

Colossians 1:14-20

“Delivered, Transferred and Redeemed”
Last Sunday of the Church Year (Proper 29 C)

November 23, 2025

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, West Salem, Wisc.
Pastor Peter Adelsen

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

“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”
(Colossians 1:13-14).

Last Sunday during the children’s message, we were reminded that it is getting darker these days. There is less light these days. And until December 21, the light grows more dim each day. Darkness is powerful. Darkness has an undeniable authority. Darkness forces you to do certain things and darkness prevents you from doing other things.

In today’s age, we can live out our lives without ever actually experiencing total, complete darkness. We can do this through artificial light, through things such as light bulbs and flashlights. So, it is easy for us to lose sight of darkness’ authority. But darkness does have real power. Darkness forces us to drive slower at night. Darkness causes us to put on the brights in hopes that a deer will still not jump out in your way.

In complete darkness, you will get lost and never know where to go. Darkness certainly forces us to be cautious and sometimes that darkness causes fear, because darkness can hurt you.

Darkness can actually kill, because all living things need light to stay alive. In parts of the world where darkness lingers, people have to take steps to fight off depression and other maladies. In total darkness, people can become insane and become sick and die. And all because of darkness. That is authority. That is power.

Spiritual darkness has power too. This ***“domain of darkness”*** is a place where darkness has its way. This ***“domain of darkness”*** is dark because people cannot see their way to the truth; they cannot perceive what they should perceive about the Lord and about themselves. They grope, they stumble, they are the “blind leading the blind” to destruction because they do not have better advice or example to offer than their own impaired stumbling. Sin is dark because we live in it thoughtlessly, carelessly, recklessly, stumbling and tumbling to our own and others’ destruction.

This “*domain of darkness*” is also dark because it is precisely where Satan holds sway. He relies on darkness, both the darkness of night, when sin crouches at our door so close to us, and the darkness of the heart, where we do not even understand the things we say and do as wrong. Satan likes darkness because it affords him room to work. He can work when you don’t confess your sin. He can work when you spend your time and energy hiding your sin. He can work when you have no one else with you and you assume that no one else sees or cares what you are doing. Darkness is a favorite place for Satan. Darkness is where Satan works his hardest on you and me.

In today’s epistle reading, many of the Colossians were choosing to live in spiritual darkness and because of this darkness, the Colossian church was in serious jeopardy. It was so bad that Epaphras made a 1,300-mile trip to Rome to visit St. Paul while he was in prison.

So, what was the issue? Well, the city of Colossae included a mixture of both Greeks and Jews and among them were elements of Gnosticism. This Gnostic heresy taught that Jesus alone was not adequate for salvation. They taught of a secret knowledge that threatened the salvation of these Colossians. This heresy centered on the Person of Christ as they denied Christ’s humanity as they viewed Jesus as a mere spirit being who came from God. They taught a form of philosophical dualism where the spirit is good, and matter was evil. So, they said that Christ could never be man, because flesh was evil.

But by far, the most serious aspect of this Colossian heresy was its rejection of Christ’s deity. This is why St. Paul wrote this letter to the Colossian church. He wrote this letter because their salvation was at stake.

The Bible is supremely a book about the Lord Jesus Christ. The Old Testament records the preparation for His coming. The Gospels present Him as God in human flesh, come into the world to save sinners. The Epistles detail the theology of Christ’s work and personification of Christ in His Body, the Church. And Revelation presents Christ on the throne, reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Every part of Scripture testifies about Jesus Christ. In Luke 24, “*Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, [Jesus] interpreted to [the Emmaus disciples] in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself*” (Luke 24:27). In John 5, Jesus said, “*You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me*” (John 5:39). And Philip, too, preached Christ to the Ethiopian eunuch by using only the book of Isaiah (Acts 8:35).

But of all the Bible's teachings about Jesus Christ, our text today may be the most significant. Today's text is dramatic and powerful and removes any doubt or confusion over who Jesus truly is.

So, who is Jesus? ***“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of creation”*** (Colossians 1:15). Jesus is the absolute image of God. Now, He did not become the image of God at the incarnation, but He has been the image of God from all eternity. Jesus is the exact representation of God's nature. He is the exact likeness of God. He is in His very form God. This is why Jesus could say: ***“Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father”*** (John 14:9). In Christ, the invisible God became visible, ***“and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth”*** (John 1:14).

Jesus is the full and final and complete revelation of God. He is God taken upon Himself human flesh.

Not only is Jesus the image of the invisible God 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. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together”*** (Colossians 1:16-17). Jesus is the Creator. He is not a creation of God. Jesus created all things. ***“All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing that was made”*** (John 1:3).

The entire universe exists and continues to operate only through the power and will of Jesus Christ. For, if He would for a moment cease to sustain creation, then the stars, the planets, and atoms would all spin out of control until they would disappear into oblivion. It's Jesus who holds all things together. Jesus is God.

This, ***“in Him all things hold together”*** also teaches us something else. You see, on Judgment Day, everyone must pass through Him. So, those who in life knew Him in name only, or only knew Him as an inconvenience, or those who did not know Him at all, will now face Him entirely unprepared, dressed in the dirtiness of their sins and will hear Him say: ***“Truly, I say to you, I do not know you”*** (Matthew 25:12).

Jesus does not know those who live in darkness. For everyone who does not live by faith in Christ is among Satan's fallen world. Without faith in Christ, the sinner stands before God guilty and condemned; the sinner stands before God as a debtor, an enemy, a stranger.

But we, who have been delivered from the domain of darkness by faith in Jesus will see Jesus standing before us as a familiar friend and brother. In Him, “*we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins*” (Colossians 1:14).

Despite our sins, Jesus has reconciled us back to Himself. He undertook the Great Exchange. He willingly suffered all things for you. He willingly faced mockery for you. He willingly died for you. In Christ, the sinner now stands before God as righteous. In Christ, the sinner is granted freedom. In Christ, the sinner’s debt is paid. In Christ, the sinner stands before God as friend. In Christ, the sinner stands before God as His son or daughter.

In Christ alone, we are at peace with God. In Christ alone, we are reconciled to God. In Christ alone, we are restored to a right relationship between God and man.

We are at peace with God because Jesus shed His blood on the cross and by rising again the third day from the dead to make sure that you are His.

In Christ, we have been delivered from the domain of darkness and have been transferred to His kingdom!

You were created by Christ and He has redeemed you to be His forever. Christ is the Head of the body, the Church. And since you are in Christ, you are no longer captive to sin, you are no longer of the domain of darkness. You are redeemed. You are delivered. You are forgiven. You are set free. You are cleansed. You are healed. This was accomplished because of the power of His shed blood. His blood brings peace. His shed blood brings peace between you and God. His blood cancels your sin, your idolatry, your rebellion you once owed Him.

Jesus has won for you peace by His blood and by His cross and by His resurrected life. Christ is all in all. By faith, Christ, your Creator and Redeemer has delivered you out of the domain of darkness by giving you redemption, the forgiveness of your sin. Amen.

*The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.*

+ SOLI DEO GLORIA +