Peacemakers // Home Bible Reading and Study
Week Two: July 12-18 // Colossians 1:15-29

This month we are in a study of Paul's letter to the Colossians and his encouragement and instruction to the church as they battle outside forces attempting to add to the Good News and disrupt their peace. This week, we're going to read through the rest of chapter one, including a section that appears to be in hymn form and is sometimes referred to as **"The Christ Hymn."** Let's begin there:

15 Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.
He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation,
16 for through him God created everything
in the heavenly realms and on earth.
He made the things we can see
and the things we can't see—
such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world.
Everything was created through him and for him.
17 He existed before anything else,
and he holds all creation together.
18 Christ is also the head of the church,
which is his body.
He is the beginning,
supreme over all who rise from the dead.
So he is first in everything.
19 For God in all his fullness
was pleased to live in Christ,
20 and through him God reconciled
everything to himself.
He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth
by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

This song, which may have been a song the church already knew, an adaptation of an older hymn, or a new hymn Paul was sharing, poetically tells the story of God's creation and the plan of redemption, of bringing peace to that creation through Jesus. And there are parallels in the language that he chooses. He begins by talking about who Jesus IS, that God is revealed IN HIM, and that THROUGH Him that once beautiful creation would be made whole again.

Vs. 15-17 (God's Creation)	Vs. 18-20 (God's Redemption of Creation)
Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.	**Christ is** also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So He is first in everything.
He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through **(IN) Him** God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth.	For God in all His fullness was pleased to live **in Christ**
Everything was created **through Him** and for him.	And **through Him** God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

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As outside influences were attempting to diminish who Jesus really was for the church (the source of "God's wonderful grace" that we read last week), Paul is reminding them, once again, that **Jesus is enough:**
-He's always been, participating in creation.
-He is the image of God...the WHOLE image of God.
-And He is the means by which our broken world is restored to God. His sacrifice would ultimately bring peace between God and man.

Now Paul goes on to remind the Colossian church (and US) that WE are now the BODY, that Jesus lives in US:

> **21 This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. 22 Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.**
> **23 But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it.**
> **24 I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for his body, the church. 25 God has given me the responsibility of serving his church by proclaiming his entire message to you. 26 This message was kept secret for centuries and generations past, but now it has been revealed to God's people. 27 For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his glory.**
> **28 So we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ. 29 That's why I work and struggle so hard, depending on Christ's mighty power that works within me.**

"This is the secret: Christ lives in you."

The whole image of God now lives in us.

So now what? So this: We tell others. **WE SHARE THE SECRET.** We share out of a love for Him, a love for others, and a DESIRE to "present them to God."

That is the peacemaking process. We meet people where they are and desire a better life for them...the BEST life for the them. We share our story of when we "were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions." We tell how WE were drawn close and reconciled to Him. We demonstrate the better path and commit to walking alongside them with all of the wisdom and guidance the Spirit provides.

This week's prayer: God, give me the strength to share the secret, desiring good for those that may not desire good for me . I confess my dependance on the fullness of Jesus' Spirit within me. When I suffer, may I rejoice. And may I boast only in You.