

Reading: Colossians 1:15-22

¹⁵The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For 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. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And 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. ¹⁹For 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.

²¹Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. ²²But 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 –

New International Version - UK (NIVUK)

Preaching notes:

The whole of creation proclaims the pre-eminence of Jesus and the apostle Paul's encouraging letter to the church of Colossae makes this fact abundantly clear. The question we must ask ourselves is: are we listening?

This short section of scripture has been described by many scholars as "breath-taking" as it sums up perfectly the unity of God – Father, Son and Spirit, the position of the Son within this divine union (which we call the Trinity), the centrality of the Christian church to creation (meaning that the divide often spoken of between "secular" and "sacred" is false) and finally the purpose of Jesus dying on the cross and being bodily resurrected (the firstborn from among the dead) in order for us to participate in the new or re-creation. The NIV Bible commentary on this passage states: "Christ is supreme over all creation...We must believe that Jesus is God or our Christian faith is hollow, misdirected and meaningless. This is a central truth of Christianity".

In reading these verses you may wish to compare them to the opening of John's Gospel (1:3) where we hear similar words about Jesus: "through him all things were made (created), without him nothing was made that has been made".

R.C. Lucas in his commentary on this passage states: "the whole created order, in time and space, owes its existence to Christ", the repetition of "he is..." and "in him..." gives added weight to this assertion. Jump forward a few verses from our selected passage and we read in verse 27 our participation in this great and wonderful truth: "Christ in you, the hope of glory", the one who is proclaimed through the indescribable beauty of all creation offers each of us a life, united with him, 2 Corinthians 5:17 reminds us "so if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new."

The letter to the Colossian church should be read in its entirety, its four short chapters speak directly into situations that we face today. Our selected passages, chosen to begin our series on Creation, give an excellent foundation to our celebration. The proclamation from Psalm 24 says it perfectly "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it" and the way we as Christians live our lives must reflect that fact. I am uneasy in the way we prefix "Eco" to church or to Christianity because it implies it not already a fundamental part of our Christian expression.

During this time of pandemic and lockdown one of the positive consequences is that many rivers have become cleaner and the air is better. Why did it take an event such as this to highlight the abuse of God's creation and the greed, pride and selfishness that underlies it? Let us hope that more people will see the beauty of God's creation and that we as Christians will readily proclaim God as the Creator, not in a dogmatic way but with Biblical truth and faith. Please join me during this Creation Time praying that those who do not yet hear God speaking to them will hear His voice by the whole of creation proclaiming Him as Creator.

Amen