

Sunday October 8, 2023

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. ² Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. ³ For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. ⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth & the mountain peaks belong to him. ⁵ The sea is his, for he made it & his hands formed the dry land. ⁶ Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; ⁷ for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

Song – How Great Thou Art

[How Great Thou Art with lyrics performed by chris rice - YouTube](#)

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| <p>1. Oh Lord, my God
When I, in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder
Thy power throughout the universe displayed</p> <p>Chorus
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art</p> | <p>2. And when I think that God, His Son not sparing
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing
He bled and died to take away my sin</p> <p>Chorus
3. When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration
And then proclaim, my God, how great Thou art</p> <p>Chorus</p> |
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Bible Reading – Psalm 145:1-7 (NIV)

I will exalt you, my God the King;
I will praise your name for ever and ever.
Every day I will praise you
and extol your name for ever and ever.
Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;
his greatness no one can fathom.
One generation commends your works to another;
they tell of your mighty acts.
They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—
and I will meditate on your wonderful works.[b]
They tell of the power of your awesome works—
and I will proclaim your great deeds.
They celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

Announcements

Focus for October – Time with God. “When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and replied that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and recognised that they had been with Jesus.” Peter and John were fishermen. They hadn’t gone through the higher education system of the day. Yet when they stood up and spoke about Christ, they spoke with a boldness and clarity that stunned even the big wigs of their day. What was their secret? “They had been with Jesus...” We too can grow in our boldness and clarity in speaking about Jesus to others, simply by sticking close to Jesus in our day to day lives. Remember, the secret weapon in the Christian life is prayer.

Preaching over the next month.

Sunday Oct 8th - Christ and the cosmos

Sunday Oct 15th - Christ and ministry

Sunday Oct 22nd - Becoming More Like Christ (David Wigney)

Outreach in Windale. A small team from our church have begun praying and planning to do outreach in Windale. Please be praying and also considering whether you could be apart of this. For further information, please speak to Andrew Mackie, Colin Wright or Jon Brown.

Term 4. Our normal church activities start up again this week. Holidays in the hall is on today for kids in pre-school to year 4. There is activity sheets for children remain in church.

Steve’s leave. Stephen is currently taking LSL during which the family will be travelling to USA/Canada for around a month. Please pray for a good time of rest and refreshment. If you need any pastoral help until the end of October, please see Jon or Mal or Jo.

Samaritan’s Purse Christmas Boxes. Boxes will be available from today for this campaign for \$1 per box. Fill your box and include \$12.50 for postage, have a box filled on your behalf for \$25, or buy a starter pack for \$8.50 and add a toy and article of clothing and \$12.50 for postage. Please speak to Kathryn O if you have any questions.

Church Working Bee | Saturday 14th October 8:30am - Plenty of jobs for everyone! Hoping to see a good turn-up on the day.

Hunter PY Camp | Friday 10th - Saturday 11th November - PY camp is on again this year for Year 6 - Year 12 students at Gateway Presbyterian, Anna Bay. This is a great opportunity for our young people to grow in their faith and fellowship with other teens. For more information contact Cheryl Gillard.

Prayer Points

Psalm 2: “Blessed are all those who take refuge in Him.” We live in a society that’s obsessed with safety. People are full of fear and worry about life and death. Pray that we would submit our lives to king Jesus and find safety in Him. Thank God for the sure refuge that’s found in Jesus Christ alone.

Pray for Ukraine: • Pray for God's peace and reconciliation to overcome all hatred, conflict, and war. Pray for followers of Jesus to arise as messengers of His hope to the hopeless and the oppressed. Pray for repentance, forgiveness, and unity in the Church, across denominations and traditions.

Pray for our nation - Pray for many Australians who long for a deeper meaning to life. Pray they would come to know Jesus Christ who is the way, the truth and the life. Pray that God would open doors to speak the gospel, and open hearts to receive Jesus.

Bible Reading – Colossians 1:15-23

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16** For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through 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 [g] your evil behaviour.

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, and do not move 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.

Song – Nothing but the blood of Jesus

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| 1. What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus | 3. This is all my hope and peace
Nothing but the blood of Jesus
This is all my righteousness
Nothing but the blood of Jesus |
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Chorus

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| 2. For my pardon this I see
Nothing but the blood of Jesus
For my cleansing this my plea
Nothing but the blood of Jesus | 4. Glory, glory this I see
Nothing but the blood of Jesus
All my praise for this I bring
Nothing but the blood of Jesus |
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*Chorus: Oh! Precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow
No other fount I know
Nothing but the blood of Jesus*

Sermon – The Glory of Christ (Colossians 1:15-23)

The Glory of Christ (Colossians 1:15-23)

Who is Jesus? Islam says he is just another prophet. Some Jewish thinkers claim Jesus as a Jewish teacher. There are Marxist readings of Jesus. There is the New Age version of Jesus. There was even one fellow in the 1960s who proposed Jesus was actually a hallucinogenic mushroom! Who is Jesus?

Colossians 3:16 tells us that these early Christians were singing “psalms, hymns and spiritual songs” to each other in their meetings. Pliny the Roman Governor of Bythinia writing to Emperor Trajan in 112AD describes Christians in Bythinia as a bunch of people who were in the habit of “Singing hymns to Christ as God.”

That's what this passage is in Colossians 1:15-20, a gospel hymn. A hymn of praise to Christ as God.

Where does Jesus fit into the cosmos? Often we begin with, “where do fit into the cosmos. And the paradoxical answers come back: you are a speck of dust and the very centre of the universe. Which one? We need to first understand where Christ fits into the cosmos. And then we can get our place.

Jesus...

1. The Lord of Creation
2. The Lord of the new creation

1. The Lord of Creation

Look at verse 15 again, “**He is the image of the invisible God.**”

Do you want to know what God looks like? Jesus. The Bible says God is unknown. He’s invisible apart from Jesus. Jesus is how we know God. He’s the image. God is unknowable, unreachable, alien to us, unless Jesus reveals Him.

The Greek word for image is ‘Icon’ An icon is the face of something. The representation of that thing. **The face of rocknroll is Elvis. The face of tennis is Federer. The face of fashion is Coco Channel.**

The face of God is Jesus. If you wanna know what God is like, you look to Jesus. And that’s good news isn’t it! Someone said, “**If God isn’t like Jesus, he ought to be...**” Everyone loves Jesus. Look at his life. Look at how he was born into poverty. Look at how he loved people. He healed them. Look at how he treated the marginalised and the oppressed. Look how patient he was with sinners. Look at how he washed His disciples feet. Look at how he stretched out his arms to the world. Look at how he bled and died for you. Do you know what you’re look at.....

The very image of God. In Jesus you see the true God. Jesus is God with skin on his face. **We see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.** That’s why Jesus Himself said, “**If you’ve seen me you’ve seen the Father..**”

He is the image of the invisible God, and the firstborn over all creation. Next time the JW’s come knocking on your door. Don’t pretend you’re home. Invite them in and tell them this: The firstborn in the Bible is the heir. Solomon is described as David’s firstborn, but he was not David’s first son to be born. And that’s what Paul means here, “He is the heir over all creation.” It belongs to him. It’s all coming to him.

Far from being created, Christ is the Creator. Check out verses 16-17: **For by Him all things were created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things have been created by Him and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things hold together.**”

Christ is God. He is the agent of creation - **by him.** And it was made **for him. And he sustains it.** That’s almost unbelievable! My mind can’t take it in.

Next time you go down to Dudley beach on warm sunny day you should think of Colossians 1:16. God the Father said, I want a beach. The second person of the Trinity creates it. The second person of the Trinity sustains it. What the point of Dudley beach? The point of Dudley beach is for Christ and for his sake it was made. It’s for his glory. Now we’re beginning to think straight about Jesus Christ.

Now let's carry that through. This means my bodily life is in His hands. Who made me? Christ. What am I made for? Christ. What sustains my life? Christ. This means I owe Christ not just my spiritual life. I owe him my physical existence. My physical body belongs to Him. And this means he sustains my body, until he doesn't wish to sustain me.

This means, Christ is concerned with your physical life just as much as your spiritual. There is no sacred secular divide. Your family belong to him. Your finances belong to him. Your health belongs to him. You need to go away for a while and meditate on that. You can't just take Sunday and say, "Lord Jesus' that's yours." Because he says, "sorry pal, but I made it all. **There's not a square inch that Christ doesn't cry, "Mine!" Over.** Now we're beginning to have a bigger Christ than most people ever dreamed of. He is Lord of creation.

And He is....

2. The Lord of the New Creation

Look at verse 18, "**And he is also the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the first born from the dead, so that in all things he might have the preeminence.**" He is the Lord of creation. And the Lord of the new creation: the church, which is His body. **If I was ruler of the cosmos, the last thing I'd want to be head over is the church! It's a bit embarrassing to be associated with isn't it? It's full of weirdos. Weak people, broken and sinful people. But Jesus isn't ashamed to us brothers.** Instead he's chosen to unite himself to His people in the most intimate way.

He's starting something new. This world is beautiful, but it's broken. And it's because of sin. Which brought death and decay.

But in Jesus Christ we see the Creator stepping into His creation. And renewing it and restoring it. Someone said, "**Everywhere he went Eden was restored**" And he died and rose again. He is the firstborn from the dead. In Him we see the beginning of the new creation. A new world. Death will be no more!

....**"So that he might come to have first place in everything."** He is first, so he must have first place. Let's make sure we give him first place, in our church. In our prayers. In our hymns. In our sermons. In all our meetings and plannings. And Bible studies. Give him first place. It would be wrong not to. "For God was pleased to have all his fulness dwell in him..." God has put everything we need in one place. It pleased God to have all his fulness in Him. Let's make sure we're constantly drawing from His fulness. Living out of it. Holding on to the head, being nourished and built up. That's the only silver bullet to church growth. A church without Christ at the centre is like a headless chook. It might run around frantically for a while. Busy with activity. But eventually it will drop dead. If he has the power to sustain the universe, than he has power to sustain our little church doesn't he?

And let's look again at **what our Lord Jesus did on that cross:** Check out verse 20: "**And through Him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross.**"

When you have little kids you got to tidy up after them. Toys are everywhere, draws are open, food all over the place. It's chaos. What a relief when chaos is defeated and everything is put back where it

belongs! That's what Jesus did for us on the cross. He is putting everything back in it's right place. He's bringing about the new creation. And he has done it by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Think of it. The one who made heaven and earth, now suspended between heaven and earth on a cross. That face, which is the icon, the image of the invisible God, the brightness of God's glory, caked in blood and sweat and tears. **Why?** To put the cosmos back together. Sin has ripped everything out of joint.

The Bible says this is what is wrong with our world. This is why there's wars, and abuse, and heartache. We've tried everything else but it hasn't worked. Politics hasn't done it. Technology hasn't done it. All this talk of equality hasn't done it. **It's like trying to put a band aid on a dislocated shoulder.** The cause is our broken relationship with God.

We are separated from our Maker. **And it's our fault. Notice in verse 21, "Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds expressed in your evil actions.** We initiated the divorce. We (humanity) wanted to go our own way. When Jesus hung between earth and heaven on the cross, he made peace. He came to make peace, not war. He's putting everything back together where it belongs: including you and me! Notice in verse 22, "But now he has reconciled you by his physical death, to present you holy, faultless, and blameless before him."

The one who has eternal and infinite significance, has reached down to us who are finite and insignificant. And he lifts us up to the highest heights with himself. In Jesus Christ we see a God who loves you more than his own life. A God who'd rather die than live without you. In Jesus Christ our Creator has reached out to bring us back to Himself. He endured a brutal death so that you can be made beautiful: holy and blameless

So if you're connected to Jesus, there's nothing you need to do to get you to God. I'm already reconciled. It doesn't depend on my performance. Some days I feel more holy and blameless. Some days I feel pretty unholy and sinful. But when I'm in Christ, my relationship with God is fixed and final, **"Holy without blemish, and free from accusation!"** That's how God pictures me in Christ? Is that how you see yourself?

But there's one more thing we need to look at: Look at verse 23, **"If indeed you remain grounded steadfast in the faith, and are not shifted away from the hope of the gospel that you heard."** What does that mean? It means you go on believing this gospel you have heard, which has been preached to you. It means returning to verse 22 again and again. Everyday you can say, "I don't care about what my feelings tell me. God's word says, I'm holy, without blemish and free from accusation." It doesn't depend on my performance. But on Jesus finished work.

Do you understand that? Maybe you're here, and you're starting to see that God is completely Jesus-shaped. And you're starting to see that Jesus is completely God-sized. And you're being drawn to him. Well tonight you can go from someone 'alienated from God' to someone 'reconciled to God.' Simply by turning to Jesus. If you're feeling insignificant and lost in this world. Come to Jesus Christ to find who is the meaning of life.

Once - alienated, enemies, evil.

But now holy in God's sight, without blemish, free from accusation.

IF you keep believing this gospel - keep clinging to Jesus.
 Insignificant. "You" - the Lord of all is concerned with YOU.
 He'd rather die than live without you.

Prayer:

So I'm just going to lead us in a little prayer where you can respond to Jesus.

It'll just say "Jesus, I recognize that YOU are Lord. I'm sorry for living for myself. Thank you for making peace on the cross. Forgive me and lead me from now on. Amen."

Jesus, I recognize that YOU are Lord. I'm sorry for living for myself. Thank you for making peace on the cross. Forgive me and lead me from now on. Amen

Song – In Christ Alone [In Christ Alone \(Official Lyric Video\) - Keith & Kristyn Getty.](#) [Alison Krauss - YouTube](#)

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| <p>1. In Christ alone my hope is found
 He is my light, my strength, my song
 This cornerstone, this solid ground
 Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
 What heights of love, what depths of peace
 When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
 My comforter, my all in all
 Here in the love of Christ I stand</p> | <p>3. There in the ground His body lay
 Light of the world by darkness slain
 Then bursting forth in glorious day
 Up from the grave He rose again
 And as He stands in victory
 Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
 For I am His and He is mine
 Bought with the precious blood of Christ</p> |
| <p>2. In Christ alone who took on flesh
 Fullness of God in helpless babe
 This gift of love and righteousness
 Scorned by the ones He came to save
 Till on that cross as Jesus died
 The wrath of God was satisfied
 For every sin on Him was laid
 Here in the death of Christ I live</p> | <p>4. No guilt in life, no fear in death
 This is the power of Christ in me
 From life's first cry to final breath
 Jesus commands my destiny
 No power of hell, no scheme of man
 Can ever pluck me from His hand
 Till He returns or calls me home
 Here in the power of Christ I'll stand</p> |

Benediction ¹⁵ *"Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake & remains clothed, so as not to go naked & be shamefully exposed."*