

Reconciling

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[0 : 00] All right, Colossians chapter 1. We're going to look at verse 20 this morning. It kind of closes out this Christological hymn that Paul is using here in the very beginning.

It's in the middle of a sentence, so we're going to back up and read verses 18, 19, and 20. You have it there? Good? Okay, great. Begins in verse 18, it says this, He is also the head of the body, the church.

And he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he himself will come to have first place in everything. How is that so? For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in him, and through him to reconcile all things to himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross.

Through him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. Verse 20, one more time. And through him to reconcile all things to himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross. Through him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. Let's pray together. Father, thank you for your word. Lord, we pray that because it is strong and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword, you would use it to go right between the joint and marrow, that you would expose us and expose our hearts and the thoughts and intentions of our hearts and help us to see ourselves for as we truly are, that we may lean and rest upon you and run to you for our salvation, our joy, our holiness, our righteousness.

[1 : 43] And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. I don't know if you've ever walked into a room full of people, or maybe just a couple of people, and they were talking as you were walking in, and when you walked in, they stopped talking.

And you get this sort of feeling that maybe they were talking about you. And our family, we actually started calling this out using a phrase, not the center of the universe.

Not the center of the universe. Because invariably, one of us would be in another part of the house, and the others were gathered together in the kitchen talking, and usually it was me walking into the room late going, what are you saying?

Would you say something about me? And the answer from everyone was, you're not the center of the universe. Not everything is about you. And it's interesting, because that's exactly where this passage is this morning.

Because as we look at it, you've got to realize that when we hit verse 21 and following, it's going to be about you. But this passage is not about you.

[2 : 59] But you need to hear this passage, because you need to see and understand who God is and what He's doing. You see, verse 21 through 23 is going to be about reconciling, but it's going to be about reconciling humanity.

This morning is not about reconciling humanity. This morning is about God reconciling all things to Himself. And that may sound strange to you at the moment, but I think as we get through this, you'll begin to understand what this is meaning.

And my prayer is that it will give you some hope. It will give you some hope as you look at this world around you, and you see the things. Knowing who God is, what God has done, you will walk out of here with a hopeful attitude, knowing that He is going to right the wrongs, and that He's going to bring all things together.

And we're going to look at this passage in three questions. So, let's take a look at the first one. Why did all things need to be reconciled?

Why did all things need to be reconciled? Because that's what the passage says. It says that He reconciled all things, then He says, in heaven and on earth. And He's looking at the entire created cosmos, and He's saying that all things, He's reconciling all things to Himself.

[4 : 16] Why does it need to be reconciled? And we have a hint of it in our passage. And the hint of it is that He says, having made peace. Having made peace.

Well, you don't have to make peace where there's no hostility. And so, all things in heaven and on earth were hostile to God. Hostile to His ways. Hostile to His purposes.

Because of sin, because of what happened in the garden with Adam and Eve, all creation, all the created cosmos was hostile. And peace needed to be brought in.

And that is what God is doing by the blood of His Son, bringing peace, and reconciling all things to Himself. So, what happened to the world that made it so that there is no peace?

We understand that we as humans have no peace with God because we've violated and broken His law. But why is it that the created cosmos is hostile to God or is not at peace with God?

[5 : 19] And I want us to take a look in the book of Romans because Paul gives us some clarity about this in Romans chapter 8. And in verse 18, he says this.

He says, For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us. Now, let me just pause there.

Basically, he's kind of setting up his argument that when we go through suffering, we have a tendency to think that the suffering we're going through is bigger than anything else we could ever experience.

And what Paul is saying is that the glory that's going to be revealed in us one day is far greater than all the sufferings that we're going through now. Amen?

That is a good, good thought. Then he gets into verse 19, and he says this. For the anxious longing of the creation... I just want you to think about that.

[6 : 16] The anxious longing of the creation. Of all things that have been created in heaven and on earth, all things longing in the creation, it waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

Now, just pause there. Just take that in for a second. Try to understand what he's saying. What he's saying is that you and I have suffering, and we're waiting for the day when we go to be with the Lord, and the glory that's going to be revealed when we go to be with Him is going to far surpass all the suffering we've had in life.

But the creation is also longing for the day that our glory is revealed. It's longing for that day.

The creation's anxiously longing for that day when you and I have a final and full salvation, when the glory that is going to be in us is finally revealed.

The creation longs for that. The trees, the rocks, the stars, the moon, the cosmos, the nebula that's out there, and things we don't even understand, longs for the day when that glory is revealed in us.

[7 : 32] That's what he says in verse 19. Now the question is, why? Because of verse 20. For the creation was subjected to futility.

The creation was subjected to futility. Not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it.

That Him there is God. What is this saying? It is telling us that God Himself subjected the created cosmos to futility.

And He did that at the fall of Adam and Eve. This word futility is the same word that you'll find in the book of Ecclesiastes.

In the book of Ecclesiastes, that's where we have vanity, vanity, all is vanity. And we don't have time to do detailed study of that, but that's what this is all getting at. Is that the world has been subjected.

[8 : 47] The Hebrew word is habel. Habel, habel, all is habel. This word futility, this word habel, this word vanity. It has this idea of useless, worthless.

Idols are called worthless things. It's this idea of chasing after the wind. It's this idea of the vaporness of life. It's the idea of the difficulty and the frustration of life. It's the transitory repetitiveness of life.

It's the place where temptation to sin lives. It's the place where death lives. It's the place where struggle, suffering, sickness lives. When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, God subjected the creation to this futility.

You can see it in Genesis chapter 3 and it talks about that the ground was cursed. It talks about how toil is going to be necessary to eat. I mean, can you imagine for just a second they were able to eat without having to work for it?

We can't even fathom that that's a possibility. It seems so natural to us. We've gotten so used to the way this world works. It talks about thorns and thistles will grow, not plants.

[10 : 01] It talks about the sweat of the brow that we will eat. Havel, vanity, futility. It's just the way things are.

Let me see if I can give a couple of illustrations to get our hands around this. This transitory, wispy, vapor-like quality of life in which nothing is as it ought to be.

The sun rises, the sun sets. The sun rises, the sun sets. The sun rises, the sun sets. The sun rises, the sun sets, the sun rises, the sun sets.

And even after a hundred years of days of suns rising and setting, the world is no better than it was. Maybe this would help.

If we change the word futility to something that maybe we would all sort of identify with, instead of saying vanity, vanity, all is vanity, or futility, futility, all is futility, we could say laundry, laundry, all is laundry.

[11 : 18] Because you wash it, you fold it, you put it away, you wash it, you fold it, you put it away, you wash it, you fold it, you put it away, although, I have learned, you wash it, you fold it, you wear it again, you wash it, you fold it, putting it away as just an extra step.

but we look at that kind of a thing and we say to ourselves oh that's just life we just got to do this yes but life ought not be this way the reason it is this way and as we do it and we have to do it again we have to do it again and we accomplish nothing with it is because this is a cursed world this is a cursed cosmos even the creation then because of this curse it's not just the transitory it's not just the repetitive monotonous idea of life but it's the attack that creation makes against us we have close to 18 weather related disasters every year in the united states alone and since 1980 it has caused 2.6 trillion dollars in damages every year about 50,000 people are attacked by wild animals and they must get some sort of medical intervention every year 10,000 children under the age of 14 die mostly due to accidents did you know that every year 260 to 280 brand new rare genetic diseases are discovered that's that's that's the creation coming after us that's the created cosmos hostile towards us that's havel that's futility 358,000 homes catch fire every year and in the united states alone 1.9 million new cases of cancer are diagnosed every year that's havel that's futility this world is under a curse it is hostile to god it's hostile to his purposes it's hostile to us and what this passage is teaching us is that god is reconciling all things to himself and this is why it needs to be reconciled the second question i want to ask it won't take us too long to do this but it's who's doing this reconciling who is it that's doing the reconciling verse 19 and 20 flow together and in verse 19 we said it was the father's good pleasure for all the fullness of deity to dwell in christ the sentence keeps going and the subject of the sentence is the father still he's it's the father who's reconciling all things to himself god the father is wrecking reconciling all things to himself in other words it's the father's idea to reconcile all things to himself so often we get this mistaken notion that god the father doesn't really give a rip about us but he is the vengeful scary god of the old testament who has no love or mercy or grace in him whatsoever and that it's jesus the mild and meek baby in the manger that has all the grace and the mercy but the truth of the matter is is the whole reason jesus came is because it was the father's idea it was the father's initiation it's the father's settled disposition of love and care and concern and compassion and mercy upon his created cosmos it was his kindness that began all of this and so as christians we've got to make sure that we do not believe the lie that says that we see love in jesus and nothing but judgment and the father it's not true it's god the father reconciling the world to himself he's reconciling all things to himself he is bringing an end to hostility see that's the word reconcile word reconcile is when you have two parties that are at odds with each other and you bring them together you make peace between them and they come back together and so as he is setting things right he's reconciling all things to himself he is bringing an end to the hostility he's righting the wrongs he's straightening out the crooked he's transforming the deformed it is his creation and currently it exists crossways to his purposes he made this world to praise him and to be a place for us and it is now cursed and underneath futility and vanity and he is reconciling this christians think for just a few moments about how all the difficult things in this world affect us sickness tragedy natural disasters even the monotony of daily life we grieve we weep we go into depression sometimes despair but christians think what this verse is saying think about what this is saying the father cares enough about the futility of life the father cares enough about the sickness in life the father cares enough to send his one and only son into this world taking our sin upon himself and in perfect righteous sacrifice he is then using that to right the wrongs of this cursed world to set straight the creation hostile towards us and so what you what you what you

must do is you can't let you can't let the difficulties of life you know i can just i can just imagine a young mother with with a couple of little ones who who changes diaper after diaper no you could even say it this way you could say diaper diaper all are diapers i can see her with this monotonous task going on and on wondering is there anything else to life other than just this is this all i'm created for is this all i'm good for i can see i can see someone looking at someone that they love with all kinds of sickness whatever that could be and and saying this ought not be this way this ought not be this way but what you must not do beloved is you must not believe the doubt and the skepticism and the lie that says the father doesn't care he does care and i i'm afraid that sometimes we as christians live like atheists we live by the principle that i will believe it when i see it and we wait for god to prove his love when he already has so i want to encourage you christian to believe deep down in your heart and be like the father who looked at jesus and says yes lord i believe and help my unbelief go to the father ask him to help your unbelief when you begin to doubt that he is good when you begin to doubt that he cares and there's some who are not christians who point to these troubles who point to these sufferings and they want to accuse god with a question like how can a loving god allow this kind of suffering to which i sometimes want to reply what difference does it make to you since you don't believe that there's a god after all or what gives you the courage to question someone whose moral character is way better than yours there's something in there that's angry that wants to jump out and say where is god and i just want to say to you do you not understand the kindness and the care and the compassion that the father has for you yes this world is in a mess but it's in a mess because of adam's sin and the judgment that god gave to sin i want you to think about this because i don't think we understand this yes god punished adam and that punishment has been inherited by all the human race and yes the earth is cursed and the cosmos is cursed because of that but that is not nearly as bad as what we deserve you know what you know what we would have deserved since adam was the head of the human race what we would have deserved is for him to immediately bring forth all humanity that he would ever bring forth and immediately in adam cast us all into his wrath that's what we deserve but that's not what he did and it's amazing to me that even on a cursed earth like this even upon a world that seeks to attack us even in a world that seeks to make us sick we find sunrises are still beautiful and we find that god has given humanity such fascinating ability to diagnose and cure so many diseases and sicknesses i say to you if you are not a christian today you need to look at this verse and understand that god himself is seeking to reconcile the creation to himself to right the wrongs to reverse the curse and one day his work will be finished and the last enemy will be subdued so how is he reconciling all things how is this happening that's the other question that this verse answers and it's there in that phrase having made peace through the blood of his cross having made peace through the blood of his cross peace peace the father is reconciling the world the cosmos through the blood of his son peace is made peace is what reconciliation needs this peace this reconciliation that's what the blood of christ is bringing as god brings all this together he's bringing the shalom back into this world and he's doing it through the blood of the cross you see we got to remember that the blood of the cross the blood of christ is not simply a ticket to heaven for disembodied souls of nice people i'll say that again the blood of christ is not simply a ticket to heaven for disembodied souls of nice people that is not what it is at all the blood of christ is the penalty payment for cosmic treason that's what it is the blood of christ is a wrath satisfying sacrifice the blood of christ is a peace producing covering the blood of christ is our reconciliation with the father you remember we looked at romans chapter 8 earlier and i want to go back to it for a second because there's some some good things in there you remember verse 20 says for the creation was subjected to futility the creation was subjected to futility not willingly but because of him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of god this futility is the creation in slavery to corruption and the hopeful thing is is that as we have our freedom of the glory of the children of god and and you you keep reading in this and you see what he's talking about here is that our our being children of god is going to be finalized like like right now we're living as foster children of god but one day the adoption is finalized and when that adoption is finalized the old carcass goes away and i get a brand new glorified body and when that happens the creation is set free in that moment and so the hope is that as god subjected it to futility he's one day going to release it from its slavery it will no longer be cursed in other words as christ saves his people he delivers us from our sin as he sanctifies us throughout our lives and one day we're fully adopted by the lord we have glorified

bodies it is in that day that the creation will be set free from the curse because the cursed people live on a cursed earth but a new people need a new earth to live on god does this by the blood of his own son that's why isaiah 53 says that it pleased the lord to crush him it was by sending his son to die that god the father reconciled all things to himself it's as though he looked at his son and says listen it's so out of whack down there you gotta go sacrifice yourself on the cross you gotta pay off my wrath because only as you as the infinitely worthy son can pay off my infinitely terrible wrath and when you do that then we can make all things new and if you're not a christian you need to understand that your only hope is jesus christ and here's here's what i mean the father has a settled hostility and anger towards sinners because we've broken his law we understand that and we want that peace with god which we'll talk more about next week that or two weeks after that this reconciling but here's the thing to reconcile us to god god himself will accept nothing from you to be reconciled to him he will accept nothing from us he's not going to take our good deeds and say okay now you can be reconciled to me he's not going to take our protection of religious holidays and say okay now you can be reconciled to me he's not going to take our kind thoughts he's not going to take our every sunday attendance he's not going to take anything to satisfy that wrath and to be reconciled to him except the blood of his own son that is the only thing he will accept from us is the blood of jesus christ there is no greater love than that that the father has provided the very means of salvation that would satisfy his own wrath but in order for you to be truly saved it means you have to admit that you are nothing it means you have to admit that you are a wicked sinner it means you have to admit that you deserve death and hell and if you don't see yourself as deserving god's wrath if you're allergic to such an admission in your heart then how can you ever truly be saved but christians i'm not i want to come back to you for just a second and make application of all these things and it won't it won't take us long just just saying it again just summarizing christ's blood is restoring the cosmos

[27 : 39] it is by his blood that the father is reversing the curse upon the earth to the degree that one day the wolf will lay down with the lamb and the leopard will lay down with the young goat by his precious blood he has purchased a peace and a reconciliation between us and the cosmos between god and the cosmos everything in heaven and earth reconciled to the father by his blood he purchased that by his blood but what about all of this futility what about all of this trouble what about all this vaporness what about all this monotony what about all this sickness and death and temptation to sin since by the blood of christ the father is reconciling all things to himself we can stand we can stand confident in the face of futility we can stand confident in the face of havel we can stand confident in the face of the monotony and uselessness of life and be okay we can take and have the laundry that we wash and fold we put away and we wash and we fold and put away and be okay because we can find purpose in that because of the blood of christ reconciling all things to the father and because the father is reconciling all things to himself it means that the evidence of the curse in this life things like sickness and pain and death and turmoil the creation trying to attack us should not shake our faith it should not cause us to doubt the goodness of god we have a more sure and steady rock than the rock of gibraltar we have the rock of the blood of jesus christ and so we can stand here and we can look at the news and we can look at let's go on in our families we can look at what's happening and we can we can see the bleakness we can see what seems to be hopelessness we can feel the despair that's going on but you need to understand that he's reconciling all this through his blood so how how can we because because i'm telling you a truth that you know and so you know that it's all going to be better one day but like i don't know how far that day is from here like there's a part of me that kind of wishes we could just sort of borrow from that day just a little bit because you know you you get a phone call from somebody and the world blows up because despair depression upsetness frustration whatever because listen to what's going on over there how can how can we have our faith not be shaken by this futility how does the blood of jesus help us helps us in two ways number one his blood forgives us for even even being tempted to despair you see here's the thing temptation does not work on us unless we already have a problem in our heart temptation doesn't work on us unless we already have a problem within our heart and when we hear of some havel some futility some tragedy sickness some you know disaster some monotonous thing in life when we hear of that and we are tempted to despair it's because we already carry in us the seeds of doubt about god's goodness power and purposes and that temptation tempts us to go into despair but we can stand firm because we know that he's

already cleansed us from even the temptation to that despair and even as you see that and you feel that and the weight of all these things i don't know about you but when when when i get it it's this dread and it's this sort of rock sitting in the the the deepest parts of my stomach and i just feel like i can't even breathe sometimes because there's these moments of despair and i just know that there's a part of me that's just not believing that god is good and the good news is not that i can pull myself up by my bootstraps and not feel anything the good news is that the blood of christ has already forgiven me for those things but the second thing is that his blood and his work on the cross includes the work whereby in his resurrection he pours out the holy spirit the spirit of the resurrected christ who fills us so that when we are faced with that temptation again the temptation that says i'm going to despair i'm not sure if god is good because look at my family that's sick i'm not sure that god is good because look at this tragedy that struck us i'm not sure that god is good because look at all of these horrible things that are going on i'm not sure that god is good and powerful because look at the monotony of my life how do i get by the holy spirit is poured out in our heart to help us and to convict us and to empower us so that we do not yield to that temptation and that is done because of the blood of christ and so christians i say to you come today to christ lean upon christ rest been christ believe that your father is reconciling all things to himself he is good he is good and you don't have to hold it together to be okay the blood of christ is there for you making you okay it's not easy but he is reconciling and he will finish what he started let's pray together
Thank you.