

The Kingdom of His Beloved Son

Colossians 1:13–20 ESV

¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

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.

Introduction

Today is “Reign of Christ Sunday” or “Christ the King Sunday”.

It is the last Sunday in the Church Year.

Next week marks the beginning of Advent and the beginning of a new church year.

One of the readings for Reign of Christ Sunday is the one I just read from [Colossians 1](#).

Many scholars have stated that these verses served as a kind of hymn to Christ for the earliest Christians.

In these verses the preeminence and glory of Jesus is highlighted.

Thus, it is an appropriate passage to read and preach from on Reign of Christ Sunday.

I have divided this morning’s sermon into two parts that ask two questions:

1. What is the Kingdom? (vv. 13-14)
2. Who is the King? (vv. 15-20)

What is the Kingdom? (vv. 13-14)

Verses 13-14 conclude a section of [Colossians 1](#) that speak of how Paul prays for the Colossians.

In vv. 9-10 Paul prays that the Colossians Christians would,

“be filled with the knowledge of [God’s] will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

Paul’s hope is that, as the Colossians are filled with this wisdom and begin to walk in a manner worthy of their calling, they would abound in thanksgiving to God for all he had done for them.

Our passage this morning begins in verse 13, where Paul continues to outline certain blessings the Colossians should be giving thanks to the Father for.

The blessings outlined in verses 13-14 reveal two aspects of the nature of Christ's Kingdom.

A Kingdom of Love

The first is that the kingdom is the "Kingdom of the beloved Son of the Father".

Verse 13 states that Christians have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness and transferred into the Kingdom of the Father's beloved Son.

Throughout the New Testament the Kingdom is described in different ways.

In Matthew's Gospel the Kingdom is described as the "Kingdom of Heaven".

In the other gospels the Kingdom is described as the "Kingdom of God".

But here, the Kingdom is described as the Kingdom of the beloved Son.

Here Paul states that God has brought Christians out of Satan's domain of darkness and into the kingdom of Christ.

And Paul describes Christ as the beloved Son of the Father.

Just as the Kingdom is described in various ways throughout the New Testament so too is Jesus.

In addition to other titles, the New Testament describes Jesus as priest, king, prophet, savior, and the Lamb of God.

But here, Jesus is described as the beloved Son of the Father.

The aspect of the Kingdom that Paul wants to highlight to the Colossians is that of love.

The Kingdom they are now a part of is the Kingdom of the Son who is loved.

Because of God's deliverance, Christians have been brought out of the darkness of Satan's kingdom, and brought into the love of Jesus' kingdom.

The Kingdom of Christ is ultimately a kingdom of love because the king is the beloved Son.

The infinite and eternal love with which the Father loves the son, is the love that pervades and animates the Kingdom of the Son.

As one scholar puts it,

"The love of God toward Christ, is the cause and most certain earnest of his kindness towards all those who are translated into the kingdom of Christ."

Because of this, you should be reminded of two things:

You are Loved in the Beloved

First, you are loved in the beloved Son.

Because you are in Christ, you are loved of God.

You Must Walk in Love

Second, because you are citizens in the kingdom of love, you must walk in love.

As Paul writes later in Colossians,

Colossians 3:5 ESV

⁵ Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Colossians 3:12–14 ESV

¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

A Kingdom of Redemption

The second thing we learn about the kingdom in verses 13-14 is that it is a kingdom of redemption.

In verse 14 Paul says that it is in the beloved Son that we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins.

Every citizen in the Kingdom of the beloved Son is there because of the grace and forgiveness of God.

There is no citizen of this kingdom who was not redeemed to be there.

Being in Christ's kingdom means being a recipient of God's grace.

You had to be redeemed in order to be transferred into the kingdom of the beloved Son.

Redemption is the biblical language that a price had to be paid.

And the price paid for your redemption was nothing other than the blood of the beloved Son.

The beloved Son of the Father shed his blood in order that you might be redeemed and brought into his kingdom.

And because of this redemption, you are brought into his kingdom and, as Paul states at the conclusion of verse 14, your sins are forgiven.

This is the nature of the Kingdom of God.

It is a kingdom of love and a kingdom of redemption.

And while we have already learned some about who the king of this kingdom is, that question is answered more fully in vv. 15-20.

Who is the King? (vv. 15-20)

Everything that could be said about [Colossians 1:15-20](#) is well beyond the scope of this morning's sermon.

In the time remaining I want to highlight three things about King Jesus from these verses.

1. The King is Creator
2. The King is Sustainer

3. The King is Reconciler

Creator

Verse 16 states that,

Colossians 1:16 ESV

¹⁶ 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.

When we say that Jesus is king we are making a claim of authority.

Jesus declares his own authority in [Matt 28:18](#). When Jesus gave the Great Commission to his apostles.

Matthew 28:18 ESV

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Sometimes, when the New Testament describes the grounds of Jesus’ authority, it highlights Jesus’ victory in his resurrection.

In other words, Jesus has the authority on the basis of his Resurrection.

However, in other places, including here, the authority of Jesus is grounded in the fact that he is the eternal creator.

Jesus is the God-man, God in the flesh.

He is the Eternal Son of the Father who, as John’s Gospel declares, made all things.

Here in [Colossians 1](#) Paul is communicating that Jesus’ authority over all things is absolute because, as God, he is the creator of all things.

King Jesus rightly rules over all because he is the creator of all.

Sustainer

But Paul points beyond Jesus as creator in verse 17 where he also highlights Jesus as sustainer.

In verse 17 Paul writes,

Colossians 1:17 ESV

¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

It isn’t simply that, as eternal God, that the Son is before all things and the creator of all things, he also holds all things together.

What Paul writes here is just like what is written in [Hebrews 1](#) which states that Jesus, “upholds the universe by the word of his power.” ([Heb 1:3](#))

This idea is also in the background to the Apostle John’s use of the Greek word “λογος” in [John 1](#).

John 1:1 ESV

¹ In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God.

This Greek word “Logos” was freighted with philosophical significance and John used it on purpose.

Many Greek philosophers believed that there was an eternal “logos” that was a kind of organizing or sustaining principle of the entire world.

For them, things only exist in any rational unity or organization because of this “logos”.

John takes up this idea but then applies it to Christ.

It is as though John is saying,

“Yes, there is something that gives rationality and organization to the cosmos. But it isn’t some impersonal force. Rather, it is the Eternal and Beloved Son of the Father. And that Eternal Son has taken on our flesh in order to save us.”

Here, in a very short verse, Paul gets at the same idea when he writes, “in him all things hold together.”

The Son isn’t just the creator of all things, he is also the sustainer of all things.

And this Son who sustains all things is also the king of the kingdom that you are now in by his grace.

In short, your king is your creator and your sustainer.

But, as we have already acknowledged to some degree, he is also reconciler.

Reconciler

The fact that Jesus is reconciler is made clear from verse 20.

“and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”

Earlier, I spoke to the fact that the Kingdom of the Beloved Son is a kingdom of redemption.

You are in Christ’s Kingdom because you have been redeemed by the blood of Christ.

This is one aspect of the reconciling work of Christ.

As Paul writes to the Romans in [Romans 5:10-11](#)

Romans 5:10–11 **ESV**

¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹ More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

But here Paul expands the scope of Jesus’ work of reconciliation.

It isn’t merely that Jesus is reconciling sinners, he is going to reconciling “all things, whether on earth or in heaven”.

This of course draws us back to [Genesis 1:1](#), “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

When Adam fell, the entire creation was thrown into disarray.

It was always God’s plan for heaven and earth to live in harmony with one another.

But that plan was set askew when humanity rebelled against God.

But now the plan for all of creation to be restored and brought into harmony is once more before us in Christ.

On this side of Christ's return, we still long for the restoration of all things.

But because of Christ, we know that one day the knowledge of the glory of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

This hope is founded on the fact that Jesus is king, and as king he is not only the creator and sustainer, but also the reconciler of all things that have been brought under the plight of sin and death.

So this Sunday, Christ the King Sunday, we look in hope to our king:

The Beloved Son of the Father who had brought us into his kingdom of Love.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN!