

Coastal Community Church Vision

Hope beyond our brokenness

Trust in our Risen Savior

Restoration for our city, nation, and world

Today... I choose to be changed by Jesus, I choose to seek Jesus first, and I choose to join Jesus in His resurrection work.

Ear Tug. Ask Permission

Jesus will never leave you. Jesus sustains you with His love before you even understand what God's love is. Jesus gives you rest, space to breathe. Jesus will never leave you. The fullness of His love for you is the most unexpected part of this journey of knowing God. We don't get how deeply and profoundly loved we are. We have such little experience truly trusting someone as trustworthy as Jesus is. We hesitate confessing everything...being totally vulnerable...naming it all...and then choosing to surrender and be led by Jesus into life. It seems too much, too hard, too good to be true, too painful to face...but in these next verses Paul is going to give us one of the clearest and most moving pictures in all the New Testament of the hope and love we find in the good news of Jesus' heart for us and his work on the cross that save us.

Can I speak to the part of your heart that's hurting? That's afraid? That's broken? Can I speak to the part of your heart that holds onto Jesus

no matter what, that won't let go no matter the storm, that needs Him more than the air you breathe? Then let's **Pray**.

Colossae is Riverside, its Tehachapi, it's Arroyo Grande and Grover Beach. It's the small town away from the big city and where all the big city ideas are discussed and digested. For the Christians in Colossae, the Lord was Caesar. The gods were many and their worshippers were basically everyone. The theological move of the day was to sprinkle a god's blessing like a seasoning...add a little Zeus when you need more money, a little Aphrodite when you need love, a little Poseidon when you need to catch a fish...and it will all work out. After all, the economy, architecture, language, trade...it was all built around Caesar and the gods. You need to understand that our culture is exactly the same today. If you need a little money success, it's Jesus plus these greedy principles. If you need a little love, it's these websites and don't tell Jesus. If you want the good life, it's Jesus plus a little of

But then Christians came and said something radical: Jesus is Lord, not Caesar. And there's one God in Three Persons...Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And Jesus isn't something you sprinkle onto your self reliance. Jesus says 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' To know Jesus and to be saved by Jesus is to surrender our entire life, our whole heart, to the

most trustworthy, loving, and forgiving person we've ever known. And so Paul says...

Colossians 2:9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, 10 and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.

Paul is speaking to people living in a landscape where the architecture, politics, banking, authorities, military...it all screamed Caesar is Lord. And what is Paul saying? Jesus is Lord. In fact, Jesus is every bit of God the Father. They are one. And since Jesus now lives in you through the Holy Spirit...all the fullness of God is in you. And all the powers and authorities that would crush you, derail you, woo you...Jesus is in control over them all.

On the days when you are discouraged by the chaos of this world, we stand in faith that Jesus is in control. On the days when our hearts are broken by others, we stand in faith that Jesus will make all things work together for our good. When we have nothing left, no fight, no faith, no hope...that's when we discover that Jesus will literally provide the fight and faith and hope we need. I'm not alone. You're not alone. The God who hung the rings on Saturn and fixed the Sun in our galaxy and knit you together in your mothers womb is holding you now. He's with you now. Jesus has us.

Next Paul is going to literally use the worst analogy in all of scripture to help us see the lordship of Jesus even clearer. I hate this analogy. It's not an enjoyable analogy. But it's true. Ready?

Colossians 2:11 In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ...

I hate this analogy. But it's true. What is Paul saying? Stay with me. Come back. Focus on me. Ready? We all have hearts covered and numb by our sin and how we've been sinned against...separated in some sense, to experiencing Jesus' profound love for us. We all have hearts covered in porcupine quills that bristle with worry, defensiveness, selfishness, anger, hopelessness...all in some attempt to protect us from all the pain. All of us know this reality. How do I get my heart back? How Oh we try. Maybe this thing will make me feel alive...maybe this experience...maybe this person...maybe this moment...maybe this amazon package. It's the same strategy of all people everywhere... maybe I can somehow change my desires that are killing me, my whims that trip me, my reactions that damage others, my needs that never seem to be satisfied. So what is Paul saying?

Jesus is the one who changed and is changing your heart. The moment you allowed Jesus in, He started giving you new loves...and

those porcupine quills started to fall away. The way your heart changes is always with Jesus...it's surrender, confession into every corner you try to hide and cover up because Jesus is that trustworthy to give you something better than you're holding onto.

Paul continues...so Jesus is the one who is healing our hearts...

12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

You see, the same God the Father who raised Jesus from the dead is the same God the Father who is bringing you back to life. God the Father isn't mad at you for being wounded and half alive...God's entire plan is to make you His and make you fully alive WITH HIM.

In 1934, a British magazine told the story of young Prince Edward and a visit he made to a small hospital where thirty-six hopelessly injured and disfigured veterans of the First World War were admitted. He stopped at each cot, shook hands with each veteran, and spoke words of encouragement. He was conducted to the exit but observed that he had only met twenty-nine men. Prince Edward said, "I understood you had thirty-six patients here. I have only seen twenty-nine."

The head nurse explained that the other seven were so shockingly disfigured, that for the sake of his own feelings, he had not been taken to

see them. The prince insisted that he must see them and spoke to each of them and thanked them for the great sacrifice they had made.

Then he turned to the head nurse and said, "There are only six men. Where is the seventh?" He was informed that no one was allowed to see him. Blind, maimed, dismembered, the most hideously disfigured of them all, he was isolated in a room where he would never leave alive. The nurse said to the Prince, "Please don't ask to see him." But the Prince insisted. The nurse reluctantly led him into a darkened room. The royal visitor stood there and then the tears broke out as the prince bent down and reverently kissed the cheeks of that broken war hero.

There is one who has stooped far, far lower, to kiss a far, far worse ugliness—not the physical disfigurement of a broken hero whose brokenness called forth reverent gratitude. But me, the leprous, evil ugliness of a corrupt sinner who rebels against the most trustworthy love. That's who Jesus, the Prince of Peace, kisses and claims as His own...it's me...to heal, to give a new heart, to resurrect.

Here's the crescendo of this passage, the hope of the Gospel:

Colossians 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness,

which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

When you were dead, God made you alive by joining you with His son. How? When you deserved punishment, Jesus forgave your sins by taking your punishment until it killed Him. Imagine a courtroom...you're guilty. The guilt must be paid...restitution must be made...the law must be fulfilled. And so the One who made the law...that's Jesus...is the one who fulfilled the requirements of the law that would have killed you. Jesus took it all away, nailing it to the cross...through his own hands and feet.

The perspective Paul is offering is shocking. Jesus nailed the accusations against you to the cross until they died...with him. Don't you understand? Jesus chose you and chose the agony of the cross at the exact same time. Jesus knew what it would take to forgive and save you...His very life...and Jesus gladly chose to give it up for you.

So what shall we do with this good news?

Does it make sense to say, "Well, that's great and all...but a little bit of my earning really will sweeten the deal"? No! That's crazy talk!!! Mormons literally believe that Jesus saves you 97% of the way...you're responsible for the 3%. That's insanity. That's like saying to your spouse, 'Hey babe, you and I are going to be married 97% of the time...but I'll

only spend 3% with my other lover. But you and me are still good, right?' Your spouse would tell you exactly where to shove that 3%, and rightly so. The only thing we do with this good news is to trust Jesus...fully. To surrender to Jesus...fully. To love Him and run to Him all the time and believe what He says...all the time.

But why do I resist this? Because I want to nail someone else to the cross. I want to blame another. I don't want Jesus to pay...I want them to pay. I want to hold onto my self righteousness a little longer so I don't have to admit I'm a rebel. I want to hold onto my self ambition a little longer so I don't have to surrender and wait...even though I know what I receive from Jesus is better...I just want what I want now even though it doesn't satisfy. I am so committed at times to hiding all my sin behind inflatable me so that I don't have to tell you what's really in my heart. But there's no joy, none of God's power, no peace, and no hope in that strategy. We know this. I know this.

And here's the challenge Paul is making to the people of Colossae, and to us as a church. We are not responsible for saving or transforming our hearts...but we are responsible for our surrender and trust to Jesus. I don't have to prepare the meal or buy the food, but I do have to choose show up and eat. I don't have to fix and fuel my car, but I do have to put it in drive and follow His direction. I don't have to reach inside my soul and

stitch it back together but I do have to bring my soul before my great and loving Physician.

This isn't a chore. This isn't a burden. Can we reject that lie? **God, I reject the lie that trusting you, obeying you, and surrendering to you is worse or more difficult than the pain of my rebellion, in Jesus' name. Jesus, I take back my delight in praying. I take back my joy in following your lead. I take back my desire to listen to, and follow, Your good plan before I choose my own way.**

One day there will be a moment in our church when the worship won't stop. The revival is starting across California. Mass beach baptisms are happening all over the place. The presence of God will be so heavy and peaceful and life giving in this place that we won't want to go. And there will be a moment when you will have to choose...is my tv show, my nail appointment, my lunch spot, my expectation that church lasts this long...is that more important than being here in His presence? I know your hearts. You want God more than anything. So my prayer for myself, and for us in this season, is that our first love is always and only Jesus. In fact, can we pray that together?

Jesus, you saved me for yourself. You are the most trustworthy person I could ever know. I take You back as my first love. I want You more than any other. I surrender my heart to You. I gladly receive your forgiveness and your love. I'm all yours, Jesus.

Table Talk, Prayer, Benediction