

Connecting the Sunday Sparkle at Hearsall Baptist with the Daily Dust of Life

Welcome

- Sometimes people get so uptight defending their point of view they can become actually funny. Does anyone have an example?

Worship

- Read Psalm 133 - preferably in an inclusive language translation.
- What do you treasure about the unity we find at church?
- Thank God for his gift of our oneness in him.

Word

Read Colossians 1:15

Two bold claims are made about the Son in this verse.

- Discuss some ways in which the Son is the image of an invisible God.
- The second claim is that the Son is the firstborn over all creation. This is hard to understand literally, whether we think of the Son as the eternal second person of the Trinity or whether we think of Jesus born of Mary. More likely Paul means the status and pre-eminence that belongs to the firstborn. Does the Son have pre-eminence in your life?

Read Colossians 1:16

- Paul now makes explicit the idea that firstborn does not mean first created - since **all things were created through him**. Discuss (briefly) how it can be that even apparently evil things (such as ruthless empires) can ultimately have their origin in the Son.

Read Colossians 1:17

- A new thought is added here - as the pre-eminent Son, in him all things hold together. The world today can seem like it's falling apart, but discuss (briefly) how it might be that in reality, everything is held together in the Son.

Read Colossians 1:18

Three more audacious claims follow.

- In what sense is the church as his body, with him as the head?

- What significance does the reference to the dead have for us and for the world at large?
- Is there anything outside his supremacy?

Read Colossians 1:19 - 20

More huge claims follow about the Son.

- All God's fullness dwelt in him. Very small things can contain vast quantities of information - think of a DNA strand or a microchip. Even so, it's hard for us to understand how all of God's fullness could be contained with the man Jesus. What does this suggest about the potential of any human being?
- What is the scope of the reconciliation achieved by Christ?
- In simple terms, how has this reconciliation been achieved?

Read Colossians 1: 21 - 23

- What is the impact of this reconciliation on the believer?
- How is it that we are described as being without blemish and free from accusation? Is this about the fact that we've been forgiven, or the work of the Spirit improving our lives, or both?
- What does this imply about our relationships with each other, within his body, the church? In view of how God reconciles us to him, how should we repair broken relationships?
- What is the **gospel**? How would you put it into words? Can the deepest meaning of the gospel ever be adequately expressed in words?
- In what sense, then, has it been proclaimed 'to every creature under heaven'?

Witness

These verses present a completely inclusive vision of the scope of the gospel and the reconciling work of Jesus Christ.

- This week, look out for opportunities to find Christ already working within people.
- Share with them positively about the reconciliation God is bringing about with everyone and everything.
- Pray for them that they may experience the privilege of being consciously a part of Christ's body.