**“The Preeminent”**

Psalm 46

Malachi 3:13-18

**Colossians 1:13-20**

Luke 23:27-43

 Last Sunday of the Church Year, Nov. 19/20, 2022

For this last weekend of the Church Year, I’d like you, again, to hear the entirety of our Epistle lesson, from Colossians 1:13-20, with its proper emphasis: “He (that is God, the Heavenly Father) 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. **He (Jesus)** isthe image of the invisible God, the firstborn 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**. And **He is** before all things, and **in Him** all things hold together. 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**. For **in Him** all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and **through Him** to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, **making peace by the blood of His cross**.”

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

I’ve going to teach you a few **foreign words today**. In this last (“**proteos**”) weekend of the Church Year … the **culmination of things** (the **Source and also conclusion** of the effect of all Law and Gospel / our and all existence’s past and future) … you need to, first, know the **one Greek (and, therefore, English) word that “explains it all”**.

If you’ve seen the movie, “My Big Fat Greek Wedding”, the dad of the movie kept harping on Greek’s source and itself preeminence of his language as to where we got ours. And so it is true that we can become “enlivened” by comprehending this language’s intention.

“**Proteo**” (the almost **noun verb whereby the one who is described that way IS what He DOES**) is that **one word** used in Colossians 1 to **summarize the PREEMINENCE OF JESUS affecting and core to all history and our eternal future**.

**Text**

Beyond **Who Jesus is**, **what He has done so key to all that existence** is and can be is given in the first two verses of our Epistle in Colossians. “God has delivered from the domain of darkness” … and **that** has to be discussed before the rest. There are many who aren’t aware of that “domain of darkness”, or deny its fact, considering themselves (and all humanity) primarily good by nature, moral mostly and decent, the **exceptions to that** being the “dredges” that the rest should be protected from, the “heinous” who are “out of the norm”, saving (if saving should be spoken of) would be of those who’d really **need it**, not us pretty good people.

But it was “**us**” in that “domain of darkness”; so much other portions of Scripture say **we’re** “**of**” that “domain”, **we** the “dredges” also, the “heinous” relative to a **divine expectation for “perfection”**. Saving would be **for “sinners”** and (as Scripture says so fully) “**all** have sinned and fall short of God’s glory and demand”, “**no one** is righteous, not one”. “God saved **a wretch like me**” “Amazing Grace” sings so that **we can be honest about it**. In **one sense** we are, though, **victims** of the existence of a “domain of darkness”, **born into it**, “sinful and unclean”, **inheritors** of that pre-disposition, but **we’ve complicated that situation totally on our own since birth**. **You and I have not refrained from sinfulness**. We **have participated** in self-service over God service, and I’m betting we’re **continuing down that path** even while in the Word-speaking of a Divine Service (maybe not enough to our own personal liking or distracted from its pure expression or not perfectly receptive to it even if we’d like to be perfectly). **We’re** the culprits of “darkness” contrasted to light, light not emanating from us / “darkness” being mostly **our natural course** no matter how hard we think we’re trying.

God **CHANGED THAT, though** in promised ways for all who’d receive grace through His promised **means of it**. “God delivered us from the domain of darkness and” (Himself) **transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,** **IN WHOM** **WE HAVE** **redemption (or payment, mercifully, for our sins), the forgiveness of them” by gracious gift received in faith**.

And **HOW** could that be **made to** **work for us?** **Because of** **WHO it was** that made it happen / **WHO** **it was** that paid for redemption by His death in sin curing ours. Jesus **is “preeminent”** (the “**proteo**” / that Greek word that **describes Him and also what He has accomplished**. “**He (Jesus) is** the image of the invisible God, the firstborn 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**. And **He is** before all things, and **in Him** all things hold together. And **He is** the head of the body, the church. **He is** the beginning, **the firstborn from the dead**”. And **here’s** the fact statement that ought to automatically move into a purpose statement for **everything that He’s done and who it is that He’s done it all for:** “that in everything **He might be” (IN ALL THINGS) preeminent” (or BY ALL BE “proteo” Who already IS cosmically “proteo”)**. “**IN” JESUS** “all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and **THROUGH HIM** to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven … **making indeed peace by the blood of His cross**.”

**Application**

Today we’re singing “A Mighty Fortress **is** our God” and “How **Great Thou Art**”, yet the “**telos**” (or **finality**) of **God’s Son, Jesus’ last words upon His cross, “It is finished”** dwarfs all our words / the “telos” of Jesus’ word / the completed, accomplished, the finished in time fully yet finished that way for all time to follow, “The Preeminent” event and victory and fulfillment of Divine Promise, that’s the “**telos**” (Greek word) for **accomplishment** in that phrase “It is finished”. Jesus mouthed those words though in Aramaic (the spoken dialect of Hebrew) as “**mashelem**”, that **preeminent announcement of His lips**. And if you listen carefully to Jesus’ word-phrase you will hear the “**shelem**” / “shalom” of “peace” and “wholeness” and “completeness” (what it brought), **never available until** **then and with that**. The **ENTIRE HOPE** of Hebrew people / God’s people (everyone waiting for God’s fulfillment of His promise to deliver those watching from sin, death, and the devil’s “domain of darkness”) got announce victoriously by Jesus in the “shalom” of “peace” upon His accomplished bloodshed and death. …..

…. So, if the Lord does not return to **perfect us in that “telos”** between now and next weekend, we’ll **begin a remembering process again**, **anticipating** the “proteos” “preeminence of God’s Son in Jesus made flesh so as to die for sin. We’ll **anticipate anew** His coming as promised and watch as He succeeds in that accomplishment. We’ll **watch Him** live (Jesus); Him die and then rise. We’ll **enjoy His life in us** for every day of our future.

But for **today** and for **all the days that we continue in our enjoyment** we **acknowledge the accomplishment (the “telos”) of the One who is God’s own Son**. We **acknowledge the “preeminence” of Jesus, the Christ**. **He and what He has done** **brough “peace” and “completeness” to us**. “How **Great … and Merciful and Gracious … Thou Art**”.

In Jesus’ name. Amen.