

Preaching Copy: Colossians 1:19-22 “Reconciled by the King of Kings”

Last Sunday of the Church Year Series C- Proper 29

Sunday, November 20th, 2022

Text: Colossians 1:19-22

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,

The text's intent

Proclaim Christ as the man in whom the fullness of divinity was pleased to dwell so that He might accomplish our rescue from the power of sin and death through His paying the ransom price through the crucifixion of His body, shedding His blood, which is the ransom payment needed to forgive our sins and restore us to a harmonious relationship with God. He did this as the One through whom all things were created, who Himself took on flesh to reconcile all of creation back to God and transfer all who believe into His reign and rule, His Church, of whom He is the head. He gives to us through the Gospel a foundational and steadfast faith, and hope we have of eternal life through Him, the firstborn of the dead. His Spirit keeps this faith alive through the Gospel message of whom Paul was called to be a minister of.

Focus Statement:

Jesus Christ is the Creator who came down to join His creation becoming man His divinity seeing fit to join itself permanently with His humanity. Although He is preeminent over all He willingly paid the ransom price of giving over His body and shedding His blood to rescue us from the domain of darkness and transfer us over into His reign and rule. We have been placed in His Church of which He is the head, declared washed clean of sinful stain, completely forgiven, and restored to a peaceful relationship with God. His Spirit works through the Gospel message to keep us steadfast in that foundational faith

Function Statement:

Why it's important to know:

Born into the kingdom of darkness we live a life alienated from each other by sinful divisions and rivalries and alienated from God through our hostile thoughts and evil actions.

What the hearer should do as a result:

See ourselves and others as those for whom the Creator God paid the ransom price to restore us to a harmonious relationship with Him, and to try to live in one with others so we can proclaim the Gospel as His Church.

Subject Sentence: Restored to peace with God and man by the King

Introduction: Living as Rivals

A little rivalry can be a good thing, can't it? Take for example the fun rivalry some of you have with one another when Michigan plays Michigan State in football. There is usually some innocent smack talk that happens before, during, and after in person and on social media. As far as I have seen none of it has devolved into real life knockdown drag out brawls, unlike the reaction of some of several Michigan State football players who attacked the U of M player in the tunnel after the game several weeks ago. That is taking the rivalry thing way too far.

My good friend from my Seminary Class, who is a Pastor in Minnesota, grew up in Chicago, and is a fan of the Chicago Bears. So last week we had some fun with each other when the Lions played the Bears at Soldier Field in Chicago. Now neither one of us thinks all that highly of our teams. We spend a lot of time arguing whose team is actually the worst. Up until last Sunday I had the edge with my team being the worst since the Lions had only won 2 games so far this season, while the Bears had won 3. Then last Sunday, as our two teams played each other, it was the showdown where one team would clearly show themselves to be the inferior. But much to my surprise, and his, the inferior team was proved to be the Bears as the Lions beat them by one point, coming from behind in the 4th quarter, down by 14 points, to gain the win. I tried to be gracious about it all, offering him some counseling after the game was over, or a towel to dry his tears. But he declined both offers using some rather unsavory language. I think it may have been prompted by me wondering how bad a team must be to lose to the Lions.

Unfortunately, not all of our rivalries are so light hearted, Take for example the rivalries that developed over the last election. We are a people that love to take sides aligning ourselves so deeply with one party or the other that when our party loses, we take it personally, as if we ourselves lost the race. The same can be true when our candidate wins, we see it as a personal victory. We can even go so far as to speak ill about those who voted for the other candidate, forgetting that this may include our brothers and sisters in Christ. Sometimes people say things that unintentionally hurt us and offend us. And without knowing it they become the enemy in our hearts, the opposition, someone we struggle to forgive.

Why is it we do this? It's what happens when we forget who we really are, and who those around us are. We align ourselves with sports teams and political parties as an expression of our identity in this world. We forget who we really are before God.

Our Identity Before God: Like Those in Malachi Speaking Hard

And who are we in the eyes of God? At times we are like the people in our Old Testament Lesson who the LORD says speak hard words against Him. We are those who complain that evildoers prosper while we who obey the laws, pay our taxes, and toe the line get further and further behind. We complain when our lives don't go exactly as we want them to, when God doesn't answer prayers in the manner that we think He should. We wonder about His love and care for us when our health takes a turn for the worse. We are unhappy and complain about those who don't always do what we want them to do when we want them to do it. We have sinful hearts that are bent on doing the opposite of God's will for us. We live alienated and estranged from the One who created us to be His perfect children. We are people who were born into the domain of darkness, who try as we might cannot break out or escape who we really are. We are those as Paul describes in **Colossians 1:21** **And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds**

Who God Is To Us: Jesus

That's why it's so important to know who Jesus really is. I would hope most of us here know Jesus as your Savior, and as your friend. But the Jesus that Paul presents to us in our Epistle Reading today is far more than just a Savior and friend. Jesus is God Himself! He is a man, with all the parts and fixtures that a true man has, including a brain and a soul. But at the same time, He is God. He is the human being in whom all the fullness of the divinity of God chose to come and take up permanent residence. He is 100% God. He is so fully God that Paul describes Him as the mirror-like image of who God is. Jesus is the God who created everything that fills our world and our universe. He created what can be seen and what can't be seen. He is the source of all things, all life. And it is by His powerful working that all things hold together, and the earth keeps spinning.

He is the firstborn of all Creation, meaning He is preeminent above all things. All sources of rule, power, and authority find their source in Him. It may seem like evil, and the unbelieving world are running amok, and evildoers prosper and get away scot-free, but the reality is that Christ is still ruling over all things and all those who oppose His will have to answer to Him on the Last Day.

He is the Creator God who couldn't stand the thought of His Creation being lost forever to the domain of darkness. He is God incarnate who came down to intimately join with His Creation for the purpose of redeeming it from eternal destruction. He came for you and me, who stood alienated from Him with sinful hearts that stand opposed to His will, hearts that produce evil thoughts, words, and actions that earn for us eternally what the thief on the cross was facing: suffering now, and eternal suffering to come.

He is the only one who could change our eternal destiny. He did so by paying the price necessary to ransom us out of the domain of darkness. And that price was His own body crucified on the cross and His blood shed in place of yours and mine. Our sin called for our death, that is what we owed. But the Creator God, the King of Kings, willingly chose to pay that ransom price out of the greatest kind love, for you. He took from you all that would testify to your eternal death, all that would declare you to be an enemy of God. It's gone. He has made peace between you and the father. You are no longer alienated from Him. You have been transferred into His kingdom, His reign and rule. You now live before Him here on earth and you will live in His presence in the eternity to come.

Who We Are in Christ

The King of Kings declares you to be His own special possession, His priceless treasure. You have been called into His body which is the Church. As you gather to worship Him as His Church, He pours out upon You grace upon grace upon grace. Through Word and Sacrament, He provides what is needed to keep you steadfast in your faith concerning who He is and what He has done for you.

In the world He reigns and rules in a manner that we can't always see. But in His Church, He reigns and rules through the Gospel. And we see Him at work as He convicts us of our sinfulness but then reminds us of who He is and all that He has done for us in the Gospel. When our attitude turns hostile and our mind turns away from obedience to His will He lovingly reaches out and draws us back, even as we are headed toward that domain of darkness again. Whenever we might fall away, He is there to draw us back to Him, back into His reign and rule, back into His loving and gracious arms.

Conclusion

A little bit of rivalry can be fun as we support our favorite football team and share some innocent smack-talk with our friends. Giving prayerful consideration to which political candidates best support what we value as Christians and discussing those issues we find important can also be a good thing. We are called to be good citizens involved in the political process. As we do so we need to remember who we are and who our Savior is. We are often those who speak and think hard words against our God when He doesn't operate according to our liking. We sometimes speak those hard words when others don't do and say and vote in a manner according to our liking. We need to remember that all of us, those we disagree with as well as we ourselves have been redeemed from the domain of darkness by our Savior Jesus Christ who is also the Creator God incarnate. He found you important enough and loved you so very much to take on flesh and suffer and die for you. He finds the person you may see as your rival to be just as important, just as loved, one worth dying and rising for. May we see them not as rivals, but with the same eyes that He sees us, as His beloved children, redeemed and restored to a right relationship with Him, by His work alone. Amen.