

“God’s Adhesive Kingdom”

Colossians 1:11-20, Luke 3:22, 12:32, 23:33-43, 2 Corinthians 5:19

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Prayer for Understanding Ever present Lord, thank you for your word, which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Holy Spirit please open our senses to your grace, forgiveness, and reconciling love. Amen.

Today is Christ the King Sunday when we celebrate God’s adhesive kingdom. The Apostle Paul proclaims: **Colossians 1:17 NRSV “In Jesus all things hold together.” Colossians 1:17 NLT “Jesus holds all creation together.”**

When it comes to holding things together, Jesus is stickier than Super Glue. Stronger than Gorilla Glue. More lasting than Loctite Ultra Gel. Without God, everything falls apart. Jesus is all about adhesion. Speaking of adhesion, did you hear about the guy who had to quit his job at the Super Glue factory? He was getting too attached to his coworkers. He couldn’t separate himself from his work.

Did you hear about the husband living in silence? The husband recalls how his wife asked him to pass her the lipstick, instead, by accident, he passed a tube of superglue. She still isn’t talking.

Stanford University is the site of a linear accelerator, a mighty two-mile long atom smasher. It is a great lever with which scientists try to pry things apart to discover what is in the miniature world of the atom, neutron, and proton. Linear accelerator scientists have consistently discovered that there is some strange force that holds everything together. They do not know what to call it, and they do not know how to identify it. They talk about a kind of cosmic glue that holds things together. God sustains the cosmos with forces that hold everything together. Jesus came to bring all people together.

We, humanity, sin, that is we try to divide, to break things apart, to build walls. We sometimes let hurts, resentment, and revenge break up our relationships. Some compartmentalize their life. Some isolate themselves from nature. God is loving to put the world back together. King Jesus will reign over a united kingdom.

Jesus is sticky, working to put a shattered world back together. Paul says that it is through Jesus that God is **Colossians 1:20 NRSV “pleased to reconcile to God all things”** God is restoring broken relationships — between people and God, as well as between individuals. God is working for unity, holding everything together. Paul also says that Jesus **Colossians 1:18 NRSV “is the head of the body, the church.”** Jesus is stuck to us in the same way that a head is attached to a body, and Jesus wants us to be God’s hands and feet in the world. As people who are the body of Christ in the world, our invitation is to take our cues from the one who is our head. To love all people. To serve to unite all people. In other words, to be God’s adhesive agents.

Colossians 1:11-20 NLT “We also pray that you will be strengthened with all God’s glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy, always thanking God. God has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to God’s people, who live in the light. For God has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son, Jesus, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins. Christ Is Supreme King. Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. Jesus existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through Jesus God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. Jesus made the things we can see and the things we can’t see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through Jesus and for Jesus. Jesus existed before anything else, and Jesus holds all creation together. Christ is also the head of the church, which is God’s body. Jesus is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So Jesus is first in everything. For God in all God’s fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through Jesus God reconciled everything to God. God made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ’s blood on the cross.”

Paul says that Jesus **Colossians 1:15 NRSV “is the image of the invisible God.”** You can perceive God by examining Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, by meditating on the Kingdom of God parables, by striving to live and love like Jesus. Wherever you examine anything, anyone, being drawn together, held together, having adhesion, you are liking perceiving our invisible God.

Paul explains **Colossians 1:17-19 “Jesus holds all creation together. In Jesus all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.”** All our understandings of the Bible should be passed through the filter of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We should try to see the world through Jesus’ eyes, understand the will of God as Jesus did,

walk the path that Jesus walked, and love all people as Jesus loves all people. All our understandings of the Bible should be passed through the filter of God's adhesive love.

Jesus' love is an unbreakable adhesion to each person, that adheres us to all people and adheres us to the cosmos. King Jesus adheres us to the kingdom of God. No matter what you do or don't do, no matter how far you wander into the darkness Jesus will always stick with you. Paul puts it this way: **Colossians 1:13-14 NLT "For God has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of Jesus, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins."**

Jesus lived and taught God's adhesive Kingdom where all are forgiven, all are loved and all are united. Jesus lived and taught, be gracious as God is gracious. It is extremely difficult to love one's enemies, to love those who hate you, hurt you, beat you, betray you and crucify you. It begins by Jesus sticking to those who crucify him, by forgiving and loving all people. As members of God's Kingdom, we are to forgive, love, and unite as our King. **Luke 23:33-43 NLT "When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed Jesus to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice. The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. "He saved others," they said, "let him save himself if he is really God's Messiah, the Chosen One." The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. They called out to him, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" A sign was fastened above Jesus with these words: "This is the King of the Jews." One of the criminals hanging beside Jesus scoffed, "So you're the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you're at it!" But the other criminal protested, "Don't you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom." And Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise."**

Adhesion, forgiveness, love are key characteristic of God's kingdom. Those who crucified Jesus, and the scoffing criminal, ironically prove Jesus is king. They have an earthly view of kings based on power, control, and saving one self. Jesus proves he is king by forgiving those who crucify him, betray him, abandon him, and mock him. Jesus proves he is king by forgiving everyone. To ensure that we do not miss Jesus' humble act of forgiveness Jesus proclaims it when on the cross. **Luke 23:34 "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."** King Jesus is not interested in saving himself. King Jesus is resolute to save everyone.

On the cross, Jesus took on himself every instance of fear, hate, chaos, brokenness, and death. Jesus told on himself every failure to love, every broken relationship so all of that dies, gets buried, left in the past so everyone can rise to a loving relationship with God and a loving relationship with all people. No one is excluded. Judas the betrayer is forgiven. The religious leaders who arranged for Jesus' crucifixion are forgiven. The soldiers carrying out their crucifixion orders, gambling for Jesus clothes, are forgiven. The scoffing criminal is forgiven. Everyone is forgiven. Everyone will be welcomed into God's adhesive kingdom where all enjoy perfect love with everyone, where all are united with everyone.

The religious leaders, rulers, soldiers and scoffing criminal tossed around titles. They thought they knew what titles meant, they thought they knew about kings and kingdoms, so they judged Jesus by their understanding. One criminal does not use titles. He simply says, "Jesus." The meanings attached to titles does not rule over Jesus. Jesus transforms the meanings of titles, of king, of kingdom. Jesus does not fit into categories. Jesus breaks categories creating unity. The criminal knew to who he was turning. Unlike the crucifiers, he knows what he is doing. He perceives the kingdom where he is forgiven, all are forgiven and all are united in love. The criminal in requesting the kingdom brings the kingdom bringer, Jesus, into focus. It is God's pleasure to give all people the kingdom. Jesus said: **Luke 12:32 "Do not be afraid. For it gives God great joy to give you the Kingdom."** It is God's pleasure to pour the Holy Spirit, the kingdom of God, into the vessel of our soul. Jesus knows personally for he experienced this pleasure at his baptism. The gospel proclaims: **Luke 3:22 NLT "The Holy Spirit, in bodily form, descended on Jesus like a dove. And a voice from heaven said, "You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy."** King Jesus is determined to fill every person with the kingdom of God.

Whenever someone savors God's grace, it is "today," a time of actualization, a minuscule taste of God's kingdom. Jesus replied to the criminal: **Luke 23:43 "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise."** Whenever someone forgives and loves, it is a minuscule taste of God's kingdom. God's forgiving loving grace is always knocking on the door of our heart, whenever we open the door, we receive the kingdom. The criminal opened the door, realized that God was always with him, that God delights in being in relationship with him, that Jesus is adhered to him. Paul declares: **2 Corinthians 5:19 NLT "For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to God, no longer counting people's sins against them. And God gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation."** As

disciples we are to love everyone and to proclaim forgiveness to everyone. Paul wrote: **Colossians 1:19-20 MSG** **“Jesus was supreme in the beginning and—leading the resurrection parade—Jesus is supreme in the end. From beginning to end Jesus is there, towering far above everything, everyone. So spacious is Jesus, so expansive, that everything of God finds its proper place in Jesus without crowding. Not only that, but all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe—people and things, animals and atoms—get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies.”**

Paradise is everyone’s future, resurrection life in heaven. Paradise is also experienced on earth when grace is savored or forgiveness mends a relationship or when love unites. Paradise is unity among God, humans, animals, plants, and the cosmos.

John Shea wrote: “The death of Jesus makes clear his integrity. What Jesus said and what Jesus did were of one piece. Jesus taught and lived a nonviolent way of life, holding forgiveness and reconciliation to be absolute values that had to be followed at all costs. When pressure was brought against Jesus to abandon those values and use whatever powers Jesus had to protect himself and defeat his attackers, he refused to do so. He died as he lived. This simple yet profound integrity asserts a forgiving God as truthful.”

In a sermon Pastor Jonathan Edwards asks, who is Jesus, the lion or the lamb. Can Jesus somehow be both? Jesus can — as difficult as it is for us to comprehend. This is because “there is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellences in Christ. There do meet in Christ infinite highness and infinite condescension ... infinite justice and infinite grace ... infinite glory and lowest humility ... infinite majesty and transcendent meekness. There is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellences in Christ.”

John Oxenham explains it in a hymn. “In Christ there is no east or west, in him no south or north, but one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth. In Christ shall true hearts everywhere their high communion find. His service is the golden cord close binding humankind. Join hands, then, people of the faith, whate’er your race may be. All children of the living God are surely kin to me. In Christ now meet both east and west, in him meet south and north. All Christly souls are joined as one throughout the whole wide earth.” All ways of saying: **Colossians 1:17 NLT “Jesus holds all creation together.”**

In Rachael Remen’s book, *My Grandfather’s Blessings: Stories of Strength, Refuge and Belonging*, she tells of a woman in her thirties. She recounted the horrible death of her husband. He had cancer, therapy after therapy failed, he became bitter, lashing out at everyone, rebuffing anyone who tried to comfort him. On his last day on earth, he looked back at his young life regretting the choices he made. He died angry and withdrawn. The wife ended her telling of the ordeal with, “I do not want to die this way.” Rachael asked. “So how do you want to live?” The woman looked puzzled. So Rachael asked her again. “How do you need to live to be sure that you do not die that way?” Contemplating her death started a process that led to her rearranging her life. She realized she had relationships that need reconciling.

On this last Sunday of the church year, we contemplate our king Jesus’ death where Jesus remained resolute in forgiving everyone and welcoming everyone into paradise. Next Sunday is the first Sunday in the church year, advent, the preparation for Immanuel, God with us. It is a week where we are encouraged to forgive and mend every relationship. A time to let go of every hurt, grudge, resentment, negativity, fear, and hate, to let go of all that diminishes life, to let it all pass with the end of the year so we are free to let come reconciliation, love, and vibrant relationships. Amazing grace all the broken relationships are passing away giving life to loving relationships with everyone. Thanksgiving also happens this week, perhaps you have relationships with some family members that are less than loving. Leave the past in the past. Every day is a fresh start to enjoy loving relationships. God’s adhesive kingdom is abundant with forgiveness and love. Amen