



Growth Group Questions: April 22, 2023 – “Reconciliation”

Context:

Colossians 1:15-20 is one of the most important Christological passages in all of the New Testament. These words are chosen carefully and skillfully, as well as being balanced rhythmically. They read like a poem, if not a song or hymn. They invite the reader to pause and think about what they have just read. There is strong parallelism between the creation story and the new creation. What has been said before of God in the Hebrew Scriptures, is now said in reference to Jesus.

Humanity was God’s “ultimate work” in the creation story of Genesis. We were made in God’s image. The true humanity of Jesus is the “ultimate work” of God in the new creation. He is the firstborn over all of creation. Yet, he is not a part of the created world. All that God made happened by means of Jesus, and it is through him that the world is maintained and is kept from falling into chaos.

Because of the resurrection of Jesus, a new age has dawned. Jesus has conquered sin and death and he is now the head of the church. This has brought about the possibility of reconciliation between God and humanity. On the cross Jesus dealt with sin – the sin that gets in the way of our relationship with God. Jesus exhausts the power of sin and takes away its ability to ultimately separate us from God.

Colossians 1:15–20 is not just an exalted view of Jesus and humanity, but also of God and his world. God, humankind and the world need to be understood in relation to Jesus Christ. Jesus makes the invisible God visible and fulfills God’s ultimate purpose of reconciliation by going to the cross.

The people in Colossae - as well as us - are presented to God as holy and without blame or accusation. What God had intended in the beginning is now possible because of the atoning work of Jesus. The people of Colossae can now live obedient lives. As always, there is a big “if.” “If” the Colossians want to receive all this “then” they must continue to live out their faith and not move on from the hope of Jesus.



Scripture:

Colossians 1:15-23

¹⁵ The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ 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 and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ 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.

²¹ Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of^[a] your evil behavior. ²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— ²³ if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move 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.

Questions:

1. In Colossians 1:15, the Apostle Paul says that Jesus is: “the image of the invisible God.” What does that mean?
2. What does the phrase “firstborn over all creation” teach us about Jesus?
3. In Colossians 1:16, we read that “all things were created through Him and for Him.” What is Paul saying here? How does the understanding that all things were created “for” Jesus shape the way we should live?
4. In verse 17 of Colossians 1, the Apostle Paul says that in Jesus “all things are held together.” What does that mean?
5. In the King James Version of the Bible, Colossians 1:15-23 is labeled “The Supremacy of Christ.” What are the implications of seeing Christ as Supreme?
6. What is the difference between letting Jesus having prominence in your life versus letting Him have preeminence in your life?
7. Pastor Noel said that all of us live as atheists in some part of our lives. What does that mean? Do you agree or disagree?
8. What is alienation? What does it mean in 1 Colossians 1:21 that “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your mind because of your evil behavior”?
9. What is reconciliation? How does reconciliation occur between two people? How does reconciliation occur between us and God?
10. The Apostle Paul said that Christ reconciled us through his death and resurrection to “present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.” What does that mean to you?

