background of my sermon for me right there.! So that's really great. So yeah, Colossians was written by the Apostle Paul to the church in Colossae.

And that was a city that Paul didn't travel through or to, at least that we know of. But as we saw on the screen there, the people in that city first heard the gospel from a man named Epaphras. Who was sort of a co-worker of Paul's. And after those introductory remarks that Brad shared with us, Paul in his letter to the church in Colossae, the first thing he does is he starts to remind them of the gospel.

He starts to remind them of who Jesus is and what is the good news about him. And so we're going to just jump right into, we're at verse 15 of chapter 1.

And I'm going to read our passage and then we'll take some time to think through it together. The Son, writes Paul, is the image of the invisible God.

[1 : 27] The firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created. Things in heaven and on earth.

All things in heaven and on earth. Visible and invisible. Whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities. All things have been created through him and for him.

He is before all things. And in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body. The church.

He is the beginning. And the firstborn. From among the dead. So that in everything.

He might have. The supremacy. For God was pleased. To have all his fullness. Dwell in him.

[2 : 27] And through him. To reconcile to himself. All things. Whether things on earth. Or things in heaven. By making peace.

Through his blood. Shed. On the cross. Once. You were alienated from God. And were enemies. In your minds.

Because of your evil behavior. But now. He has reconciled you. By Christ's physical body. Through death. To present you.

Holy. In his sight. Without blemish. And free. From accusation. If. You continue. In your faith. Established.

And firm. And do not move. From the hope. Held out in the gospel. This. Is the gospel. That you heard. And that has been proclaimed. To every creature.

[3 : 24] Under heaven. And of which I. Paul. Have become a servant. And so. Before Paul. Gets to anything else.

In his letter. To this church. He reminds them. Of the gospel. He reminds them. Of the good news. Of Jesus. Both. Who he is. And what. He has done.

Those first four verses. From 15. Down to 19. Are all about. Who Jesus is. Paul calls him.

The son. And it kind of flows out. Of what he was talking about. Before. Where he. Talks about God. The father. And then there is. The son.

God's son. Jesus. And here in verse 15. Paul describes Jesus. He says. The son. Is the image.

[4 : 18] Of the invisible God. So God cannot be seen. He's invisible. But Jesus.

God's son. Is the image. Of the invisible God. To say it another way. Through. Even though God is spirit.

And therefore. Not seeable. To our human eyes. God has made himself. Seeable. Through his son. Jesus. God has put himself.

In a form. Which is visible. To us. So that we can see him. And know him. That's who Jesus is. To see Jesus.

Is to see God. To know Jesus. Is to. Know God. God. So he is the image.

[5 : 16] The son is the image. Of the invisible God. And Paul says. He is the firstborn. Over all. Creation. Now these words. Sometimes. Maybe confuse us a little.

We don't. Often. Use that language. Very much. When we hear firstborn. Usually. We just think of the first child. Born in the family. And that's it.

But back in. Bible times. To be the firstborn. Meant so much more. Than just order. Of birth. The firstborn.

In a family. Had a special status. In his family. He received a double portion. Of the inheritance. From his father. And yet a higher position.

In his family. Than his siblings. And so when Paul calls Jesus. The firstborn. He's saying that Jesus has.

[6 : 11] This special. Exalted status. He is over. He is above. But maybe what's surprising. Is what he is over. And above.

Paul says that he is the firstborn. Over all. Creation. Firstborn over all creation. And to understand what that means.

We actually have to just keep reading. To the next verse. Paul explains it. The son is the firstborn. Over all creation. For. In him.

All things. Were created. Things in heaven. And on earth. Visible. And invisible. Whether thrones. Or powers. Or rulers. Or authorities.

All things. Have been created. Through him. And for him. And so that's Paul's explanation. Of what it means. That the son. Is the firstborn.

[7 : 10] Over all creation. It certainly doesn't mean. That he was the first one. Made. In creation. Because Paul basically says. That all things.

That were created. Were created. Through him. Everything. And so the son of God.

Was already there. Before anything. That was created. Was made. Now that's difficult. To wrap our minds around. We might be wondering.

Paul. Are you saying. That Jesus. Made the whole world. Even before he was born. That's exactly. What the Bible teaches. That's precisely. What Paul is trying. To get across. To us here. The one. Who is Jesus. Existed. Long before.

[8 : 03] He. Was born. Into our world. Even before. The creation. Of the world. He was there. And he wasn't. Just. Watching.

Paul says. All things. Have been created. Through him. So the son of God. The one who would. Later be born. Into our world. He himself. Created. All things. And what's included. In those. Those all things.

Paul tells us. The things of. Heaven. And the things of earth. So that. There is only. That covers all of it. Basically. Everything down here. And everything up there.

Everything. All things. In the whole universe. The stuff of earth. That we see. All around us. And the stuff. Up there. In space.

[8 : 57] The stars. The galaxies. And beyond. The one who was. Who was. In the beginning. And was later. Born into our world.

He made all of it. Even the thrones. And the powers. And the rulers. And the authorities. Paul says. Whether he's referring to earthly. Or.

Spiritual. Or natural. The son of God. Created them all. In him. All things. Were created. All things. Have been created.

Through him. That's quite the truth. Isn't it? Stop and think about that. This is reason.

To praise. We've been. Just. Thinking about. Some of the beauty. That we see in our world. The sunset. Last night. I don't know how many of you.

[9 : 56] Caught that. Jesus. Made it all. And.

Something that should just. Move us to worship. Something. Bring us to awe. And so. We were talking about.

How Jesus is the first born. Over all creation. This is Paul's explanation. Of what that. Means. And. It mainly. In this passage. Has to do with his status.

In relation. To the creation. He is exalted. He is higher. Than all of it. Because he. Made. All of it. But then there's this one little phrase. At the end of this.

Verse. Which we don't want to miss. And I. I love this. All things. Have been created. Through him. And. For him.

[10:55] All things. Everything. That's been made. Has been created. For. The son. Maybe this is where some of that first born idea comes in as well.

At least. It. Maybe. Makes sense to me this way. God has made everything. It's all been created by him. But it's been made.

For. The son. For God's son. We talked a little bit earlier. About how the first born gets a double portion. Of the inheritance. In this case.

There is only one son of God. And he gets it all. All. It's all for him. And so God's intention in making everything.

Through his son. Is that it should all be given. To him. And belong to him. Or to say it another way. Jesus is the heir.

[11:57] Of everything. That God has made. And we don't have time to talk about this today. But there's also the wonderful truth. That we read in scripture.

About how through faith. We can be adopted into the family of God. We are united to Christ. Such that we become co-heirs with Christ. Amazing and wonderful truth for another time.

But let's just keep going in the passage. Let's keep listening to what the Lord is saying through Paul. The son is the image of the invisible God. He's the firstborn over all creation.

We know this is true. Because he made all things. It was all made for him. And we also know all of this. Because verse 17. He is before all things.

And in him, the son, all things hold together. So just in case we're still wrestling with this idea of Jesus. The son existing before all things were created.

[13:00] Paul says it again as clear as can be said. The son is before all things. Before anything else was made.

He was there. Not only was he there. But Paul takes it even further. He helps us see another dimension to it.

He says in Jesus, through Jesus, all things hold together. In him, all things hold together.

The son of God is right now sustaining everything in the universe. Do you ever wonder how all the incredible complexity of all the systems that we have.

All the things happening in the universe. Do you ever wonder why it all just doesn't fly apart and break down. Do you ever wonder how it is that our earth continues to perfectly orbit the sun.

[14:10] And the moon orbit the earth. And every other moving star and comet and asteroid. Everything is moving up in the heavens.

Including us. Our planet. And yet there's order to it. Such that we don't get cooked to death. Or frozen to death.

Or smashed to death. By stuff flying around. By a cosmic collision. Or we could think of the weather systems on the planet.

We see natural disasters sometimes. And that's tragic. But there's an ebb and a flow. To everything. There's a balance. To the natural forces on our planet.

There's these intricate and delicate cycles. Cycles that replenish the water. So that the fresh water is there for us to drink.

[15:07] So that the lakes and the rivers don't just dry up. And drain away for good. I love these words of Solomon. In Ecclesiastes. He says, All streams flow into the sea.

Yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from. There they return again. There's this cycle that God has set up. And it sustains life.

Here on earth. Where we could think of the amazing systems in our bodies. The things that enable us to grow. But not just keep growing forever. It stops at just the right time.

Where the things in our bodies going on. That help us to heal. When we've been cut. Or hurt. Or injured. You could think of all those things we learned about in high school biology.

The circulatory system. The respiratory system. The digestive system. All working together in our bodies to sustain us. We could think about the astonishing systems inside a living human cell.

[16:15] Of which we have many. All the micro machinery at work. In there. Producing proteins. And copying DNA.

And moving things to and fro in the cell. Reproducing cells. Do you ever wonder how all of those related systems.

Going on in our universe. How they don't just fly apart. And break down. Causing us everything to die. In a matter of days.

Or to say it another way. What's the most complex system. That you are able to maintain. And how does that compare to all the moving things in the universe.

I mean we sometimes struggle just to keep plants alive. And vehicles running. Our own bodies healthy and strong. The reason this universe doesn't just fly apart.

[17:21] And break down in a matter of days. Is because the son of God. Is constantly holding it all together. That's how powerful.

And amazing he is. We can't hardly keep the fish tank clean. Or the garden from exploding with weeds. And even if we do manage to do it.

For those two things. What are the other things that we are responsible for. That are falling apart over here. While we do it. But Jesus holds it all together.

All at once. By his powerful word. Paul goes on. Verse 18. And he is the head of the body. The church.

He is the beginning. And the firstborn from among the dead. So that in everything. He might have. The supremacy. We could spend lots of time on each of these things.

[18:20] All of them are important. Just to hit on a few. Jesus is the head of the church. Just as the head is the most important. And prominent part of the body.

That's what Jesus is in relation to us. He's indispensable. The body can live without an arm. Or a leg. Or a gallbladder.

But without the head. We're dead. So too with Jesus. He is the head of the church. He is the leader. He is the one in authority.

Over. The church. Not the king of England. Not the pope. Jesus is the head of the church.

He is the firstborn from among the dead. Jesus is. The first one to conquer death. To come out of it victoriously.

[19:18] And to share that same resurrection power and life with us. So that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.

In his son. So Jesus. He doesn't just image God. Like a moving picture. On a television. Or like a mirror. On a wall.

But God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in his son. The son of God has the fullness of God.

And this is something that we could ponder all day. And still not understand. It's a mysterious supernatural reality. Truly. Truly.

Only God knows. How. This. Can be. In his son. It's beyond our understanding. We just embrace it by faith. And it's not a blind faith.

[20:24] I mean. He's given us many signs. We talk about that all the time in Luke. With the miracles. That Jesus did. But a wonderful truth. We get this amazing picture here.

Of. Who Jesus is. He's the image of the invisible God. In whom the fullness of God dwells. He existed before all things.

He created all things. And is sustaining them. Holding them together. He is supreme over all of it. And he is the one. For whom all of it was made.

And then after all of that. We finally come to this sort of a climax. In this. Telling of the gospel. Verse 19.

For God was pleased. To have all his fullness dwell in him. And through him. To reconcile to himself. All things. Whether things on earth.

[21:34] Or things in heaven. By making peace. Through his blood. Shed. On the cross. So God has a very great thing.

That he desires to do. Through Jesus. Jesus. And it's to reconcile to himself. All things. By making peace. Up until now.

We haven't heard a word. About sin. In all of this. It's just all been about Jesus. And how great he is. But now Paul. Brings in the truth of sin.

All things are made by God. We heard that. Through his son. For his son. But the relationship. Between God. And all things. Has been broken.

The relationship. Between God. And us. Is marked by hostility. In fact. Paul says it even more clearly. And directly.

[22 : 37] In verse 21. He says. Once. You were alienated. From God. And were enemies. In your minds. Because of your evil behavior.

In your behavior. So. What Adam did long ago. In the garden. When he disobeyed God. He sinned. His sin. Led to our corruption. Now we all sin. As well. Both in our attitudes.

What goes on in our minds. And in our actions. Our behaviors. What we do with our bodies. In both ways. We have sinned.

And it has severed. Our relationship. With God. In the words of. Paul. We have alienated ourselves. [23 : 31] From him. In fact. It's even worse. Than that. Not just separation. But hostility. Once.

You were enemies. Of God. And yet. Paul says. In the verse. Before. It pleased God.

To reconcile us. To himself. It pleased God. To reconcile. Us. To himself. While we were in that.

State. God. God very much. Wants to restore. The relationship. Between him. And us. He wants to make peace. Between us.

He wants to put an end. To that hostility. He wants to heal. That broken relationship. So that we're not enemies. Anymore. But so that we are friends.

[24 : 29] And even more than that. Children. In his family. How will God do this? Paul says. He reconciles. And makes peace.

Through his blood. Shed. On the cross. And so Jesus died. For a reason. He suffered.

And died on the cross. To get. You. And me. Back into relationship. With God. He died. He died. To make peace. Between us.

And God. Paul doesn't go into. An explanation. Of how it all works. In this moment. But we know. From other places. In the Bible. That Jesus became.

A sort of substitute. He died. On the cross. And when he did that. He took upon himself. The punishment. That we deserve. For our sins.

[25 : 28] And he made atonement. For our sins. Justice was served. The sentence. That we deserved. He took it on himself.

And Jesus could do that. The Bible tells us. Because. He was. Sinless. He didn't have a sin. Of his own. And yet. He chose willingly. To suffer.

What we deserve. For our sins. All of this. So that we could be reconciled. So that we could be restored. To God. Peace.

Made. Between us and God. By the time we get to verse 22. Paul. Talks about this.

As something that the Colossian Christians. Already have. Not as just some theoretical. Maybe. But as something that they have already entered into. And.

[26 : 26] Why he speaks this way. Is because of what we heard. Brad share earlier. Paul has. Heard of the faith that they have in. Christ Jesus.

They heard the good news. About Jesus. And embraced it. And it was growing in. In them. And even spreading out from them. They believed in Jesus. They gave their lives to him.

And so that's why Paul can say this. So confidently. And so personally. Here in verse 22. But now he has reconciled you. By Christ's physical body.

Through death. To present you holy. In his sight. Without blemish. And free from accusation.

In. That's probably my favorite verse. In all of this. This is what Jesus' death accomplishes.

[27 : 25] For us who believe. In him. Not just that reconciliation. And that restoration. We've talked about that. But these other things.

To make us holy. To present you holy. In his sight. Without blemish. Free from accusation. And first he tells us.

How he did it. He did it by Christ's physical body. Through death. It's a reminder again. That our sin is serious to God. God is righteous.

He is just. He is good. And so what is not good. Must be dealt with. And we're reminded by these words. That to atone for our sins.

To restore us to God. It required the death. Of the son of God. His body. Even though he didn't deserve it.

[28 : 36] Our peace with God. Required. That his blood. Be shed. On that cross. And so our sin is very serious to God.

It must be dealt with. But as we heard. God is pleased. To pay that cost. In order to reconcile us. To himself. He wanted to do it. And then for these. Just a few moments here.

He talks about. In the last half of this verse. What. What are the things. Accomplished. For us. By Jesus. Through his death. My favorite part of this passage.

God's desire is not just to. Reconcile us to himself. But to present us holy. In his sight. We.

[29 : 37] Have not been holy. We have been corrupt. We have been sinful. We have been selfish. We have been proud.

We are not holy. But God sent Jesus. So that he would die on that cross. So that we might become. Holy. In his sight. Through Jesus' death on the cross. God changes our status with him. From unholy.

To holy. From guilty. To not guilty. From sinful. To sacred.

Special. Perfect. Pure. Father. Paul gives us a couple more phrases. To flesh this out. Without blemish.

[30 : 38] What does that look like? It looks like us being without blemish. And free from accusation. I love that phrase. Without blemish. It means spotless.

No fault. Can be found. That's not how we've lived. That's not how we've been.

But it's like the record of our sins is erased. So that in God's sight. Through Christ. We are now counted. And treated as flawless.

Spotless. No wrongs. On the record. It's amazing. And free from accusation.

I love that phrase as well. There's so many things that we could be accused of. If we were to make a list of all the sins that we've committed in our lifetimes.

[31 : 39] Oh it'd be so long. And so many. We can't even do it. And it's like through Jesus and his death on the cross. God has just taken that list that was there.

And burned it. There's no longer anything left against us. Free from accusation.

There's nothing wrong that we can now be accused of. Why? Because Jesus served the punishment. For all the wrongs that we've done. If it's like debt.

He paid off all the debt that our sins have piled up. Such that we just owe nothing at all anymore. We can now pass through God's judgment.

With a verdict. Of not guilty. No accusations. To be made. Can be made. Our criminal record with God is blank.

[32 : 38] There's no longer anything on it. That hasn't been dealt with. We are free. From accusation. In the courts of heaven. I love those words.

Paul reminds us here at this point though. That this is only true of those who continue. In faith. These wonderful realities are not just given to everyone.

Only those who repent and believe the good news of Jesus. Are reconciled to God. And at peace with him. And are presented as holy in his sight. And are without blemish.

And free from accusation. We must put our faith in the good news about Jesus. And what God has done. In order to receive all this. Just like the Colossians did. And Paul says we must continue in that faith.

We must stay believing in him. And not move away from the hope. That's held out to us in this gospel. Only as we hold fast to the gospel by faith.

[33 : 46] Can we be assured of these things. That God has promised to us. These are wonderful and glorious truths. About who Jesus is.

And what he has done for us. To bring us back to God. And to make us new. We're going to go to the Lord's table now. And we're going to spend a few minutes.

Before we eat and drink. Just reflecting on this good news. And I want to encourage you. Just to take some of this time. To talk to the Lord. About some of the things that we've heard.

Maybe that's for you. Confessing sins. Maybe it's giving thanks. Maybe it's just. Awe. And wonder. And expressing that to God.

Over who he is. And what he has done. Just a reminder as we do this. That this table is for those who have faith in Jesus.

[34 : 46] And so if you have not yet. Come to that. In your life. Then we would just ask that you. Let the cup and the bread. Pass you by. Until you have. So the.

We're going to take a few minutes now. To quietly reflect and pray. Then the elders are going to come up. They're going to pass out the bread and the cup. We'll wait till everybody has been served. And then we'll eat and drink all together.

In unison. So let's do that now. Let's talk to the Lord. Let's respond to. What he has said and done.
Thank you.