

**Blessings in King Jesus**  
**A Sermon by Rev. Frances Savill**  
**Sunday July 17, 2022**

**Colossians 1:15-28**

I listened to a sermon this week that said the problem with the church in the United States is that it has lost its centre.

The preacher was saying that many people had not returned to church after COVID and that a number of people had left the church over political divisions.

His point was that as a church, as the body of Christ, our first and greatest loyalty is to Jesus. Jesus is our centre.

We may disagree on many things, we may see different solutions for social and world problems, but our debates, our discussions, the basis for our thinking and our foundation should be faithful living as Jesus' disciples.

As we see the example of the early church, and the example of Jesus himself, we see that Jesus gathered people who disagreed on almost everything. There were zealots in the group of disciples, those ready to fight with swords against the Romans.

Then there was a tax-collector, a Roman pawn.

These Jewish men ministered and healed and taught Samaritans; women were numbered as disciples.

The gospel, Jesus' good news, broke down the barriers and brought people together in a way that was unimaginable.

But it was because Jesus was at the centre.

Jesus is the head of the church.

The demands upon us are placed on us by Jesus, we follow him, and everyone who is submitted to Jesus is part of his body; the church.

Jesus is the beginning of all things.

Everything was created in him, for him, by him, and through him.

In him all the fullness of God dwells.

Thomas said to Jesus; "Show us the Father."

And Jesus answers him; "how long have I been with you and you don't know me."

Jesus is the image of God.

He is God that we can see and learn from in a way that we could not before.

The prophets and leaders and the scriptures spoke about God, and taught us the character of God, and the work of God, but we see in a whole new way who God is, in the person and work of Jesus.

Jesus is the name that is above every name.

Jesus is the beginning and the end- and in him all that was broken and distorted, all the effects of sin and brokenness is reconciled to God through Jesus life and blood given for us on the cross.

Blessing and restoration, new life, forgiveness and mercy are ours in Jesus. The Message says it this way:

*We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at this Son and see God's original purpose in everything created. For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank after rank of angels—everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him. He was there before any of it came into existence and holds it all together right up to this moment. And when it comes to the church, he organizes and holds it together, like a head does a body.*

*<sup>18-20</sup> He was supreme in the beginning and—leading the resurrection parade—he is supreme in the end. From beginning to end Jesus is there, towering far above everything, everyone. So spacious is he, so expansive, that everything of God finds its proper place in Jesus without crowding. Not only that, but all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe—people and things, animals and atoms—get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of his death, his blood that poured down from the cross. (The Message)*

Jesus is the centre, but the church is always in danger of going astray and thinking that we need Jesus and something else.

We are pulled and pushed by our culture to conform, easily diverted or subverted, distracted, or compromised or in some way blown off course and we lose our centre.

The Christians in Colossae faced the same temptation to compromise with the culture.

There were the legalists on one side who wanted them to follow the *Law and Jesus*.

And then there were all their pagan friends and the whole Roman culture that wanted them to worship *other gods and Jesus*.

So, Paul reminds them that to compromise with either pressure was to not follow Jesus at all.

Paul says to them:

*"So what about you? Well, there was a time when you were excluded! You were enemies in your thinking, and in wicked behaviour. <sup>22</sup> But now Jesus has reconciled you in the body of his flesh, through death, in order to bring you into his presence holy, blameless and without any accusation.*

***<sup>23</sup> This assumes, of course, that you keep firmly on in the faith – by which I mean, solid on your foundations, and not shifting from the hope of the gospel which you heard."* (BFE)**

What does Paul mean exactly?

For those not raised in a Christian home, there was a time when we rebellious to God, going our own way, completely without reference to God and God's ways.

But then the Holy Spirit brought us into relationship with Jesus and we learned Jesus and his ways.

Being in Jesus, in relationship with him, he presents us whole and holy, giving us new life in his name.

This is providing we continue on the Jesus path.

That isn't a threat to us or our salvation.

It isn't that Jesus is suddenly going to stop loving us if we stop following him and his ways.

Jesus' ways open things up to new life, increasing life, whole and holy living. Everything finds its place as we learn life in him who is the head of all things.

Any other way, leads away from the centre, and leads us away from life.

*"You yourselves are a case study of what Jesus does. At one time you all had your backs turned to God, thinking rebellious thoughts of him, giving him trouble every chance you got. But now, by giving himself completely at the Cross, actually dying for you, Christ brought you over to God's side and put your lives together, whole and holy in his presence. You don't walk away from a gift like that! You stay grounded and steady in that bond of trust, constantly tuned in to the Message, careful not to be distracted or diverted. There is no other Message—just this one. Every creature under heaven gets this same Message. I, Paul, am a messenger of this Message." (The Message)*

The temptation is always the same, to doubt God and God's ways – to doubt God's love and God's faithfulness.

But when we hold Jesus in the centre and follow Jesus, even when the way seems uncertain and the sirens of this world would lead us on another path, we find life.

The choice is always before as people and as a church.

We can do it our own way, trust our own wisdom, which leads us away from the centre and starts down the path of death, or we can trust Jesus, trust his wisdom, trust His way for the church, for our lives and for our deaths, on the path that leads to more and more life.

Thanks be to God.