

Sunday 9th July 2017
Northolt Park Baptist Church

Reading Colossians 1:1-23

Colossians 1

⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. ¹⁰ And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. ¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

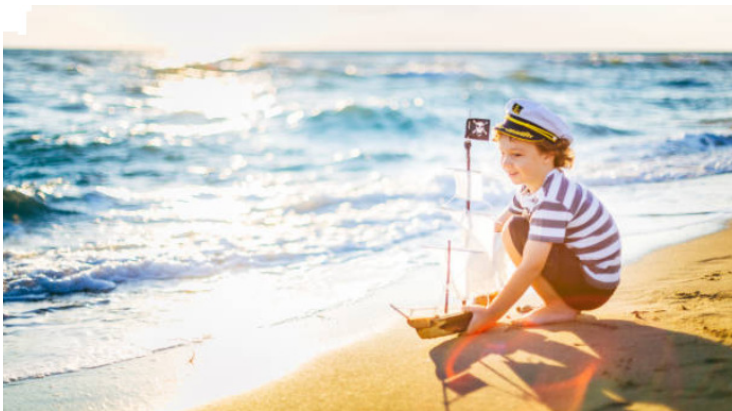
¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on

earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by 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 your evil behaviour. 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, not moved 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.

Making things is great fun. We are all into craft work these days even the older people. I met a man who like making things. He did it on a grand scale¹ His name was John Laing. You sometimes see his name on building works. He gave me a book with a story about a boy who created a model boat. With his Dad's help he made a hull, and a mast and sails a rigging so that it would sail. He painted it carefully so it looked just like a full-sized boat would look. He was so pleased with it.



He couldn't wait to sail it and living by the coast, he took it to the beach and launched it. It was amazing. Then a puff of wind in the wrong direction and the boat changed course and

sailed out to sea away from any hope of him recovering it. He was devastated. He had invested so much time and effort into it. Weeks later he passed a second-hand shop and would you believe it, his boat was there for sale! He rushed in and explained it was his but the shop keeper wasn't having it. "If you want it you pay the price on the label." He said. The boy was sad again. But he made up his mind , washed cars, did errands until he had the required sum. He walked into the shop, paid his money and came out. As he put it on the shelf in his bedroom he said. You are twice mine. I built you and I paid for you. That is true of you. Jesus created you and he has paid the price for your sins. If you put your faith and trust in him you are twice his. Created and redeemed. You are special.

For now lets just pick out some key points from the Bible reading.

Creator

Authority

Fullness

Redemption

Reconciliation

Creator. But first let us consider the enormity of the opening statement. Jesus was before creation – first-born over all creation means he was before time itself existed. He was active in creation. When Genesis 1 says that God said, It was Jesus who was saying “Let there be light” and there was light. But this goes beyond Genesis. He is the creator of all powers and authorities both in the physical political world and in the spiritual world. And he holds it all together. This makes Jesus a superman beyond our imagination. And this is not a comic story, this is the real man, Jesus. When you pray for healing, you are asking the creator to do a repair job on his creation. Jesus himself said if you have faith you can say to this mountain move and it will. But that is only the physical world.

Authority.

That said, Paul steps straight into Jesus being the head of the church. Get it? He is not only the creator of the world, he is the creator of the church. The church is the new creation. When

you came to Jesus in repentance and faith you received new eternal life. The universe as we know will one day disappear, but the kingdom of God, the church, is eternal. And Jesus is the head of it. Not Pope Francis. Not Justin Welby, not the President of the Methodist Conference or any other church leader, Jesus is the head of the church. If we are to be the church of Jesus Christ, we had better accept his overall leadership and make sure our leadership is leading as he wants us to be lead. Authority rests, not in church leadership, but in Jesus. But just as you think, OK so I can ignore the Leadership of this church, can I remind you that Jesus uses other Christians, including leadership to tell you what he wants and if you ignore God-given advice or teaching from Jesus-Centred Leadership you are rejecting the Boss, Jesus. I watched a programme about **fungi** the other day. They can be the largest living organisms spreading out miles. But what we know is the fruiting head the mushroom. It is easy to think the mushroom is the plant. The same is true of the church. What you see this morning is the church getting together to celebrate. But the church of Jesus Christ is much, much more than

that. If you are a child of God, you are 'church' wherever you are, whatever you are doing. That is what is meant by the body of Christ. It is not what we together do in assembly that makes church, it is the combination of all our lives that demonstrates Jesus to the world.

So church is not buildings, or form of worship, or meetings, it is people living out Jesus.

Meeting together is very important because we are encouraged and taught how to think and act. Jesus is the creator and the authority in the church. So by his Holy Spirit he leads us to think and behave as part of his body every day not just Sundays.

At the heart of this is the foundation of our faith. That Jesus died for our sins, that he rose again and he has sent his Holy Spirit on the church. We are receivers of grace, receivers of forgiveness, and we should stay that way, receivers of the Spirit to live such lives that please our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Fulness. You have everything you need to live a life worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And everything you need for salvation and eternal

life dwells in him. Not in a programme or a course or a book or even the Bible alone. The fullness dwells in Jesus. If you want a rich life of real blessing then you must hunger and thirst for righteousness for Jesus himself to walk with you each step of the day whether you are conscious of him or not.

Redemption is both a Christian word and an everyday word. When you get a voucher from Sainsburys, or 'free' entry to Alton Towers and the like, you take it back and claim the reduction. The person at the cash till redeems it. Places the value that Sainsbury has given it. No one else values that piece of paper. And so with Jesus. He alone loves you so much that he laid down his life for you. In his death you are delivered from the penalty of your sins, you are redeemed, your sins are forgiven. Live in the light of your sins being forgiven, Jesus is your redeemer, enjoy being redeemed!

Reconciliation. But there is more , Jesus is the peace maker. He reconciles us to God. He steps down into our world to reach out to us and God and by his death and resurrection bring the two

enemies together. UN, ACAS, Relate and many other organisations try to emulate the work of Jesus and that is good. But it can only work when there is a willingness of both parties in a dispute to resolve issues. God reaches out to us through Jesus, seeking to reconcile us to himself. Jesus gives his life to resolve the sin problem. But we have to be willing to receive the salvation Jesus offers. You can reject the offer and live without a relationship with God on a road that leads to eternal separation from God, which we call Hell. Or you can accept the reconciliation that comes through Jesus, and enter into the joy of his salvation, the presence of the Holy Spirit and the hope of eternal life with Him, which we call heaven.

And that is the whole point. Creation is all about Jesus. Life is all about Jesus. Without him we are in the dark, blundering from one problem to another. With Jesus our lives while still facing problems and troubles are entirely different because we face them from the strongest life foundation.

READ Col. 1: 9-14