

Colossians 1:15-22 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,

Colossians 1:15-22 | The Servant Revealed

This Advent season we have had the joy of moving through the four servant songs of Isaiah. These are the prophetic descriptions of the servant of the Lord. One who is to come as our sacrifice, our hero, and the truly righteous one. These songs were written 700 years before the birth of Christ. They were planted like seeds into the consciousness of a people. But like seeds they grow as they are hidden. Buried, invisible, but active.

For the early church, Isaiah was referred to as the fifth gospel. The early church spent so much time in those servant songs to understand what it was that had taken place with Christ. Peter clarifies this,

1 Peter 1:10-12 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, ¹¹ inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

These things into which Angels long to look have now been revealed. We do not read the prophecies of Isaiah with a question in our minds of who the servant is, but a clarity and confirmation of the person of Christ.

This past year I also had the joy of preaching through Paul's letter to the Colossians, I think it was the most joyful time of preaching I've had in my life, as I became floored again by the person of Christ. At the beginning of this letter there is a section written by Paul as a prayer of thanksgiving which overflows into a hymn of praise about who Christ is. The seed that was planted and hidden in the servant songs of Isaiah finds its shape in this song and I'd like to share

it again this evening. What does it mean that Christ has come? Christ is the source, the sustainer and the purpose.

1. Source, Sustainer, Purpose

Colossians 1:15-22 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.

In this hymn of praise Paul's language spills over to offer superlatives across all categories.

- He is the very image of God. So that all God's invisible attributes are seen in him.
- He is the one who created all things. In Heaven and on Earth.
- He is the means of creation, and the purpose of creation.
- He holds all things together. Maintaining existence itself.

These are not ordinary superlatives. I want you to consider what you might say about a man, so that you might hear the radical nature of what Paul is saying about Jesus.

- He is the most righteous man who ever lived.
- He is the strongest man there ever was.
- He is the most gentle man to ever live.
- He held more together than anyone else.
- He rightly used more authority than anyone else.

Do you hear the difference? Paul is not saying that Jesus was simply the best man. We have hymns of praise that we can imagine for our heroes, but what Paul is saying here stretches beyond anything imaginable to ascribe to another man. So Paul says it plainly.

Colossians 1:19-20 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.

You see Paul is not simply saying that Jesus is the best man. The servant of God hidden in the songs of the prophets. Is unveiled in the person of Jesus Christ as the man who is God. God was pleased to dwell in him, fully. So that in him all things might be reconciled to himself. Now why does God take on flesh. It is so that he can die. Why did God come to die.

2. Celebrate the Gospel this Christmas

Colossians 1:21-22 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,

And you. Paul pivots from his hymn of praise about Jesus to address the reading audience directly. You outside of Christ are alienated from God, hostile toward God in your mind, and doing evil deeds. But this Christ has reconciled us to God in this body of flesh by his death. So that we might be restored to God, holy, blameless and above reproach before him.

I speak to all of you who know you need a savior. All of you who sense your own alienation from God. All of you who find in your hearts an inability to save yourself. The man Christ, has paid the price for your sins. He sought you when you did not seek him. Because of his love by which he upholds the world so by this love he sought to save sinners like us. Come to him, honor him, praise him. Jesus saves.