

Seeing the Scene

Spent the week "Looking" at a passage in Colossians You may have wondered why I picked the Book of Colossians for us to study It is not the best known. Just one of 66 books in the Bible It is not the shortest or the longest Doesn't have a ton of famous verses Doesn't contain many well known stories The reason I chose this book is simply this This Book reminds me of the Motherland....Yes the Great State of Texas (Texas 1)

Well that is not the only reason...but....it was important. Today I want to unpack it a bit. Because I am from the Great State of Texas (Texas 2) I have really been looking forward to this sermon. You may be wondering what Colossians 1:15-23 has to do with Texas. I am glad that you asked.

The Alamo 1 -Mission San Antonio de Valero. The Alamo ..long before they converted it to a car rental company March 6,1836

Brave Texans defending the Mission and surrounded by the Mexican Army James Bowie- No relation to David But had a pretty impressive knife if I do say so myself. Sam Houston David Crockett (Alamo 2)- I am the number one fan of the man from Tennessee. His hat though was a fashion faux pas

Anyway.... 115 Texans and 400 Mexican Men died that day Yes...I know we lost.....The battle was a COLOSSAL failure..... I get it....But that is not the point. There was a moment in the Days preceding the Battle....The Alamo was surrounded 2 Options Live or Die. Every man had a decision to make They could live for themselves or die for a cause they believed in

Col William Travis took his Sword and drew a line in the sand (Alamo 3) Those on one side of the line died for their cause Those on the other lived for themselves Can you imagine the weight of that decision? That crystal clear moment of your life When you realize that you will surrender everything Everything you have...including your life For a cause greater than yourself.

I hope you can imagine it Because that is exactly what Jesus Asks of His followers Die to yourself So I can live in you

The Book of Colossians and this passage in particular Is the line of truth It stands as one of the best books in the Bible in plainly describing. The supremacy And Majesty of Jesus Christ.

The passage we begin looking at today is the core passage of the entire book It spells out in clear language who Jesus is. If you have any questions about who Jesus is If you are trying to figure out who Jesus is Trying to decide where "you stand"... This passage was written for you In fact this passage is the core of what Christianity is all about This passage describes what separates us from every other religion Paul is essentially taking His Words And drawing a line in the sand Every person has a decision to make The decision we make is not just life and death on earth. But where we will spend eternity after our time here on earth.

The response to the words of our passage today Separate those who are saved And those who are not In this passage Paul paints a picture of Jesus That is higher and loftier than most of us ever consider He makes claims that go beyond any easy understanding of Christ and they challenge us to make a stand for Christ that goes beyond any easy decision.

This is the Alamo passage of the Bible. Paul is asking us to cross the line Stand with Jesus Die to ourselves so He can live in us and with us for eternity. We are surrounded...not with the Mexican Army But with False teaching. We must know where the line of truth is And on which side we are standing.

Turn with me to Colossians 1:15-20 That is why I couldn't wait to preach this sermon This is your day to make sure you know where you stand The line of truth has been drawn and has not moved for 2000 years. We are surrounded by an enemy. The decision may cost us our life on earth. But Paul draws a line in the sand. He clearly states who Jesus is...who we are....and the decision that stands before each of us. Let's read it.

Colossians 1:15–20 (ESV) 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him 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. 17 And 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, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

We are going to go through this passage today....slow down...and apply what we have been learning. I have given you my notes from this passage that show you how I approach every passage that we teach. Don't freak out, we are going to go through it. For those online, it is available in the sermon notes on the Remnant Website.

The first thing that I do is to remind myself of how this passage fits into the letter. Remember letters have a flow to them. You read them from beginning to end. So, I always ask myself first, what did the writer just finish talking about?

We spoke a few weeks ago about that passage. It was the incredible prayer that Paul had for the Colossian believers that he had never met. It is the prayer that I would pray for everyone if I only had one prayer.

Next, I read **the passage** at least 7 times....and begin by asking myself, How do I feel? How does this passage make you feel?

For me, this passage brings the emotions of wonder, worship, gratitude and me feeling unworthy.

Next, it helps me to see all the things that repeat. I always take the Scripture without any markings and make my own. Now the key here is not that you put everything in the right bucket. Whether you think something compares and someone else thinks it contrasts is not the point. The point is that you see it and think about it. There are no wrong answers here unless you just blow through the text and move on. Remember the goal is to abide...not have perfect order.

It always helps me to look over the passage globally....We are just going to work through what we have learned...We are just looking...We are still just on content. This is why I gave you the bookmark today...

The first thing I look for are words that repeat....Remember that noticing the words that repeat instantly tell you what the writer thought was most important. What words do you see that repeat in this passage?

He is...

By/Through Him

Firstborn

Creation

All things

Reconciled

These are the things that we see repeat in this passage

Next we look for things that compare...Now compare and contrast are very similar. You have to compare something to see that it actually contrasts. But what we are looking for are things that specifically say...is like or as a...

Do you see like or as in this passage? Not really

The absence of something sometimes is a key thing to notice. One of our repeat words here is HE IS.

Paul is not telling us what Jesus is like....This passage is about who Jesus is. There is no wavering...no comparison....He is. The absence of comparisons here tips us to the clue that Paul is leaving no room for doubt or debate. This is who He is....take it or leave it.

But I also see in this passage a metaphor....a comparison that invites us to meditate...words that create a mental image....

He is the image of the invisible God....How can something invisible have an image? How is Jesus the image of God? Metaphors...slow down and meditate.

How about contrasts?

He is/You are

Visible/Invisible

Peace through blood

Once alienated and hostile/Blameless and above reproach

Head of the Body/Head of the Church

Creates all things/Reconciles all things

Firstborn of Creation/Firstborn from Death

Now things that connect

Do you see a so that....kind of statement in this verse?

That in everything He might be preeminent.

What about prepositions? Tons of them...by Him...for Him...through Him...

Any question marks? No...why? Because Paul is answering a question not asking one. There is no room for questions here...Paul is stating facts.

Means? Yes...tons of them. By Him...through Him...in Him...This passage is all about Him.

How about conditions and consequences? Do you see if or then?

If indeed you continue in the faith. This passage demands a response from me. Don't try to figure it out, just notice it.

What about Lists do you see any lists here?

All things created A) in heaven B) on earth C) visible D) invisible E) thrones F) dominions G) Rulers H) Authorities

Jesus is 1) image of the invisible God 2) firstborn of all creation 3) before all things 4) head of the body/church 5) the beginning 6) firstborn of the dead 7) Preeminent in everything

All things: a) all things created b) all things created through Him c) all things created for Him d) in Him all things hold together e) that he might be preeminent f) reconcile by blood of the cross

Jesus is 1) the firstborn of all creation and 2) the firstborn from the dead

You were 1) alienated and hostile in mind 2) doing evil deeds

You are a) reconciled in his body of flesh by his death b) holy and blameless c) above reproach

Continued in the faith 1) stable 2) steadfast and 3) not shifting from hope

Gospel is 1) proclaimed in all creation and 2) Paul is a minister

Ok so lots of lists...don't try to figure them out...just note them and write them down.

But ask yourself why so many lists? Well Paul is stating facts....

Ok lets look at what is Emphasized.

Verb tenses...

Well He is is always present tense. Notice that through out the New Testament when the authors speak of Jesus they speak present tense....they know He is alive. Let me tell you how I speak of my dad who has passed away...It is one of the validating features that makes the New Testament authentic. Jesus is alive...the writers never mess this up.

Notice that some things are past tense and some things are present tense. He was the first born of all creation...past tense...In Him all things hold together...present tense...he is holding together all things right now. The fullness of God was pleased to dwell...past tense...All of God's fullness has been given to Jesus.

We were alienated, hostile and doing evil deeds...past tense. He has now reconciled past tense...Jesus work for you is done...in order to present you...future tense...on judgment day.

The Gospel has been proclaimed past tense....

Do you see any commands here? Not really.

Just go through the passage and notice the verbs.

What about a purpose statement....so that...

He has reconciled by His death in order to present you holy, blameless, above reproach. A purpose statement. This answers the why question.

Do you see any exaggerations here? Do you expect to?

Not really because this passage has all been about facts...clearly outlined truths that we must know...there is no reason to exaggerate. You can't exaggerate Jesus...

Are there any keywords that you need to understand...Maybe find out what they meant in the Greek or Hebrew...I will be showing you how to do that later.

might

Ok so we have looked at this passage. Notice that while we were categorizing, processing, thinking.....we were learning at every step. We have slowed down....We have given the Holy Spirit time to show us what is here. We are just looking at the content. We have not yet touched Context, Connection or Conduct.

We have just noticed all that we can notice....at least for now.

Next I read around the outside of my notes counterclockwise...and I read them 7 times. Why do I do this? Because I am soon going to move to context. I want to make sure I haven't missed anything. I am taking a mental picture of what I have noticed.

I have a feel for what kind of passage this is...it is an unwavering clear...non negotiable explanation of who Jesus is, what Jesus did and what Jesus will do.

I am not going to try to interpret the list...just make sure I have noted all of them. I am soon going to leave the scene and move on to context. I have to make sure that I have not missed anything.

Now I read the entire passage again 7 times.

Now this entire process took less than an hour and this is a big passage. This might be all that you do on day one. Remember we are looking at this same passage for at least a week.

At this point, you might be praying that the Holy Spirit will show you all that you are to see in this passage right now....You don't move on until you are sure this step is completed.

Initially you might break what we just did into smaller pieces. You may spend your study time one day...just writing down the lists...Maybe you focus only on the emotion, what repeats and an comparisons.

The text determines your learning schedule. For instance, in this passage I would block time at some point in the week to meditate on the metaphor...He is the image of the Invisible God.

I may meditate on the comparison in this passage...Who He is and Who I was.

I may mediate on how you can obtain peace through blood of the cross...and why God chose that for His Son.

I might meditate on what it means to be the firstborn....I might need to study that a bit.

Maybe I will meditate on what it means that He reconcile me so that I can stand blameless....before HIM. He does all the work so that when I stand before Him on judgment day...He declares what He has made me....blameless...He certifies His work in me.

I told you that in order to find the gold....you need to spend more time reflecting than reading. The lists...the repeats...all of these things are just specks of gold...they point you to the real gold.

The gold is found in the reflection..the meditation...with the Holy Spirit....God calls it abiding in Him. We will keep studying this passage next week.

This is Paul's Alamo moment...the line in the sand...we have to make sure we see the line clearly...so we know where we stand. Let's Pray.

Communion