

# COLOSSIANS

## Lesson 3

### “ROOTED IN RECONCILIATION”

**Ice Breaker:** Has anyone ever told you they forgave you after you deeply offended or hurt them? If so, did they really forgive you or just say you were forgiven? How could you tell the difference?

**INTRO:** Paul knew the Colossians were like everyone else and had to wrestle with feeling forgiven by God. Without knowing they were really and truly forgiven, they wouldn't feel forgiven and a little gap between them and God would exist. A little gap is all Satan would need to drive a wedge between them and God.

In order for them not to doubt their forgiveness, Paul gives them the soft soil of truth about reconciliation to sink their roots deep into. With roots constantly drawing up the truth of who Jesus is and what He did on the cross, the Colossians could grow full and strong... relaxing in the reconciliation that Jesus secured.

#### Col. 1:15-23

***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 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— 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.***

Q: Why do you think Paul tells the Colossians Jesus is “*the image of the invisible God*” in vs. 15?

- Perhaps they knew Jesus loved them and accepted them, but had their doubts about how God felt about them.
  - It's amazing how many Christians view Jesus differently than God.
  - They see Jesus as compassionate and God as demanding, but Jesus and God are exactly the same!
    - In John 14:8-9, Jesus told Philip that seeing Him was the same as seeing God.
    - Heb. 1:3 says Jesus is the one **in whom** we see God... who is invisible.

Q: What does Paul mean when he says Jesus is the firstborn over all creation?

- It could be Paul means Jesus is the firstborn from the dead as he goes on to say in Col. 1:18.
  - In 1Cor. 15:20-23 Jesus is called the first fruits. First fruits and firstborn are similar concepts.
  - First fruit is the first harvested portion of the crop, which guarantees the rest of the harvest is coming.
  - Jesus is the first to rise from the dead and the guarantee that we will rise from the dead also (Rev. 1:5).
  - The “dead” Paul refers to could be either those who are physically dead, those who are spiritually dead, or both.
- When Paul says Jesus is the firstborn “over all creation”, he could be telling us that not only will we, as humans, be raised from the dead, but so will all creation.
  - In Romans 8:19-23 Paul describes the earth as waiting for it’s redemption at the resurrection... just like us.

Q: What does Paul mean when he says Jesus is “*the head of the body, the church*” in vs. 18? And why might Paul be bringing this into view for the Colossians?

- Paul says in Eph. 1:22-23 the Church is the body... it is also the fullness of Jesus.
  - In other words the church **fills out** who Jesus is!
  - When you see a friend, do you think, “Here comes my friend and his body”? Or “Here comes my friend and His head”? Neither should we see a difference between Jesus and the church.
- In Matt. 25:40 Jesus said what ever happens to those who are part of His body happens to Him.
  - In Acts 9:4 and Acts 26:14 Jesus asked Saul (Paul) why he was persecuting Him. Paul had never seen Jesus before this time so how could he be persecuting Jesus?
  - Because there is no separation between Jesus and church, His body.
  - This is why the Bible says things like; **we died in Christ, We rose in Christ, we are seated in Christ**. As far God is concerned, we are “in Him”.
- Paul probably wants the Colossian Christians to understand that God sees us the same way He sees Jesus... He doesn’t look down on us or hold our sins against us!

Q: In vs. 22, Paul says we have been reconciled to God through Jesus’ physical death. What does “reconcile” mean... and why is it important we understand it was achieved through Jesus’ death?

- To reconcile means to “make friends again”, which means there was an alienation between the parties.
  - The truth is we have all offended God by “evil behavior” and alienated Him (vs. 21).
  - Whether we knew it or not, we were enemies of God in our minds.
    - Rom. 8:7 “...the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.”
- Normally when we alienate someone by doing something wrong we have to do something to “make it up” before we can be reconciled.

- Christians are often tempted to think they have to “make it up” to God when they sin and offend Him.
- Because God has reconciled with us through Jesus, God finds no fault with us.
- I think Paul wants us to really know, at the center of our being, that even though we have sinned... even though we still struggle... God isn’t looking for us to make it right with Him.
  - Jesus already made it right for us!
  - We just have to be “in Him” to be friends with God!

Q: In vs. 22, Paul tells us what reconciliation has done for us. What does it mean that Jesus has presented us to God as holy, without blemish, and free from accusation?

- First of all, it means that Jesus is the one who presents us... we don’t do have to present or represent ourselves to God.
  - Eph. 5:25-27 also talks about Jesus washing us with water through the Word so he could “**present**” us as beautiful, holy and without blemish to Himself.
  - Eph. 1:4 talks about us being holy and without blame also... all we have to do is be “in Him”.
- Being holy means we have been picked for God’s team.
- Without blemish means “undefiled” or “pure”.
  - It is the same word used to describe Jesus in Heb. 7:26.
  - To God, we look just like Jesus!

Q: Why do you think Paul threw in the word “if” in vs. 23?

- Being reconciled to God... holy, blameless and above reproach... applies to me only **if** I continue in the faith... rooted in this reconciliation.

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APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT: *Answer the following questions as best you can, then get with your discipler/discipleship group and discuss your answers.*

1. Have you ever thought of Jesus as different than God? If so, how?
2. How does knowing whatever happens to you happens to Jesus change the way you look at:
  - a. Things that have happen to you?
  - b. Things that you do?
  - c. God’s feelings about you?
3. How rooted in reconciliation are you?
  - a. If your roots were deeper, how would it affect your day-to-day life?