

“The Source, the Means, and the End”

Colossians 1:13-20

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

There’s an old saying that I’m quite certain you have all heard in relation to being decent at a lot of things: “Jack of all trades, master of none.” It reminds me of a long-standing motto in the restaurant industry that you have to have at least one signature dish that keeps people coming back. You can’t be like the Cheesecake Factory and have a menu that is literally a 20-page book. Many an establishment has fallen apart because they wanted to innovate and got away from their signature offering. There is a famous barbeque place called Dreamland in Alabama where I’m from that is world-renowned for its pork ribs. It’s a hole-in-the-wall shack that for decades served nothing but ribs, white bread, and sauce, and let me tell you, they were incredible. But after the original owner passed away, the family got it in their heads that they were going to franchise and expand, and to do so they would need to start offering more items. They wanted to be a jack of all trades in the barbeque world, and the product suffered for it. They went from being a master of one, to a master of none. Even their signature ribs and sauce suffered from it, and they were never the same.

Our text this morning outlines for us the reality of what Jesus has done for us, and it is not a situation of being a jack of all trades, master of none, or even a master of one. This is evidenced by the poignant statement from Paul in verse 19, “For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.” Jesus is God in the flesh, and as such is all-powerful and not limited by worldly reason. In terms of the Trinity, we ascribe certain works to each person: Father – creation, Son – redemption, and Holy Spirit – sanctification, but that does not mean that they are limited to those and non-participatory in the others. And that is clear from what Paul says in our Epistle lesson. Jesus, the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, is the fullness of God. He is not a piece of God or an extension of Him, but He is God Himself. He is a master of all things, because He created all things, and all things were created for Him. To put it more concisely, Jesus is the source, the means, and the end of all things. And as we close out the church year, it’s appropriate that we look at the truth of who Christ is and what He has done as we move into the Advent season and look forward to the coming of the Son of Man.

He is the source of all creation. “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.” Christ wasn’t just present at the creation; He is the Creator as God of very God. There are those who claim themselves to be

Christian that somehow deny the truth of this doctrine revealed to us by God Himself. They would have you believe that Jesus is just the first creature, the greatest of all God's creations and so has a special place in the hierarchy between us and God. Their utter denial of Christ's divinity flies in the face of the Scripture and Jesus' own testament to the contrary. He says in John 10:30, "I and the Father are one." He was not just a bystander reaping the benefits of the created things that were being made, but as part of the Triune Godhead, He was actively creating all things, because...

He is the means of creation. The Father spoke and the Son was the very Word that created everything around us. The heavens and earth were not created from an imaginary set of molecules accidentally colliding in the emptiness of space, nor did the world form over a period of millions of years. God spoke the Word, and the world was created. The Word of the Lord is performative, meaning that it does precisely that which it says. In the beginning, God spoke everything into existence. "And God said, 'Let there be light, and there was light (Genesis 1:3)." It is not a dead word that falls on empty ears, or ceases to have power if it isn't "allowed" into the world by our speaking it. As the means through which God created the heavens and the earth, Jesus brings life by His action and by His grace we have been given everything that we have to sustain us in this life. He is the source of it, the means by which it was made, and...

He is the end of creation. Creation was made for Him, as a sign of God's love for His only-begotten Son. He created us to be His eternal companions that He might have someone to share His love with for all eternity. And the only reason we don't have that already is because of the rebellion of our sinful flesh – the rebellion of Adam. Our first parents separated us from the fullness of God's glory when they fell victim to the lies of the evil one that they could be like God. Jesus as the end of creation, the goal, if you will, is not just because it was made for Him, but also that He will be the one who judges it in the end. He will return on the clouds of heaven and the whole creation will proclaim as the Psalmist says in Psalm 96:10, "The Lord reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; He will judge the peoples with equity." The creation's failure and willingness to allow sin power in its life is not something that comes without a cost, and it is a cost that must be paid.

Thankfully, for the sake of all those who believe in Christ, that cost has already been paid. Righteous wrath is not what awaits you as it does the rest of the unbelieving world. Righteous judgment is yours, but the righteous judgment you have received and will receive on the last day is one of "justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone." Not only is Jesus the source, the means, and the end of all things in creation, but He alone is the source, the means, and the end of your salvation. He has made the sin

you bear in your flesh null and void before His Father in heaven, and the faith that you bear is yours only because of His gracious gift.

He is the source of your salvation. As it says in Hebrews 12:2, we look “to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” You have no faith, save for that which is created in you by the one who died to redeem the world. By the Holy Spirit’s in-working, you have the knowledge of Christ’s vicarious atonement, and the knowledge of His glorious gift of salvation by His shed blood on the cross. No other thing in this world can save you. Nothing can bring you eternal life in His heavenly presence except for the gracious declaration from Christ Jesus that you are covered in His blood and are therefore righteous for His sake. No amount of works, no amount of praying, and no amount of “speaking words to power” is capable of bringing you that gift, because you do not possess the means of salvation...

He is the means of your salvation. Christ alone and His death on the cross to pay for the sins of the world is what has secured eternal life for all who believe in Him. There is no secret knowledge that will save you. There is only Jesus and what He has done for the whole world. Faith in the Son of God as the redeemer of the world is your lot in this life, and it is the lot that will bring you to the end as one who will dwell in eternity with your Lord and Savior. Don’t look to yourself for the answers to what you seek. Do not look to your own supposed “power” for the means of your salvation. The answer is so simple, and inserting yourself into it only complicates it. You belong to Christ because of your baptism into His death as Paul says in Romans 6, and that truth is what has saved you. You are one with Jesus. You are His body and have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9). That is the means by which you are saved. The blood of Jesus shed for you. And you look forward to what that brings, for it brings with it the truth of eternal life with Jesus, because...

He is the end of your salvation. He is the consummation of the end of all things, and that means He is the end of your faith in Him. Your faith is authored by Him, sustained by Him, and is brought to its full fruition in Him. The Lord, Jesus Christ, makes everything you go through in this life worth the journey, because there is a place for you to dwell when you come to the end of your race. The house of His Father that He has gone to prepare for you is what awaits everyone who believes in salvation by His blood. All pain will be gone, all heartache and grief assuaged, never to return again. There will only be pure and inexorable joy in the light of His eternal glory. Whether you attain the glory of heaven before He returns, or are alive on the day of the Lord’s judgment, His return to awaken the dead and reunite body and soul for those who have

gone before is the end of all God's people's salvation. No matter the circumstances, therein lies the hope of all the children of the Most High.

Your Lord, Jesus Christ, is the source, the means, and the end of all things. He was the very Word of creation that was spoken in the beginning, and His coming on the clouds of heaven will be the end of fallen creation when He comes to judge the world. As it says in John 1:3, "All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." Everything you have in this life, and everything that you will have in the life to come is because of Him. Because not only is He the source, means, and end of all creation, He is the source, means, and the end of your salvation. You are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone, and that faith is what sustains you as you walk this life and await the life to come. Salvation is yours because He came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the virgin Mary. His substitutionary death is what secured that very salvation for you, and by His blood shed for you on the cross you are redeemed from the scourge of sin and death. And the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting which is yours already by faith, will be yours in reality when He comes again to awaken all the dead and pronounce His righteous judgment.

You don't need to look for your salvation in the empty words of hollow preachers that tell you that the power of your salvation lies within you. The only place that you need to look is to the cross, to the one who is the very source, means, and end of your redemption. Jesus is no jack of all trades, master of none. He is the Master of all things as God of very God. "He 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 (Col. 1:13-14)." By His shed blood and His pierced body, of which we will partake in a few short moments, you stand before the world and before your Lord as one who is washed in the blood of the Lamb who was slain and has been declared to be righteous because of Him. You are justified by His grace alone, and you will be welcomed into His loving arms because of His divine mercy. Your wearied soul has found rest in Jesus Christ, and you will have eternal rest in the light of His glory as one who is loved for His sake alone. There, in that "sweet and blessed country," we will wait together with all the saints and angels for the day when we will be reunited with our bodies, resurrected to new life as we dwell in the glorious presence of our Lord for all eternity. Amen.