

THE FULLNESS OF GOD

(Colossians 1.15-20)

December 7th-11th, 2014



WELCOME & SHARING

Share any announcements...

- . **Christmas Store Saturday, December 13th 2-5pm**
- . **Christmas Eve Worship, 5:30pm December 24th**

Opener Question: What is your favorite Christmas movie & why?

Intro: We're pretty sure they didn't send greeting cards in the 1st century. But Paul did write an awful lot of letters. And one of the themes he returns to again and again is the significance of the coming of Christ. During Advent this year, we're going to be combing through these letters to help us understand Christmas.

STUDY/DISCUSSION

>>READ>> Colossians 1.15-20

- (1) Most scholars think this is a poem, or maybe even an early Christian hymn. How would you sum up the main point?
- (2) List all the things you learn about Jesus. As you list them, try to elaborate on what you think might be the significance of what Paul says about him?

NOTE: Perhaps the most confusing term applied to Jesus here is "firstborn of all creation." At first glance, it may seem like Paul is saying Jesus is a created being, which would contradict the rest of the passage where he is described as "the beginning," the Creator, and so on. But remember, in ancient society the firstborn didn't just get a portion of the inheritance, they had claim to all of it. By calling Jesus "the firstborn of all creation" Paul is saying that Jesus is the rightful ruler of everything in the universe.

- (3) Based on what you know, or what Josh said on Sunday, how would this passage have been subversive in its original context? How does this passage challenge contemporary norms now?
- (4) If you haven't already, discuss the significance of the term "in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (v.19). How should the miracle of the Incarnation affect the way we celebrate Christmas?
- (5) Verse 18 says "that in everything he might be preeminent." Some translations have it, "that in everything he might have the supremacy." Are there things you are holding back from Jesus? What would it look like (practically) for you to give him supremacy in every area of your life?
- (6) How does the exalted view of Christ in this passage help move you to worship this Christmas?
- (7) Jesus left the comforts of heaven to be born in a manger. Is God calling you to "move out" of any comfort and security to serve and join him in mission?
- (8) Read and discuss the following poem by Brian Walsh and Sylvia Keesmaat together.

In an image saturated world,
 a world of ubiquitous corporate logos
 permeating your consciousness
 a world of dehydrated and captive imaginations
 in which we are too numbed, satiated and co-opted
 to be able to dream of life otherwise
 a world in which the empire of global economic affluence
 has achieved the monopoly of our imaginations

In this world
 Christ is the image of the invisible God
 Christ is the image par excellence
 the image above all other images
 the image that is not a façade
 the image that is not trying to sell you anything
 that image that refuses to co-opt you

He is the source of a liberated imagination
 a subversion of the empire
 because it all starts with him
 and it all ends with him
 everything, all things
 whatever you can imagine
 visible and invisible
 mountains and atoms
 outerspace, urban space and cyberspace

whether it be the institutionalized power structures
of the state, the academy or the market
all things have been created in him and through him
he is their source, their purpose, their goal.

In the face of a disconnected world
where home is a domain in cyberspace
where neighborhood is a chat room
where public space is a shopping mall
where information technology promises
a tuned-in reconnected world
all things hold together in Christ
the creation is a deeply personal cosmos
all cohering and interconnected in Jesus

Grace makes beauty out of ugly things
All things are reconciled in him
And it all happens on a cross
it all happens at a state execution
where the governor did not commute the sentence
it all happens at the hands of the empire
that has captured our imagination
it all happens through blood
not through a power grab by the sovereign one
it all happens in embraced pain
for the sake of others
it all happens on a cross
arms outstretched in embrace
and this is the image of the invisible God
this is the body of Christ.

PRAYER

Take some time and pray together. You can pray as a large group, break into smaller groups, split up into men and women, etc. If you share prayer requests, post them to the City so that your group can continue to be praying for each other.