

**First Baptist Church Merritt Island**  
**Senior Pastor Titus Green**  
**March 9, 2025**  
**COLOSSIANS – Hope of Glory**  
**Reconciled to Christ**  
**Colossians 1:15-23**

There's something appealing about the idea of a fresh start and a new beginning. In elementary school, I was what the kids called a "nerd." I wasn't the only one. There was a group of us who were commonly referred to as the "nerd herd." We weren't exactly friends. We were more like associates held together by the common bond of being rejected by the cool kids. I feel comfortable sharing that in this group given the number of space industry engineers. I've lived among you for more than 20 years, quite a few of you can relate.

As wonderful as it was to be a social outcast at 12 years old, there were times when I dreamed of making the leap from the nerd herd to the cool kids. But, in the entire history of the Perkins Public School District, no student had ever successfully made that move. My big break came in the summer before 7<sup>th</sup> grade. My family moved from north central Ohio to southwestern Ohio. This was my chance for a fresh start. It was exhilarating. During the summer, I got to know a few of the kids at my new school. They seemed to like me okay, which was all the confidence I needed to lean into my new beginning.

What kind of cool kid did I want to be? I knew I wasn't coordinated enough to be an athlete. The only talent I had was being third chair trumpet in the school band. But, going from the nerd herd to band geek was a lateral move. That left only one real option. I'd become a ladies' man. I showed up to school and told the kids to call me the D.O.L. – the doctor of love. I'll spare you any more humiliating details, but I learned something during that so-called fresh start: there's no such thing as a new beginning so long as you're the same old you.

And believe it or not, that dynamic is at the heart of our text for this morning. So, look with me at Colossians 1:15-23.

**Colossians 1:15–23**

***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, 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 under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.***

In case you weren't here last week, we studied verses 15-20. Those verses are believed to be an ancient hymn that was sung by the early church in honor of Jesus. Many scholars believe the hymn can be broken down into two parts that may have been two stanzas:

- Verses 15-18a focus on Christ's relationship to all Created Things.
  - His relationship is one of preeminence, or supremacy, or first place

- He is God
- He is Creator
- He is Sustainer
- He is the Head of His Church
- He is the Firstborn from the Dead

This morning, we will spend our time in the second half of this great hymn.

- Verses 18b-20 focus on Christ's reconciliation of all Created Things.

In addition to all that we saw last week, this morning's text reminds us that Jesus is preeminent because He is the One who reconciles all things to God. In particular, Jesus reconciles us to God.

And that's our big idea for today:

**Big Idea: Jesus is Preeminent in our Salvation because He alone reconciles us to God.**

Jesus is preeminent in everything. He the most supremely important person in heaven and earth and all things – including our salvation.

- *John 14:6 – [Jesus] is the way, the truth, and the life and NO ONE comes to God the Father except through Jesus.*
- *Acts 4:12 – There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*

Jesus is worthy of preeminence because He alone provides the way for us to be reconciled to God.

So, let's press into our text and see what there is to learn about the reconciliation provided by Jesus. Starting with the word itself.

What is reconciliation? The basic meaning of the word translated "reconciliation" in our English bibles is "to make otherwise; to alter or change." So, as it relates to people, reconciliation is a change in the relationship. And the change is for the better. It's what happens when enemies become friends; when people who are opposed to each other exchange fighting for living at peace.

And that's what our text says Jesus came into this world to do. He came to reconcile us to God, to alter and change the state of our relationship with God, to provide a new beginning.

So, the natural place to begin is with our need for reconciliation.

## 1. OUR NEED FOR RECONCILIATION

### **Colossians 1:21**

***And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,***

In the midst of Paul's discussion on reconciliation, he says the Colossians once were alienated from God. They were estranged from Him. And they weren't just alienated, they were hostile in mind. They were actively placing themselves as enemies of God.

And there may be some people who would read that and think the people of Colossae were pretty bad dudes who weren't like you and me. But Paul isn't saying they were exceptionally bad. They weren't the exception, at all. They were the rule.

This isn't just the Colossians' story. This is humanity's story.

*Romans 5:12*

*Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—*

The sinful condition of mankind can be traced to the first man who ever lived. Adam was created by God, and he was created in a role that is known as an "archetype." An archetype is an original that will be duplicated. It's the model that represents the rest of what will be made. Adam was made in the likeness of God and everyone who would come from Adam would be molded in Adam's likeness. In that way, he was the archetype.

And you know the story. In the garden, Adam chose to disobey God. As we just read, sin came into the world through that one man. Sin is an act of hostility that essential is seeking to overthrow the reign of God over our lives. God said not to eat the forbidden fruit. Adam said, "I'm not going to submit to you as God. I'll do as I please." That evil deed was an act of spiritual treason – hostility toward God.

And, since Adam was the archetype, the original man from which all other men would proceed, his sinful condition was passed to all men. In that way, we are born into sin.

And the consequences were disastrous. Sin broke God's order and design for all of creation. Genesis 3 tells us that all of creation was placed under a curse. Romans 8 says that creation is under bondage to corruption. And that's why our world is the way it is. We are living in a world gone wrong. There's something common in the hearts of people. Deep in our hearts we know this world isn't how it should be. It's like going into one of your kid's rooms and seeing the mess, there's something that says, "It's not supposed to be like this. What in the world happened here?"

And as we look around our world and our own lives, that same dynamic occurs. "It's not supposed to be like this. What in the world happened?"

- Marriages aren't supposed to end in divorce.
- Families aren't supposed to be at odds with each other.
- Children aren't supposed to be abused or exploited.
- Communities aren't supposed to be divided by race or economic status.

It's not supposed to be like this. What in the world happened? Sin. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And our sin has separated (alienated) us from God Himself and the lives we were created to live. This world and the people in it are naturally hostile to God. We have rebelled against His design for our lives.

*Isaiah 64:6*

*We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.*

Mankind in general and each of us as individuals are tainted by sin in a way that even our good deeds are mingled with sins like pride and selfishness or a lack of desire for Christ to be preeminent. In other words, we aren't right with God, and we can't make ourselves right with God.

We need a change. We need a new beginning. We need a fresh start. We need Jesus.

## 2. GOD'S SUPPLY FOR RECONCILIATION

### **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.***

Though all of us have sinned, the Bible says God is rich in mercy and full of steadfast love. Verses 19-20 reveal that God had a plan that pleased Him. He became a man in the person of Jesus. We talked a lot about this last week, but verse 19 emphatically presents the deity of Christ. The fullness of God took up residence in the body of a man through the person of Jesus.

And through Jesus, all things are able to be reconciled back to God. How? Verse 20 says Jesus made peace by the blood of His cross.

At the cross of Jesus, God made a way for our relationship with Him to be changed. Our sin made us enemies against God. Each expression of sin is hostility toward God that can't be overlooked. As a good and holy Judge, God isn't able to pass over sin. It must be punished. And that's exactly what happened at the cross of Christ.

Like Adam represented all of those who would come to life from Him, Jesus came to represent all those who would come to new life in Him. At the cross, God's punishment for sin fell upon Jesus. He was a substitute in our place, and He was a sacrifice for our sin.

### **Colossians 2:13–14**

***And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.***

There are several things to notice here. First, notice the phrase "God made [you] alive together with him." If you are part of our Wednesday night studies, you know just how powerful phrases like that can be. In Christ, through Christ, for Christ.

Here we have "with Christ." This is a reference to our union with Christ. When we come to trust in Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we are miraculously united to Jesus – His life becomes our life. His death becomes our death. His resurrection becomes our resurrection. It's as though we are physically with Him at the cross because, in a very real way, we were. God the Father placed our sin on Jesus at the cross and, through faith, we are united to the crucifixion of Jesus. We died with Him. We'll talk more about that in chapter 2.

And notice what occurred alongside that: the record of debt with its legal demands was satisfied and set aside. The just penalty for sin is separation from God. It's rejection from God and all the blessings that are found in Him. That's what the law demands. And that's what happened at the cross of Jesus.

Jesus suffered and died in our place. He became the rejected One. The Father turned His face away. Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The eternal wrath of God fell on Jesus at the cross. And, because Jesus is perfect and holy, He was able to satisfy God's wrath for our sin so that God would no longer be angry.

### **Romans 3:23–26**

***for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his***

*blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

The word "propitiation" refers to a sacrifice that pleases, satisfies, or appeases God. In other words, all of the punishment of God's just wrath over sin fell on Jesus at the cross. As the second Adam, the perfect representative of mankind, Jesus took God's wrath and satisfied the just demand that our sins be punished. And God is perfectly pleased with Jesus.

*"My sin, O the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more. Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, O my soul!"*

Jesus came to be our reconciler. To change our relationship and standing with God. This comes through His perfect life, His sacrificial and substitutionary death, and His glorious resurrection.

And the change that comes through Jesus impacts this world and our lives beyond imagination.

### 3. THE IMPACT OF RECONCILIATION

#### ***Colossians 1:18-20***

***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.***

Verse 18 says Jesus is the beginning. And that's not just talking about Jesus' role as the one who initially created this universe at the beginning. That's what verses 16-17 were referring to. In verse 18, Jesus as the beginning is referring to His resurrection.

In Christ's death and resurrection, there is a new beginning. And the Greek word that is translated "beginning" is the word "arche." It's the word we get "archetype" from. It means the commencement of something. Jesus is the new beginning of a new humanity that will be formed in His likeness.

Jesus is the perfect Adam. And the results of His work are infinitely greater than the impacts of the first Adam. For instance, what was one of the results of the first Adam's sin? A curse came upon this universe. Things began to decay and die. Gardens began to produce weeds, air conditioning units began to rust, major kitchen appliances only last 6 months, you can thank Adam for all of that. We are living under a cursed universe.

But the work of Jesus brings about a new beginning with a world-changing impact. And it isn't a return to the garden of Eden. He isn't just resetting the clock and giving humanity a do-over. The work of Christ in reconciliation is bringing about the recreation of the entire universe.

#### ***Revelation 21:1-5***

***Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."***

God isn't going to throw this world away. He is reconciling it to Himself - a fresh start, a new beginning. And not because He takes this universe back to the way it was at the garden of Eden but because He will make all things new...Heaven is coming down to this earth...the dwelling place of God is coming to be with man. Christ has reconciled all things to Himself, including the heavens and earth.

And that new creation includes you. In Christ, you don't get a slightly improved version of you. You get a brand new you.

**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,***

The reason we have peace with God is because Jesus makes us something new. Though we have sinned, he makes us holy and blameless and above reproach.

**2 Corinthians 5:17-18; 21**

*17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation...21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

In Christ, you aren't the same old you. You are a new creation. You are united to Christ in a way that you have a new standing before God. You've been transferred from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of His beloved Son. In Christ, you are the righteousness of God. You are holy. You are blameless before God. You are above reproach. You are adopted as a child of God. You are redeemed from the slavery of sin. You are forgiven of all your sins. You are at peace with God. You are reconciled. You aren't the same old you.

And there's only one condition: faith in Jesus.

**Colossians 1:23**

***...if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel...***

This isn't teaching that we can lose our salvation. The Bible clearly teaches that once we are born again, we have eternal life that will never come to an end. (John 3:16; Romans 8) We are secure in Christ. He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it. (Phil. 1:6). So, this isn't talking about losing our salvation.

It's referring to a dynamic that Jesus taught about in the parable of the soils. He said that every heart that hears the gospel of Jesus is like a certain kind of soil. Some soils have no depth or are so overtaken with weeds that even though the seed appears to sprout, there's no actual root. It withers and falls away because genuine faith was never present. The good soil was the one in which the gospel seed took root and bore fruit over time.

That's the nature of saving faith. Saving faith is sustained faith. Saving faith trusts Jesus and keeps on trusting Jesus. That isn't to say that our faith is perfect or that there are no ups and downs in the Christian life. We aren't saved because we have perfect faith, we are saved because we have faith in a perfect Savior.

It's through faith alone in Christ alone that we experience reconciliation with God. That's how we know this isn't teaching universalism. Everyone will not be saved and reconciled to God. Only those who trust in and depend on Jesus.

## APPLICATION

### 1. Place your Trust Jesus

**Colossians 1:23**

***if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel...***

### 2. Put on the New Self

Colossians 3:5–10

*Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming. 7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*

How would you live today if you really believed you are a new creation? What needs to change in your life for you to reflect more of Jesus? In Christ, you have a new beginning. Not by your power, but by Christ in you.

### 3. Preach the Gospel

**2 Corinthians 5:19**

*that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

Who's your One? Who needs to hear the gospel? Ask God for open doors this week to make Jesus known.