

(15) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities --- ALL things were created through Him and for Him. And 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, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent.

(19) For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 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 --- 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 Father], if indeed you --- continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the Gospel --- which He proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Think on these things:

- 1) How much is Jesus “God” (v. 19)? Consider also the 4th Doctrine of The Salvation Army: “**We believe** that in the person of Jesus Christ the Divine and human natures are united, so that He is truly and properly God and truly and properly man.”

Jesus is 100% God --- “in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” (See Hebrews 1:3)

- 2) What has God [the Father] reconciled to Himself through God [the Son] (v. 20)? “What” is identified as bringing peace between men and God?

What is reconciled? **ALL things (everything), whether on earth or in heaven**

What brings peace? **The blood of Jesus brings peace between God and mankind.**

- 3) Look up the theological word to describe this effort on Jesus’ part in Romans 3:25 and 1 John 4:10. What is this word? Does Romans, Colossians and 1 John help you to better understand its meaning?

Theological word? **Propitiation (Greek – hilaskomai)**

Meaning of this term? **Propitiation can also be translated as “atoning sacrifice” (NIV). More appropriately, it conveys that --- from God’s perspective --- the barrier wall between God and mankind created by sin has been broken down by Jesus’ death on the cross. Jesus’ sinless sacrifice appeased the Father; He is fully satisfied that the problem has been completely dealt with. By God’s own act of sacrifice on the cross mankind is now “justly delivered” from the wrath of God. (W.E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words)**

MANKIND NO LONGER HAS A SIN PROBLEM; JESUS HAS RESOLVED IT. WHAT WE HAVE IS A FAITH PROBLEM. TO BE SAVED, ONE NEED ONLY BELIEVE (TRUST IN) JESUS!

- 4) Read Hebrews 10:19-23. How should this understanding impact our relationship with God?

Jesus opened “access” for mankind to God's Holy Place in heaven by His sacrifice, and He serves as our High Priest. Therefore, we are encouraged to “draw near to God” because by faith we have full assurance of acceptance and He cleanses our bodies and minds. We are to hold fast to our hope without wavering because...”He who promised is faithful.”

- 5) Looking at v. 21, what 3 terms describe the relationship of non-believers with God?

1. Alienated (at odds, and out-of-step, w/God),

2. Hostile in our minds (angry and fighting against Him, “You’re not the boss of me!” or “I don’t believe there is a God!”), and

3. Doing evil deeds.

- 6) Now looking at the reconciliation accomplished by and because of Jesus’ death on the cross, what is Jesus’ goal for each and every person He presents to God the Father (v. 22)?

Jesus wants to present every believer to the Father: holy, blameless and above reproach. This is possible only because, by faith, we are given the righteousness of Jesus at salvation; our own righteousness is always as filthy rags.... (Isaiah 64:6; Romans 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Philippians 3:9)

- 7) In v. 23 Paul adds obligations that make all this possible for believers. What is our responsibility, better, our required response, for this reconciliation outcome?

We need to continue (remain) in our faith, being stable and steadfast for God (reliably faithful), and not wavering or moving away from the hope we gain from the Gospel.

People and situations I want to pray for this week: