Image of the Invisible

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 27 April 2025

Preacher: Fiona Lloyd

[0:00] Good evening. And thank you very much for choosing that song, Rob. I had that my baptismal service,! It will come up on the screen in a minute, but if you want to follow in your Bibles, that's where we're going.

I've called this image of the invisible because that's what it talks about, but it's also called in my Bible, the supremacy of Christ. And Paul says, writing about Jesus, he is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.
For by him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities.
All things were created by 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 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.
[1:45] Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you wholly in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation, if you continue in your faith established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.

This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. Amen.
I love that passage because it just reminds us to look at Jesus. Could you just move on to the next slide? I thought I'd show you a nice photo.
So our son and daughter-in-law went to the Lake District last week, and this was one of many photos they sent us. It looks like all the sunshine was in the Lake District last week, because on most of them the sky was that blue, and a few fluffy clouds, just like a child might run at school. But just looking at pictures like that, I love mountains anyway, but my first response is, wow, what an amazing God we serve. What a mighty creator we have.
[3:08] And I think the passage that I just read reflects something of that, in that when we look at Jesus, we just go, wow, this is what God is like. Reading about Jesus being the image of the invisible God gives us a spiritual wow moment, because we just have to stand in awe and say how great God is.

So I just wanted to unpack that a little bit more. So you can go on to the next slide. Josh, thank you. So first of all, from this passage, as I've mentioned, we see that Jesus shows us who God is.
If we want to know what God is like, we look at Jesus. We read about Jesus. We listen to what Jesus said. Paul says he's the image of the invisible God.
Now, the point of things being invisible is that you can't see them. And yet Paul says, here is Jesus. He's the image of the invisible God. Through Jesus, we can see what God is like. We can see who God is.
John said in his gospel that no one's ever seen God, but Christ has made him known. We also are reminded in this passage that the world was created through Jesus and for Jesus.
[4:24] Nothing that was made was made without him. He didn't just appear on the scene much later in history. He was there at the beginning. The world was created through him. So when we look at creation, we're reminded of Jesus who reminds us what God is like.

And Paul also says that he's the firstborn from among the dead. If we read the gospels, we know that other people came back to life, but they didn't come back to life permanently.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-11 18:06:38

When Jesus was raised from the dead, he was raised from the dead forever. And Paul says he's the firstborn. He wasn't just a one-off in that sense. God has given us new life and we will be raised with him.
Secondly, Paul reminds us that Jesus is the way to God. Thank you. Scripture makes it clear that we're all formally separated or alienated from God.
Isn't alienated? I could say a great word. It's probably not what it means, but it's very descriptive. From God. And we read through the Bible and we understand that our sin set us apart from God.
[5:33] And yet now we've been reconciled to God through the sacrifice of Jesus. Paul says, once you were enemies and you were far off because of your evil behavior, but now you have been reconciled.

We have a relationship with God. And Sue was talking very powerfully about her relationship with God and how at one time she didn't believe and didn't think there was anything in it for her. And then that came that moment of her recognizing who God was and of accepting Jesus.
And similarly for each of us, we've been reconciled to God through the sacrifice of Jesus. And that means that God sees us through the lens of Jesus.
He sees us as we are belonging to Jesus. And there's a great bit in that passage that I read that talks about without blemish and free from accusation. And as I read those words, I could hear some people going, yes.
Isn't it amazing that that's true? I love coming back to that verse. When I feel grotty and I feel that I'm making a mess of things, I look to that verse and it reminds me that in God's eyes, I am free from blemish and without accusation.
[6:41] Not because of anything I've done, but because of what Jesus did on the cross. So Jesus makes a way for us to be part of his family and to be joined to God.

And then thirdly, Jesus, through his Holy Spirit, transforms us. So at the end of that passage, it says about if you continue in your faith, established and firm.
I think it's verse 23. It reminds us that we need to continue in our faith. Salvation isn't just one instant. Okay, so yes, that's really important because that's when we come to know Jesus.
But actually, salvation is about being, carrying on in that relationship with Jesus, walking with him, seeking to do the things that he did. As our motto says on the back, as followers of Jesus, we direct our lives around three objectives.
Be with Jesus. Become like Jesus. Do what Jesus did. So there's that reminder here that we've been made right with God, but we need to continue in that.
[7:46] I read this passage in the New Living Translation as well when I was preparing. And it says, don't drift away. Which I think is a really good metaphor when you live by the sea. And you know what happens if you don't anchor your boat securely.

It just drifts off. And if you're unlucky, you might never see it again. Paul says in this passage, don't drift away. Continue in your faith, established and firm.
However, this isn't something that we do just by our own efforts. Well, I'll speak for myself. I know sometimes I really need to try to be a better Christian.
I need to follow Jesus in a better way. I need to do this, that and the other to make me a better Christian. And actually, if I try and do it by my own efforts, I've missed the point.
Paul says that we need to continue in our faith. But we need to do that with the help of the Holy Spirit. And if you look back in John's Gospel, Andy was talking this morning about Jesus' prayer for believers.
[8:48] And just before that, he talks about, I'm going to send you a helper. Helper, a comforter, an advocate, a guide, a teacher. Lots of different words are used. But the Holy Spirit will be sent to guide and to help us.

And he will remind us of what Jesus has said, what Jesus did. And he will help us to continue in our faith so that we can remain established and firm in our faith.
So, how do we respond to all of this? It struck me when I was reading this passage again, that it's very reminiscent of John's Gospel and John 14, 6.
And Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. Now, Paul switched that round slightly because he talks about the truth first and then the way and then the life. But it's still those three elements, isn't it?

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-11 18:06:38

So, we need that reminder that I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. So, I'd like us to take three questions away to pray and think about.
[9:53] And maybe one of these will sort of resonate with you more than others. And that's fine if you feel that God's niggling you. Maybe that's your cue just to dig a little deeper this week and spend some time praying into this.

So, first of all, thinking about the way Paul had it so that Jesus had been the way, do we need a deeper understanding of who God is? Do we need to remind ourselves of what Jesus shows us about God?
Do we need to reflect on the nature of Jesus and allow that to teach us more about who God is and his great love for us? Secondly, do we need to respond to God's invitation to be reconciled?
Now, it might be that you've never done that before. And that's something you need to take away and consider as we had testimony about this evening. Do we need to consider whether we need to be reconciled to God?
What does that mean? But the chances are for most of us, it's not about that initial reconciliation, but it's about remembering that we are blameless and free from accusation in God's sight and allowing that to inform the way we live.
[11:03] And if we're aware of things we're doing that aren't actually doing what Jesus did or being like Jesus, then we need to come back to God and get that sorted out. And thirdly, do we need a fresh indwelling of the Holy Spirit to help us in our walk with Jesus?

Now, in one sense, the answer for all of us is yes, because we need to continue to be filled with the Holy Spirit. But it might be that you're aware that you're feeling a bit dry, a bit distant, and you need to cry out to God and say, I need more of your Holy Spirit.
Help me to continue in my walk, to stick close to Jesus, to understand more of who God is, and to rejoice in the fact that I've been reconciled to him.
So three questions there, just for you to take away and have a think about. Or maybe you want to take that verse, that John 14, 6, I'm the way, the truth, and the life, and meditate on that a bit this week.
But I'd encourage you just to think about that reminder, the truth of who God is, as seen in Jesus, the truth that we are reconciled, and the truth that the Holy Spirit will help us to remain steadfast and firm in our faith.
[12:15] Let's pray.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-11 18:06:38