

Jesus Reconciles What Sin Ruined

Series: Seeing the Invisible

Colossians 1:19-22

Introduction: No matter who sits in the Oval Office at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave, in Washington D.C. you will inevitably hear someone say, "They are not my president!" The truth is, whether you like them, voted for them, work for or against their agenda - if you are a citizen of the United States, they are your president.

Your willingness or refusal to accept that reality does not change it.

Paul writes Colossians to remind us that Jesus Christ is preeminent. To put it plainly, Jesus Christ is Lord of All. He is Lord above all. The first chapter of Colossians 1 presents that truth by showing us that Jesus is...

- 1. Lord of creation.** We looked at that in depth last week. Jesus is the mind behind it. The universe exists because He conceived it and designed it. He is the reason there is something rather than nothing.

While all of God's natural laws - those scientific constants that knit our universe together - remain true to their design and fulfill their purpose - there is one part of God's creation that does not remain true to its design and purpose - and that is humanity. We are the exception to that rule.

We are the lone monkey-wrench in God's amazing creation.

We are the stain on the canvas of God's masterpiece.

We challenged God's rule and rebelled against His Lordship. We shook our fist in the face of the Almighty and said, "I will live life my way!"

Paul writes in Colossians 1:18-22, ***"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 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—" [NIV]

Let's PRAY

The title of today's message is **Jesus Reconciles What Sin Ruined**

I have two points about the Preeminence and Lordship of Jesus. Jesus is:

Lord of the **church**, and He is the Lord of **Redemption**.

We have conditioned ourselves to believe that whenever something goes wrong or doesn't live up to our expectations the solution is simple - replace it. Move on to something else.

Don't like your car? Replace it.

Don't like your house? Move.

Don't like your job? Get another.

Don't like your church? Find another or avoid it altogether.

Listen to the views of one modern thinker - not a preacher, not a theologian, not a believer - as he describes the spirit of our age. He writes, *"We no longer feel ourselves to be guests in someone else's home ... obligated to make our behavior conform with a set of preexisting cosmic rules. It is our creation now. We make the rules. We establish the parameters of reality. We create the world, and because we do, we no longer have to justify our behavior, for we are now the architects of the universe. We are responsible for nothing outside ourselves, for we are the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever"* (Jeremy Rifkin).

This experiment of self-rule has not worked out very well. Since that moment in the Garden, when Adam and Eve desired and took what God had forbidden - nothing has worked the way it should. Not creation. Not humanity. Not us personally.

That sinful decision opened the door - and suffering and death rushed in.

And what amazes me is that "God did not abandon the world that tried to replace Him. Instead, He pursued it. He moved toward it. He made a way to reconcile those who had rejected his rule through the blood of His own Son."

He brings peace through His cross.

He redeems those who are lost and reconciles them to God.

In this, God not only saves individuals - but He is also creating a people.

A new race. A redeemed people called the church.

There are only two kinds of people in this world...

Those who are in Christ... and those who are not.

You are either in Adam, or you are in Christ.

You are either lost or you are saved.

Just as Jesus is Lord of creation - the mind, the power, and the purpose behind it all - and just as Jesus is Lord of redemption - the only One who can fix what is broken - Jesus is Lord Over the church. The church belongs to Christ. He is the head of this new humanity.

I. Jesus is Lord over the Church...

Verse 18 says, ***'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 (or preeminence).'***

In this passage Paul presents compelling reasons why Jesus alone is uniquely qualified to be Lord of the church. Jesus is Lord of the Church because...

A. Jesus is its beginning.

People love to trace their family history - to see where they are from and who they are related to. Not only can you research your family tree, but have your DNA analyzed to reveal your countries of origin and show DNA matches to people

scattered around the world - family you didn't know you had.

If you trace the history of the church, if you research the genealogy of every believer...It goes back to one place, one person and one event. It goes back to a small hill in Jerusalem, to Jesus Christ, and to the cross and empty tomb.

Just as Paul showed that Jesus was Lord of Creation by teaching us that He was the beginning of it all - everything that was created was made by Him, through Him and for Him - Paul also demonstrates how the church has its beginning in Christ.

Just as Jesus is the reason there is something rather than nothing...He is also the reason why the church exists. He brought it into existence.

In the Garden of Eden, God opened Adam's side, took a rib and formed his bride, Eve. On the cross Jesus' side was pierced with a spear and blood and water flowed out from which His bride the church was formed.

Jesus' death and resurrection was the beginning of that new race of people.

A redeemed race.

A rescued race.

A reconciled race.

A forgiven race.

Paul tells us back in verse 13 that God has ***"rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son."***

Our standing before God has been changed because...

Jesus took upon Himself the penalty of our sins.

Jesus gave to us His righteousness.

1 Corinthians 15.22 says, "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive."

All those who come to God by grace and through faith in His Son are made new. We are, as Jesus tells Nicodemus, "Born again."

Peter says we have been "born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Illustration: John MacArthur reminds us that the church is not a human institution - it is a divine creation born out of resurrection power. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is the same power that gave life to our dead souls and brought the church into existence.

Not only is Jesus the beginning of the church; the reason it exists, but...

B. Jesus is Lord of the Church because...He is its life.

Paul refers to Jesus as "the head of the body, the church."

One of the many images Scripture uses to help us better understand the nature of the church is that of a body. It depicts the organic nature of the church, that it is a living, breathing creation of God where each part is connected to whole - so much so that when one part of the body suffers the entire body suffers.

That is a strong statement to a very common and misguided mindset where many see themselves as consumers of religion or as attenders rather than part of a living entity. We are part of a body that lives, breathes, feels, and moves.

When we fail to grasp that truth - participation in the life of the church becomes optional. That mindset hinders the ability of the church to operate as it should.

If you've got a little age on you then you know what it is like to wake up in the morning with an aching back, hips, knees or just about everything.

The church is a body, interconnected and dependent. And Christ is always pictured as its head. One reason is that the head gives life.

You can live without any other extremity on your body. If your finger, hand, arm, toe, foot, leg, ear, or nose is severed you can still live but you cannot live without your head.

Likewise, a church disconnected from Christ cannot live. Life, growth and power come from Him.

John 15.4-5 – “Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” [NIV]

Ephesians 4.15-16 – “Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” [NIV]

Something important to understand - When Christ is not the life...something will fill the void, which is one of the reasons Paul is writing to the Colossians.

We can have cutting edge technology, treasured traditions, efficient organizational structure, wonderful relationships, and the newest programs but if we become disconnected from Christ - we do not have life.

And here's where the danger comes in. We become disconnected when we stop submitting to Christ as the sole authority over His church. *Because Jesus is not only its beginning, and its life –*

C. Jesus is Lord of the Church because...He is its Authority

When you read Jesus is the head of the church, we should understand that its primary meaning is one of **direction** and **authority**. The head is not only life to the body, but it controls and directs the body.

It is responsible for the body's movements.

It is responsible for the body's growth.

The body responds to the direction given by its head.

Jesus is the ultimate and governing authority for the church. In Matthew's Gospel we find the Great Commission - the commission to go and make disciples. Jesus says, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."

Jesus is our final and ultimate authority which means...

He defines us. He determines the mission.

He enables us to accomplish that mission.

When a church struggles, it is often because they have stopped honoring Christ as head, hearing Him clearly, or obeying Him fully.

That means when the church is not functioning as it should...the problem is not with Christ. It is with our connection to Him. The problem is that we are not honoring Him and are not submitting to Him as we should.

Since Christ is the head of the church, how does He communicate to His body? How do we receive His direction? How is His life communicated to us? How does He enable us to do the work of ministry?

Through His Word. Through His Spirit.

It is through the Word of God that we receive direction from the Head...and it is through the Spirit of God that we are empowered and enlightened, as the Spirit takes that Word and applies it to our hearts as we submit to Him.

2 Timothy 3.16-17 – 'All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.'

A compass doesn't adjust to your feelings and is not subject to winds of change. It points north. That is God's Word. It is truth.

Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." It's His church. It's not your church. It's not my church. It's His church. He **governs** and **guides** the church.

Jesus is Lord over the Church, and lastly,

II. Jesus is the Lord of Redemption

With one sweep of the pen, Paul takes us all the way from eternity to Calvary?
With one stroke of the pen, he takes us all the way from creation to the cross.

Jesus is the one and only above the creation. Jesus is the one and only over the church. Jesus is the one and only on the cross.

Verses 19-20, ***"For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20and 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."***

Jesus is not just a Savior. He is THE Savior. Jesus is not just a truth. He is THE truth. Jesus is not just a way. He is THE way. Jesus is not just a life. He is THE life. Jesus is not just a preeminent one. He is THE Preeminent One.

The cross was in the heart of the Father from all eternity. Jesus was the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the earth.

We read in the Bible how Jesus came. He was born of a virgin. He lived a sinless life. Then we are told that this Jesus was crucified on a cross.

It is sometimes amazing to read in the Bible about the crucifixion of Jesus and be surprised that there is so little description given there.

Think about how Jesus suffered physically on that cross. As He hung on that cross, His bones were disjointed and His tendons shredded. His nerves were pulled apart and every movement of Jesus on that cross sent pain with shoots of fire running up and down the nervous system of Jesus.

The same one who is above the creation, who created the heavens and the earth, it's His cross. The same one who governs and guides the church, it is His cross. The same one who created a seed and the leaves and the branches of a tree is

now crucified on a tree. The same one who brought into existence all the streams and rivers and oceans and creeks, now cries out 'I thirst.'

The same one who created the sun is now blinded and blistered by its presence and is now chilled by its absence. I'm talking about Jesus.

Let me make two statements.

- A. The first thing I want to say about His cross is, **the price He paid**. It says in verse 20, ***'And, having made peace through the blood of his cross.' He gave His blood.***

The Bible says in Revelation 1, verse 5, ***"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."***

"There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins, and sinners plunge beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains." "What can wash away my sins, nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again, nothing but the blood of Jesus."

That's the price He paid.

- B. "The peace He made." ***"Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto Himself."***

He was pre-eminent in the work that He did on the cross. No one else could have done it! A sinner cannot die for a sinner. All in humanity have been affected by the disease of sin. And Jesus Christ alone, the sinless Son of God, could make and did make PEACE through His blood on the cross.

This sinful rejection of God's rule opened the door for death and suffering to enter our world - and it plunged humanity into chaos. We know this by looking at what Christ came to do for us.

This passage tells us that Jesus came to rescue, redeem, forgive and reconcile.

If Christ came to rescue - it means we were in danger.

If Christ came to redeem - it means we were enslaved and held captive.

If Christ came to forgive - it means we were guilty of wrongdoing.

If Christ came to reconcile - it means a relational rupture has occurred.

That job description of what Jesus came to do points to the fact that something went horribly wrong. The creature that was created in the image and likeness of God - made to have relationship with God - mutinied against the very God who made him.

As a result, we were estranged from God - separated from the one who made us and loves us.

In verse 21 Paul uses the word "alienated."

It is not that sin created a distance within our relationship with God - sin severed our relationship with God.

We were not distant from God. We were disconnected from God -- from the one who is life. We are like a branch cut from the vine - severed from our life source - and now only decay and death follow.

Not only was our relationship broken but our attitude toward God was poisoned.

Scripture says that we became "hostile in mind" toward God. When it came to God, we were not apathetic, we were antagonistic.

STORY: I read this story about Joe and Cathy [names changed] who were homeless heroin addicts. Joe says there were many nights they slept in the back seat of their car... and every waking moment was consumed with one thing-chasing the next fix.

That word-fix-wasn't hopeful.

It was desperate. It was destructive.

It was a cycle they couldn't break.

They tried everything-programs, systems, steps... but nothing worked...Until they met Jesus.

When they did, Cathy said, "Something got rearranged inside us."

Joe says, "We'd been through everything, but nothing worked until we came to the Lord. It turns out... Jesus was our fix."

And Jesus didn't just clean them up-He changed them. So much so that God called them into ministry... to go back to the streets to very kind of people they used to be. They started a residential recovery and discipleship program for those trapped in addiction and living on the streets of Richmond, VA.

And they gave it a name that only makes sense if you know their story: They called it "**The Fix.**" But now the word meant something entirely different. Not a needle...Not a high...Not an escape...But Jesus Christ.

And out of that ministry, a church was born-reaching people in recovery, their families, and the community. Joe says: "We're seeing things we never thought possible. We have junkies receiving Christ... and then never picking up a needle again. Only Jesus can make that happen. He is the ultimate Fix."

I want you to know that Jesus is the ultimate FIXER. Not only can God fix you - but God also wants to fix you.

Verse 19-20 says, " **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.**

God was not only delighted in who Jesus was, but what Jesus came to do - to reconcile men, women, boys and girls back to God.

2 Corinthians says, "**God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.**"

The Bible is not a record of man's pursuit of God, or a story about how we made our way back to God. It is the story of God's pursuit of us.

The Resurrection is not the story of man's triumph over sin... it is the story of God's triumph over sin, death, hell and the grave through Jesus Christ.

JESUS MADE PEACE. Jesus REMOVED everything that Adam has ever done, or that I have ever done, or that you or anyone else on earth has ever done, relative to SIN, darkness, death, judgment and hell.

The war is over between God and the person who believes in Jesus! God doesn't have to punish me. God doesn't have to judge me. God has no argument with me. God has Nothing to say against me, because Jesus made PEACE through the blood of His cross.

We don't "make peace" with anything we do, or by our attitude or feelings or anything else. This peace is something JESUS MADE when He died in our stead. HE made the peace, for us. And in this work, He was PRE-EMINENT.

For there to be reconciliation between sinful man and holy God, God had to take the initiative ... AND HE DID: He so loved the world, He sent His only Son.

For there to be reconciliation between sinful man and holy God, there must be action taken by God ... AND THERE WAS! Jesus shed His blood!

That's why Jesus came! That's why Jesus died! That's why Jesus arose from the grave! Sin separated us from God, but the blood of Jesus...reconciles us to God.

Conclusion

There's a statue of Christ in Brazil that some of you know about. It's called "Christ the Redeemer" and looks out over the city of Rio de Janeiro.

The statue stands 120 ft tall, weighs 700 tons and sits on the peak of a mountain at 2300 feet. It's the tallest statue of its kind in the world.

It's a great reminder that most people need a larger Christ than what they've constructed out of their own ideas, emotions, biases, and desires.

There isn't anything wrong in saying Jesus is our companion and friend. This is full of Biblical truth; but if that's all of Jesus we know then Jesus is too small.

This world is broken. We are broken. Only the one who made us can fix us.

For us to be able to say that Jesus is Lord, then...

Sin's penalty and debt need to be paid.

Sin's power needs to be broken.

Sin's stronghold of death needs to be defeated.

What we read in Colossians has the Apostle Paul creating his own "Christ the Redeemer" statue. He wants us to see Jesus Christ as the One who stands over each of us, over the church, over the world, over the entire universe. Listen again to how Paul speaks of Jesus:

"He is the image of the invisible God, He is the firstborn of all creation; In him all things were created; In him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church. In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross."

Only Jesus can fix what is broken - Jesus does fix what is broken. He can take messed up lives and make them right.