

Colossians 1: 15-23 (NIV)

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— 23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Historical Context:

- The Apostle Paul wrote this letter to the believers in Colossae who were facing the spread of misinformation, or false teachings, about who Jesus was and how to follow him.
- Verses 15-20 are regarded as what we would equate to a worship song or poem: "This passage has been typeset as poetry because many scholars regard this passage as poetic or hymnic. These terms are used broadly to refer to the genre of writing, not to the content. There are two broad criteria for determining if a passage is poetic or hymnic: "(a) stylistic: a certain rhythmical lilt when the passages are read aloud, the presence of parallelismus membrorum (i.e., an arrangement into couplets), the semblance of some metre, and the presence of rhetorical devices such as alliteration, chiasmus, and antithesis; and (b) linguistic: an unusual vocabulary, particularly the presence of theological terms, which is different from the surrounding context" (P. T. O'Brien, *Philippians* [NIGTC], 188-89)." --NETBible.org

Reflection / Discussion Questions:

- What is the significance that Jesus Christ plays in the creation of the world?
 - How is Jesus typically described in our worship songs vs. how he is described here?
- How is your view of Jesus stretched by understanding him to be so interconnected to creation? Do you know Jesus as Creator?
 - What are the implications of this?
- Do we act like Jesus has supremacy over creation or like we do?
 - How do we consider our use of resources?
 - How do you relate to the created world in our everyday life and in our faith?
- What could it look like for all of creation to be reconciled with God and experience shalom?
 - How can we be part of bringing this good news of reconciliation to all of creation, as Christ's followers?