

## You and Every You

6<sup>th</sup> Sun. after Pent. – 7/17/22 – Mt. Calvary Luth.

Text: Colossians 1:17-29 Pastor Keith Besel

v. 25, [A phrase that sums up God's goal for Paul, for me and for each one of you,] **“...to make the Word of God fully known”**.

### **Introduction**

✘ This morning, my goal is to develop a simple image that you can use, no matter your artistic ability, to illustrate God's Good News for you and every “you” in Christ Jesus. So, to help you get started with this illustration, we have placed on the bulletin insert a large “X”. (You may want to have a pen or pencil available to add some notes or ways for you to remember how this “X” is going to help you illustrate God's Good News to others.

→ So, find that big “X” on the bulletin insert and have it in front of you.

✘ We've all heard the phrase, “X marks the spot”. In books and movies, if you're hunting for treasure then X marks the spot on a map to show you where that treasure is; X means, “this is where the goods are at!”

→ Today, Paul draws a map for us with his words to show us God's treasure. This treasure; these goods are God's Good News. Paul says this Good News is for You and, through You; for every “You” in Christ Jesus.

### **I. Jesus Creates, Sustains, Reconciles All Things**

✘ He sets the stage; or lays the foundation for the treasure of His Good News in verse 17 by talking about “all things”. What does “all things” include? In the previous verse; verse 16 Paul says, “For by Him [Jesus] *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”.

→ So, “All things” includes ... ALL things! Every *thing*! All things includes the bugs living underground, our pets, your home, all trees, all streams and rivers and oceans and continents. All things includes all planets, all moons; the sun, every star in the heavens and all the galaxies.

→ Just this week NASA received the first images from the James Webb Deep Space Telescope. It was launched 6½ months ago and is now 1 million miles away in space. These pictures are showing us far away galaxies that we have never before been able to see. Now I want to be clear before I go on: what I am about to say, I assure you, I would say in response to any; any world leader that would say these things. On Monday (7/11/22) President Biden introduced these pictures, telling us that scientists say the light that is seen in these pictures is from 13 billion years ago. He went on to say, “These images are going to remind the world that America can do big things. And remind the American people, especially our children, that there's nothing beyond our capacity; nothing beyond our capacity” ([youtube.com/watch?v=rF88yFLjzZI&t=71s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rF88yFLjzZI&t=71s)).

→ Now as wonderful as this accomplishment and these pictures are, I have to respectfully, yet as strongly as possible, disagree with our president's interpretation of the message that these amazing images convey to us Americans and to all human beings!

→ Instead of boosting our egos, as President Biden wants it to do, who followed the model of the people at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11); instead of turning us sinfully in upon ourselves to incorrectly think that “there's nothing beyond our capacity”, these pictures and discoveries like them, are more faithfully used when they bring us in awe and humility to our knees before our

Savior, Jesus to admit that He alone, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is the Creator and Sustainer of ALL these things. Neither you nor I; neither NASA nor any of our brilliant scientists and engineers has, or ever will have the capacity to create these galaxies we are seeing for the first time this week. That's all God; and only God ... as Scripture tells us, not created billions of years ago, but less than 10,000 years ago, as well.

→ As Paul says, He is the creator even of “every visible and invisible spiritual power or force or heavenly being” (v.16), even those that we simple human beings do not even know about. All things includes ... ALL things!

✘ And that's not all. Paul goes on in verses 17–20 to tell us that Jesus “is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 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 (that means most important of all). 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”.

→ If it was true that “nothing” would be “beyond our capacity” then that last sentence would be a direct lie from God; we wouldn't need Jesus and His blood on the cross to reconcile us sinners back to God, because we would be able to do it ourselves. But in fact, we are all sinners who desperately need Jesus and His saving work. He's the One beyond whom there is nothing He cannot do!

✘ So, the top half of our X shows us the extent (Arms raised in a V); the boundless, limitless extent of God's reconciling work in Christ Jesus. Jesus creates, sustains, and reconciles all things, far more than I can illustrate with the widest point of the top of the X or with my arms fully extended.

## II. The Good News in Christ is for You.

✘ And now we move to the middle of our X; the part where the two lines intersect. We come to you \_name\_. (pointing at one person) In verse 21, Paul brings us to \_different name\_ (pointing at different person). “And you,” he says at the beginning of verse 21. We move from all things (gesture with arms raised in a V) to you (both hands together pointing forward). From “all things” to “you”.

→ Here, in the middle of our X, having heard and seen how Jesus creates, sustains, and reconciles all things, Paul speaks to you, and says: What Jesus did for all of creation, He did for you! God doesn't just love the “world”, He loves you! God doesn't just love everybody, He loves you. You! Of all people! You!

→ And you know what else? He knows you. He knows how far away from Him you have wandered. He knows that your thoughts don't line up with His thoughts. He knows that it's actually much worse than just being out of sync. Your thoughts have been opposed to His thoughts. Your ways have been opposed to His ways. Your actions and words have spit in the face of what He values the most. He knows that. He knows you, the real you, the “you” that you try so hard to hide from others. The you that you sometimes even hide it from yourself. Isaiah 53:6 says, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned – every one – to his own way”. That's you, and you, and you... He knows you. And still ... nevertheless ... against all odds ... He loves you. Isaiah completes His sentence, “and the LORD has laid on Him [Jesus] the iniquity of us all”.

✘ You see, His love for you isn't just a feeling. He moves on it. He acts on it. You, who “once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,” Paul says in verses 21-22, “[Jesus] has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before [the Father]” (vv. 21–22).

→ We can't miss the obvious, can we? An X is one of the shapes that crosses could take in the ancient world. That particular version is called the crux decussata, and according to tradition, St. Andrew, the brother of Peter, was crucified on an X-shaped cross. But every cross is a reminder of the love that Jesus has for you. As He hung in agony on His cross, with the sin of the whole world on His shoulders, His heart was longing for you – personally, individually.

- ✘ God's Good News in the cross of Christ Jesus is for you. The top of our X shows us the extent (V gesture): Jesus creates, sustains, and reconciles all things. The middle of our X shows us the intersection (hands together): God's Good News of the cross of Christ Jesus is for you!

### III. Through You, God's Good News is for Every "You"

- ✘ And so we come to the bottom half of our X. Jesus creates, sustains, and reconciles all things. God's Good News of the cross of Christ Jesus is for you. And through you, God's Good News is for every "you" in Christ Jesus (gesture out & down to spreading wide). Through you, God's Good News is for every "you" in Christ Jesus.

→ Paul's progression in verses 15 to 20, describes the cosmic extent of God's reconciling work through Jesus. Then, in 21 to 24, he zooms in to show how God doesn't just love the general world, but loves you personally. And now in 24–29, we see that God's Good News is not only for you – but for every "you" in Christ Jesus. And how does God go about this? Through ... you!

- ✘ Verses 27-28, "God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ".

→ Paul tells each one of you how this is a mystery; a glorious mystery. Christ, the one who created all things. Christ, the one who is before and in and beyond all things. Christ, the one who reconciled all things by the blood of His cross. Christ, the one who now lives eternally as King over all things. ... This very Christ ... is in you! You can't do that. You don't deserve it, but it is 100% true through His grace in your baptism!

→ And this Christ in you, is not inactive. He is at work through you. As we talk about His work to others, using our mouths and tongues and throats and minds, remember, we're not the ones doing the work. Jesus is doing His work through you!

- ✘ Now, I know what many or most of you are thinking. "No, not me. Not me, Paul. I don't know as much as you. I'm not as articulate as you. I'm not as eloquent as you. I can't quote the Bible like you."

→ And you know what? You might actually be right. But guess what? It's not about you. It's Christ, in you. Christ, through you. Christ, not only for you but also for every "you" through you. Through you, dear Christian, God's Good News of Christ and His cross is for every "you" in the world.

- ✘ Every "you", every person you meet, every person you see, every person you bump into, every person you're stuck in line behind, every person who frustrates you, every person having a great day, every person having a miserable day ... every single "you" that you encounter is one for whom Christ has died. Every single "you" out there is one for whom Christ rose. Every "you" that you will see this week is one for whom Christ lives forever.

### IV. The Intersection Where God Saves by Faith

- ⊗ And every single one of you in this room right now, Christ is in you according to His word of promise. This moment here is the moment of intersection. X marks this spot in time and place. X shows us where the treasure is; where the goods are at.
  - ➔ This is the moment of intersection, as a broken person like me speaks to a broken person like you. As the cosmic work of Christ comes through a forgiven child of God so that one more person; one more “you”, will hear and believe. So that you and you and you... will know and receive ... life ... peace ... purpose .... and hope. Why? To meet God’s ultimate goal for ever “you” as Paul says in verse 25, “...to make the Word of God fully known”.
  - ➔ This is the moment of intersection; the entire progression that we’ve illustrated from Paul with the letter X. Jesus Christ from eternity, for eternity, in you, through you and for every “you”. This saving moment of intersection; this simple X; it goes with you, because Christ and His work that it points you to, goes with you.
- ⊗ You see, Paul’s progression is Jesus’ progression; Jesus’ intersection; Jesus’ X that marks the spot for you and every “you”.
  - ➔ One more time through it all: 1) Jesus creates, sustains, and reconciles all things (V gesture). 2) God’s Good News of the cross of Christ Jesus is for you (hands together). 3) And through you, God’s Good News of the cross is for every “you” in Christ Jesus (hands down & out).
- ⊗ May God, who has begun this good work in you, bring it to completion on the day of Christ Jesus our eternal and almighty, saving Lord. Amen.