

A King Like No Other

Last Sunday of Church Year – 11/20/22 – Mt. Calvary Luth.
Text: Colossians 1:13-20 Pastor Keith Besel

v. 13-14, [Paul says,] “[**The Father**] has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Introduction

⊗ The darkness has definitely been growing all around us in recent weeks, as the days get shorter and daylight savings has now changed back to standard time again.

➔ In ancient times, pagan peoples thought that the darkness of this time of year signaled the triumph of evil gods or a king of the underworld winning out over the gods of light. Of course, we know that this darker time of the year is just part of the rhythm of God’s Creation. But even though we are used to this increase in darkness, we also know that darkness does have a certain power; a power that is not necessarily for good.

➔ For example, when you find yourself physically in darkness, you know that it’s easier to get lost. You need to show more caution because in the dark you are more vulnerable; you can’t see danger coming in advance.

➔ Even health-wise, human beings need light. In those parts of the world where there is more darkness, people have to take steps to fight off depression and other maladies. That’s the power of physical darkness.

⊗ And as Paul addresses it in our Reading today, spiritual darkness has power too. In Ephesians 6:12 Paul says, “We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” In our world and in our lives, the “domain of darkness” as Paul refers to it in

verse 13, can exert so much power at times that it seems as if it controls and reigns over us.

→ Of course we know there really is a king of darkness, and he is very powerful. But even as we feel Satan's power of darkness, God's Word here in Colossians, chapter one today holds out for us a tremendous promise; the promise that a new King – Jesus – is reigning now. And because He is "a King like no other" the authority and power of darkness has been broken.

I. Too often, the darkness seems so strong!

✘ All too often though, the darkness we face can seem so very strong, can't it? It makes sense that Scripture speaks here in verse 13 as if Satan's power and influence really is a "domain (or kingdom) of darkness".

→ His bag of tricks and deceptions, and even in-your-face attractions are very very real. Yes, Satan is a master at his trade; and his trade is deception, temptation and fear!

→ That is to say, his tactics and maneuvers look downright hideous against the light of the truth, which is why he hides them; he keeps them from being exposed. Revelation 12:9 calls him, "the great dragon...that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world...".

→ So we must always be vigilant; always aware as Christians, because what we can't see from Satan can so easily trap us if we become lazy or too confident in ourselves and disconnect from God's truth. And even when we know that the devil's powers are lurking all around us, without a constant bond to Christ that reign of darkness can become a great source of terror.

✘ Part of why this so important is because the darkness is in our roots; our past; our heritage. In John 8:44 Jesus confronted the Jews with the truth about all of mankind's

background, including yours and mine. He said, “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He...has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him.”

→ That's right, we were all once in that kingdom of Satan; the “domain of darkness”, because in our original sinful state we were separated from the kingdom of light.

✘ So even now, Satan and sin still pull at you and me; pulling with the lie that tries to get us to say, “That issue of sin and Satan aren't really as dangerous as all that”.

→ This is what our family and friends; our co-workers and classmates, our bosses and professors, as well as every source and type of media around try to pressure us into thinking. Just think how many times a day or week we hear of sin-based things like lotteries, substance use, gambling, getting even with people, complaining about government and authority; how much these are actually promoted and lifted up as honorable.

→ On top of that, the devil tempts us to ask, “Is this or that really wrong?” in things that are just accepted as normal, like having sex or living together outside of marriage or gossip or stretching the truth to gain an advantage or breaking the traffic laws that we disagree with or hiding something from a loved one because we think it is “for his/her own good”.

→ And one of the worst ways that sin and Satan try to pull us back into the “domain of darkness” is through the use of fear and despair. He loves it when he can get a Christian to say or think, “I'm so sinful; I'm so worthless that I don't deserve God's forgiveness. In fact there is no way that He can forgive someone as bad as me”. First of all, it is true, none of us “deserves” forgiveness, but we'll address that in a bit. But to think that God cannot forgive us, even if we are guilty of things like abortion, or unfaithfulness in our marriage, or ending up in prison for breaking a law, or habitual sin – those ones

that we repent of over and over yet go right back to again and again – well, those are exactly the kinds of things that Satan loves to keep bringing up in front of us all of the time, so that we think, “Maybe I should just give up the battle and stop trying to live for Christ at all?”

II. God has “delivered” us and “transferred” us!

✘ My dear Christians, don’t fall for those hideous and dark lies, especially as the time of Christ’s promised return and final judgement draws closer every day! As Paul assures you in verses 13-14, God has rescued you and placed you under the authority of His Son.

✘ There are two very important actions that Paul attaches to God, the Father; two things that show us why Satan and sin can no longer reign in our lives.

→ First he says that the Father “has delivered us from the domain of darkness”. The Greek word for “delivered” is “ῥύομαι” (ru-omai). It describes the act of “bringing someone out of severe and acute danger”; to “save” that person from destruction.

→ The second action is mentioned in the rest of verse 13 where it says that the Father has, “transferred” us to the kingdom of His beloved Son. The Greek word for “transferred” is “μεθίστημι” (meth-istāmee). It literally means to “remove someone or something from one place and establish them firmly in another”.

→ Putting these two actions together and applying them to your own personal situation right now today means that God has stormed the gates of hell where each of us used to reside from birth; where each of us still deserves to be because of our sin, and He has forcefully, with His overwhelming omnipotence rescued us from slavery in the dungeon of darkness and now placed us on the immovable foundation of Jesus’ kingship and reign as the one and only King of kings and Lord of lords!

- ✘ Notice and believe the past tense forms of those verbs in verse 13. God has delivered you and has transferred you to be under the reign of His Son, Jesus! It's already happened. It is a done deal!
 - ➔ And because Jesus is a King like no other king, that means He reigns over His kingdom like no other king could ever do.
- ✘ So what does all of this mean? It means that all of those things we talked about before; the sins that Satan tried to make us think were not all that important, and those rebellious thoughts and actions that we tried to rationalize as being okay, and that guilt that Satan tried to use to lead us into despair and doubt – all of that has been forgiven; washed away; overcome; restored because Jesus' death on the cross has paid for all of our sins!
 - ➔ He used His own precious blood and His innocent suffering and death as His weapon of choice; as the means of paying for our guilt; as the avenue of granting us, as Paul says, "redemption"!
 - ➔ Let's be clear, no one; and I mean no one else could have ever done what Jesus has already done for you and me.

III. Jesus has the authority to break darkness!

- ✘ Paul spends the remainder of the text in verses 15-20 laying out before us one of the best descriptions in all of Scripture of the specifics of Jesus' nature and office that set Him apart from everyone and everything else. Let's run through it all quickly. But while we do, understand that much of what Paul describes for us that makes Jesus so unique is far beyond our ability to fully grasp on this side of heaven. Yet that doesn't change the fact that it is absolutely true.

→ To begin with, in verse 15 Jesus is the precise “image” – the Greek uses the word “εἰκῶν” (ikon) “of the invisible God”. God doesn’t wish to keep us in the dark about His and His Son’s identity or actions. And so He reveals Himself openly to us when we see Christ.

→ He has the same nature as the Father – one of three persons in the Triune God. And in Jesus we see that God’s actions are always gracious and loving and forgiving. They always work in service of, and in concert with God’s desire and will.

✘ Verse 16 tells us that the Son “created” all things, “in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities”. That means that His ability to rule has no limit.

→ Jesus, not Satan, is the rightful King of the universe. And when He returns, as we think about today on the Last Sunday of the Church Year, we will see Him on His throne with the evil pretender, the devil cast down forever.

✘ Verse 17 reveals that Jesus is “before all things, and in Him all things hold together”. This is how vast his power is. It reaches to every dark corner where Satan might lurk. So take comfort from this folks. We really have nothing to fear – not Satan or his bag of tricks; not death or hell in eternity.

✘ And as to Jesus’ office, verse 18 reminds us that Christ is the “head of the body, the church”. He is “firstborn from the dead” and because His power has conquered death and hell, then you and I have the guarantee that when He returns in glory, we too will rise, physically from death to be with Him in eternity!

→ So, in verse 19, it’s as if Paul knows that our human thinking will struggle to grasp all of this, and he repeats Himself for good measure, “For in [Jesus] all the fullness

of God was pleased to dwell". Jesus is 100% man and He is all God!

- ⌘ So joy of joys, you and I reap the fruits of His glorious work. We bask in the eternal light of His glory and power as verse 20 declares it to us. "Through Jesus" the Father has "reconciled to Himself all things...making peace by the blood of His cross."

➔ That means that even when you and I don't feel peaceful, the facts don't change. Jesus has established peace between us and the Father. Our sin no longer divides us, for Jesus has taken all of the hatred and all the evil of our sins in His own body when He gave up His life on the cross!

Conclusion

- ⌘ Not if, but when you feel the pull and the power of darkness, which every Christian feels at one time or another, hold fast dear Christian to God's promise and truth here from Scripture today.

➔ We are no longer under that reign of darkness. We have been "rescued" from that condemnation, danger and fear. God has "delivered us" and "transferred us" into the glorious reign of His Son. We have it now today in our baptism by God's grace. And when Jesus comes again, we will bask in His reign in eternal glory! He is a King like no other. So we pray, "Come quickly Jesus". Amen.

Sermon Outline

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v. 13-14, [Paul says,] “[**The Father**] **has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**”

Introduction

- ✘ Darkness & its physical influence upon us. (examples)
- ✘ Paul addresses spiritual darkness & its power. Eph. 6:12, We “wrestle...against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil...”.
 - ➔ The “domain of darkness” (v.13) can seem to reign over us.
 - ➔ Yet Colossians, chapt. 1 promises “a King like no other” has broken the authority/power of darkness.

I. Too often, the darkness seems so strong!

- ✘ v.13, Satan’s power/influence are a “domain (or kingdom) of darkness”. His trade is deception, temptation & fear!
 - ➔ Rev. 12:9 call him, “...the deceiver of the whole world...”. We must be vigilant/aware as Christians.
- ✘ Darkness in our roots. Jn. 8:44, “You are of your father the devil...”. In our original sinful state we were separated from the kingdom of light.
- ✘ Satan/sin still pull at us to say/think: 1) “That’s not as dangerous as all that”. 2) “Is this or that really wrong?” 3) “I’m so sinful; so worthless I don’t deserve God’s forgiveness. There’s no way He can forgive someone as bad as me”. (examples of each of the above given)

II. God has “delivered” us and “transferred” us!

✘ Don't fall for those dark lies. Two important actions of God vv.13-14: 1st, the Father “has delivered us from the domain of darkness”. Greek for “delivered” is “ῥύομαι” (ru-omai) = act of “bringing someone out of severe/acute danger”; to “save” that person from destruction.

2nd, the Father has, “transferred” us to the kingdom of His beloved Son. Greek “transferred” is “μεθίστημι” (meth-istāmee) = to “remove someone or something from one place and establish them firmly in another”. (explained)

✘ Past tense: God has delivered; has transferred you to be under the reign of His Son, Jesus!

➔ He used His own blood, suffering, death as His means of paying for our guilt; granting us “redemption”!

III. Jesus alone has the authority to break darkness!

✘ Paul spends vv.15-20 laying out specifics of Jesus' nature & office that set Him apart.

➔ v.15, Jesus is the “image” (Greek = “εἰκὼν” (ikon)) “of the invisible God”. God reveals Himself to us in Christ.

➔ v.16, the Son “created” all things. His ability to rule has no limit.

➔ v.17, Jesus is “before all things, and in Him all things hold together”. His power reaches every dark corner where Satan might lurk. We have nothing to fear.

➔ v.19, Jesus is 100% man and He is all God!

➔ v.20, “Through Jesus”, Father has “reconciled to Himself all things...”. So our sin no longer divides us.

Conclusion

✘ We have Jesus' reign now today (baptism). When Jesus comes, we will bask in His reign in eternal glory! Amen.