

Colossians 1:21-23, “How to Come to God”

10.27.19

Today’s message is going to be a message of relief. It’s going to be a message where I believe as we go along, if you are a follower of Jesus, you are going to say, “Oh...wow...yes...what a relief!” Relief. Baseball teams have pitchers who are called: Relievers. They come into the game in the latter innings to provide relief for the starting pitcher, and hopefully finish the game with a win.

Relief, you know what that feels like. It’s when the lab report comes back and you find out it’s not cancer. It’s when the test paper is handed back to you and you passed. It’s when your car is spinning on ice, but it comes to rest... still on the highway, and no one is hurt. Relief! It’s a beautiful thing. And today we’re going to see what I believe is the greatest relief the human soul can ever experience. The fact that we can be reconciled back to God; the knowledge that our sin can be forgiven and we can be saved from hell and be brought into the presence of Jesus, Himself! **Oh, what a relief!**

Colossians 1:21-23

²¹And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²²he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, ²³if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation^[a] under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

The title of this morning’s message is: “How to Come to God,” and that title can really be shortened and summed up in one word: RECONCILIATION. To come to God, we must have a way to get to Him...because in our sinful flesh...we are totally incapable. We just read the word “reconcile” in verse 22 and we saw that same word last week in verse 20. Let’s go back there for a moment...

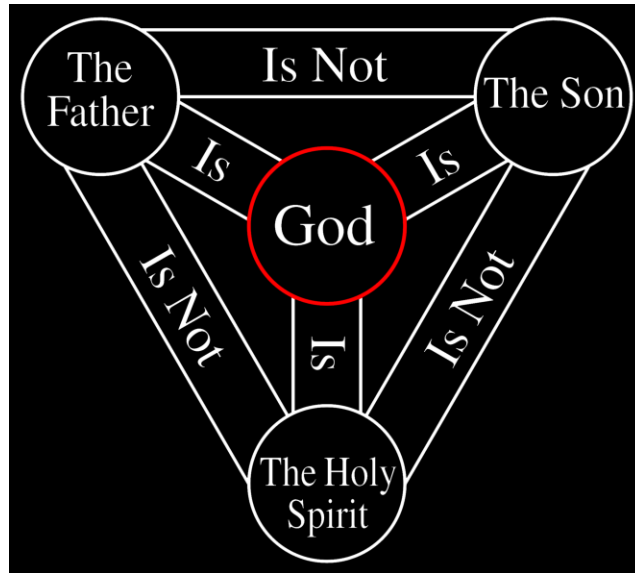
Colossians 1:20

²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Remember church family...Jesus is one of us. He came to this earth via by way of birth...



Jesus has a belly-button, just like you and me. He is in heaven at this moment and He is human, and yet, He is God. Jesus is God. When He came to this earth, He represented God in a human body. Jesus is the second person of the Trinity. See the chart...



See the middle, God in the red circle. God is the Father, God is the Son, God is the Holy Spirit. God is ONE...yet He exists in three persons. When Jesus was baptized by his cousin, John the Baptist...see this depiction on the screens...we're going to see THE TRINITY of God!



Matthew, the apostle, recorded what he saw and what he heard...

Matthew 3:16-17

¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him,^[a] and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son,^[a] with whom I am well pleased."

Three, and yet they are one... The Father, who is in heaven, the Son who came to earth and then went back to heaven, where He is now, seated at the right hand of the Father, and the Spirit, who comes to indwell the believer at our salvation. And so, why did Jesus come? Well, because you and I have a belly-button...

Everyone who has a belly-button is born a sinner. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Because we have a belly-button we are SINNERS and in that condition, we have no hope of getting to God in our sin...because He's holy and righteous and can't look upon sin! That's why Jesus cried out on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me..." It's because Jesus had become sin...who knew know sin...but He chose to take our sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God. And thus, God had to turn His back on His Son because Jesus became the sin...the one who carried all of my sin and yours.

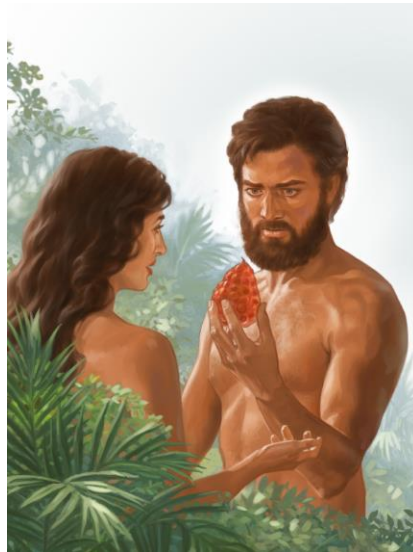
Now, why are we talking about belly-buttons and Jesus? Because the Colossians had false teachers, heretics who were teaching that Jesus never had a human body and He was not God. And so, Paul had to set them straight and we saw that in verse 19.

Colossians 1:19

¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

Jesus was a human and yet He was God. And so, you see, Church Family, it's because of Jesus' death on the cross (as a human being) that satisfied my sin-debt that I can be reconciled to God...so that you and I can come to God! Listen, before I received Jesus as my Lord and Savior, I stood before God as enemy...as a sinner...but because of Jesus' death...taking my sin upon Himself and crushing it...one day, because I have repented of my sin and called on Jesus to save me, I can stand before God as a son...a joint-heir with Jesus. Listen, in reconciliation, the sinner who once was an enemy of God, becomes a friend of God. **Oh, what a relief!**

Let me make sure we understand this. Through Jesus, what was lost in the Garden of Eden, because of the rebellion of Adam and Eve, can be regained through Jesus. What is that was lost? It was our relationship with God...our ability to commune with our Creator. God walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day...in my mind that would have been in the person of Jesus Christ...but when Adam and Eve sinned and ate the forbidden fruit...



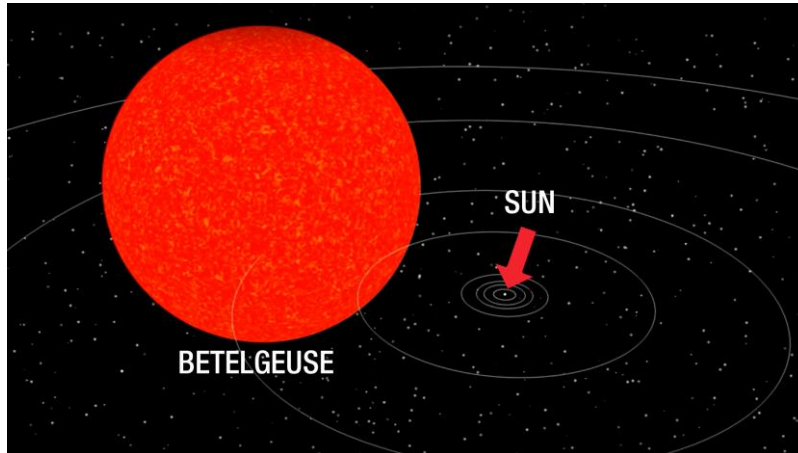
(don't say it's an apple...the Bible just says, "fruit"), we, humanity, became separated from God...we were literally alienated from Him...and Church family, the sin of Adam of Eve, ruined everything the entire universe. Did you know that? **Turn with me to Romans chapter 8.** Remember, in the beginning...Genesis 1:1, God created the heavens and the WHAT? EARTH. The earth is literally the apple of God's eye. Why? Because it's where He created humanity and He came and walked with them and communed with them. But, sin destroyed all of that...

Romans 8:19-23

¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who

have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Remember last week...we talked about this star...



Betelgeuse is 880 quadrillion miles away. That's mindboggling...but Betelgeuse is dying. So is the sun...so is the earth...so are all the planets and the stars. Why? Because they are part of the **WHOLE CREATION** of verse 22 and that means they are cursed just like we are! Listen, the entire universe is living under the curse of Adam and Eve. We are all groaning under the weight of sin. But, it's not going to always be this way. One day all of creation will be set free from the bondage of sin (break every chain). **Oh, what a relief!**

I want you to think with me about what's going to happen to this earth and the heavens...the universe...the cosmos one day. I want you to think about the Book of the Revelation and the seal judgments, the bowl judgments and the trumpet judgments... **Turn to Revelation chapter 6.**

Church family, as you are turning...listen... one day judgment is going to be poured out on this earth and upon those who have refused and rejected what Jesus did for them on the cross. They will pay for their sin by way of judgment. And when judgment comes on this earth it's going to come by way of nature...God's creation... One day...this will happen on earth...



Literally the stars are going to fall from the heavens as the universe begins to fall apart. In Revelation 6, Jesus is opening the sixth seal on a scroll that reveals the judgments that are going to come (not only the earth), but the universe...the heavens...watch...

Revelation 6:12-17

¹²When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, ¹³and the stars of the sky fell to the

earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. ¹⁴ The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. ¹⁵ Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave^[d] and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

Sounds bad doesn't it? It is...that's what sin does...it wrecks a universe...but, at the end of all of these judgments, Jesus is coming back and He is going to set-up a 1,000-year reign, called the Millennial Reign. It will be a promise kept to the nation of Israel when God said in the Old Testament that the Messiah...that's Jesus...the Promised One, would one day rule and reign from the Throne of David in Jerusalem for 1,000 years. And it's during that period of time that we will actually see the earth and the animal kingdom begin to revert back to the way things were in the Garden of Eden.

What we're going to read is a prophecy about the reign of Jesus and the Millennial Kingdom. This is so astounding! Here in Isaiah 11, we begin to see into the Millennial Kingdom, that future Kingdom of Jesus and we see the beginnings of the reverse of the curse that was levied to all humanity, to all the earth, and even the animal kingdom.

Isaiah 11:1-10

¹ There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. ² And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. ³ And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. ⁶ The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. ⁹ They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰ In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

Oh, what a day that will be in the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus...because you see, this is just the “lead up,” to the new heavens and the new earth and the new Jerusalem when we, as the Lord's children will see and experience the full Reversal of the Curse.

One day there will be a New Heaven, a New Earth and a New Jerusalem, and we will be fully reconciled to God. We will finally be on the “other side.” You know how we say, “We'll understand everything better on the other side.” One day, on the New Earth, the other side will have become **THIS SIDE**, when we are with Jesus and all things will have been made new! **Oh, what a relief!**

And you know what is MORE... Jesus is going to present us as His bride...without spot, stain, wrinkle or blemish to Himself Watch the flow of this now... Go back to Colossians 1:21-22.

Colossians 1:21-22

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.

Church, tell me again...why is humankind alienated from God? Because of sin...SIN. Humans are born sinners, hostile in mind to God, alienated from him, performing "evil deeds." BUT...because of Jesus' death in the BODY (vs 22 says), (a literal body...BTW...disputing the heretics who said that Jesus wasn't born as a human), Jesus...in the body...because of His death...for those who will believe on Him and call on Him can be saved and one day presented to God as "holy, blameless and above reproach." Do you see...we will BE ABLE to be in the presence of our holy Heavenly Father...reconciled to Him...able to stand before Him because we've been cleansed by Jesus, who broke every chain! **Oh, what relief!!! Folks that's Romans 5:1-2. See the screens...**

Romans 5:1-2

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we^[a] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith^[b] into this grace in which we stand, and we^[c] rejoice^[d] in hope of the glory of God.

Listen, aren't you glad that God didn't look to us to clean ourselves up and scrub our faces and take a bath before He agreed to send His Son to die for us? Jesus died for us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8). Jesus died for us knowing we would do evil deeds. Listen, no one can ever say, "Well, I'm lost because God didn't do enough for me." No! That's wrong! God did everything for you: He sent His Son for you. He watched His Son slaughtered for you. He turned His back on His Son for you! What more do you want Him to do for you? No...people remain lost...because they want to remain lost...because they would rather have their sin...and choose rebellion OVER Jesus.

Are you a Christian? Are you a follower of Jesus? Are you a friend of God or are you still living as an enemy of God in rebellion? **How can you tell if you're a Christian?** You'll continue in the faith... You'll finish the race... Watch verse 23...

Colossians 1:23

²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation^[a] under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Church, this is the "Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints." It means you will continue in the faith. Now, this doesn't mean that you won't ever sin again...of course that's not true...but, it does mean that you'll run through the tape...



you'll finish the race...you'll finish your life living for Jesus. Like Worknesh Degefa, when she won this year's Boston Marathon. And you know what? That's exactly how the Apostle Paul described the end of his life when he said: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have KEPT THE FAITH.

In John 8:30, the Apostle John described the fact that many were believing in Jesus. See verse 30:

John 8:30-32

³⁰ As he was saying these things, many believed in him. ³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Oh, what a relief!!! Break every chain, break every chain!

I close this morning by telling this story. I know I've told this story before, but I don't have another one that works any better and perhaps some of you haven't heard it. Years ago, when I was a boy...I was 11 or 12 years old...I loved to squirrel hunt behind my house in the woods. We lived on and still do about 17 acres of family land. One evening, I went hunting and I knew NOT to go deep into the woods...but, I got chasing a squirrel and before I knew it I looked around and I didn't recognize anything. I had no idea where I was. I had never seen that part of the woods in my life. I became absolutely terrified. I literally didn't know which way to go.

It was getting dark and it was getting cold...and dumb me, hadn't put on a coat. I started shivering and I started crying...and I started praying, "Lord, help me." I was hunting with a double-barrel 16-gauge shotgun. I fired off both shells and began to holler. And I hollered until I had no voice and no one came.

I knew enough from what my dad had taught me, not to move if I ever got lost...He told, "Son if you ever get lost, stay still, stop moving, because if you keep moving you might just wander further off even deeper into the woods than you and that'll just make it that much harder to find you. "Stay put son," his words echoed in my terrified mind. I sat down against a tree. I pulled my knees up to my chest and I waited. And I waited. It seemed like hours go by...but, was probably more like 45 minutes...but it was almost pitch dark and then I heard a voice: My dad's! "Kevin! Kevin! Kevin!" What do you think I felt? **RELIEF!**

