



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Colossians 1:15-20

Lesson 3 of 15

2018

“Christ In Charge”

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you, Seth, and good morning. We are continuing our studies in the epistle to the Colossians which we began about three weeks ago. So, we are in our third message and this morning we are looking at chapter 1, verses 15 through 20. Mark called it a wonderful passage; and it is certainly that. It is a passage that you wonder, ‘How do you *preach-up* to this text of scripture?’ It is so majestic in its revelation of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is a magnificent text to consider.

Chapter 1 of Colossians, verses 15 through 20: We ended last week with verse 14, in which Paul spoke of Christ, God’s Son, “...in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” So what follows is really Paul’s explanation for how that can be: How we can have redemption “in Him.”

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation. ¹⁶For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. ¹⁸He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For it was the *Father’s* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, ²⁰and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Colossians 1: 15-20

May the Lord bless this reading of His Word and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

Father, it is a great privilege to be with Your people on this Lord's day; thank you for the beauty of it. We thank you for the sunshine we have and for the rain You have given us as well; You bless us abundantly and we give You praise and thanks.

We come to a text of Scripture this morning that speaks of all that; Who created it all and Who sustains it all. And implied in all of that is the bounty of it all. The generosity that You have given us in this world is so much. A world teeming with life; and You are the source of it all.

This is a magnificent text, Father, and I pray that as we consider it, You would give us just a sense of Your Greatness and Your Sovereignty; the work of the Triune God. But specifically, the work of the second person of the Trinity, Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. I say 'to give us just a sense' because this is something that we can spend a lifetime studying and never come to the end of the glories of it. But Lord, bless us with an understanding and make it have the proper effect upon us that Paul intended: And that is to give us complete confidence in You and not look to other things as was the temptation in the church of Colossae to rely on other things/ideas to support them in their Christian life, or actually, a life that would take them away from You. Help us to focus on Him and to rely strictly upon our Savior, Who is more than sufficient for all of the circumstances and situations in life; Who is the only Saviour and only mediator.

Father, glorify Yourself in this time that we spend studying this passage and edify us, build us up in the faith, encourage us, strengthen us, equip us for the days and week ahead; that we would rest solely in You and that we would have a productive week and a good witness before the world.

So bless us spiritually— And bless us materially as well Lord. We have all kinds of requests in our prayer request list. We pray for those that are dealing with matters of health; we pray for those that are recovering from surgery and those that are still recovering from issues and may be in the hospital; We pray that You bless them, strengthen them and encourage them.

We give You thanks for the birth of some children. We give You praise for that and pray that the newborns in our midst will be raised in the grace and admonition of the Lord. And bless the parents and the grandparents of these children.

Lord, bless our time together now as we continue with worship and the hymn that we will sing; prepare our hearts for our time of study together.

And we pray these things in Christ's name. Amen

In the play "Julius Caesar," Cassius says to his future fellow conspirator, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves." Blaming our problems on other things doesn't fix them. We have to take charge of things. We have to change things. That's true; but there's more than advice in that statement. It speaks to a big question; and an old question: "Who is in charge?" Is it man? Are we self-directed? Or are there other forces at work?

Most Romans in Caesar's day believed that the stars did influence their lives and events. All across the ancient world man studied the movement of the planets in order to learn the future. Even ancient Jews believed that. In the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem there is a tile floor from an ancient synagogue with the twelve signs of the zodiac around the twelve tribes of Israel. Even today lots of people consult astrologers and horoscopes. And some of that, it seems, was the doctrine of the false teachers who came to Colossae. So, who is in charge of this world—the stars and planets, fate, man?

Paul's answer is in Colossians 1:15-20, in what F.F. Bruce called "one of the greatest Christological passages of the New Testament." In it, Paul shows that planets and angels don't

govern the world or determine the course of life. Man, ultimately, doesn't either. It is the One who created the stars and made man—the Lord. He is in charge.

Paul's teaching in the Book of Colossians is that Christ is preeminent and sufficient. In this passage He states that Christ is the Creator, the Sustainer, and the Redeemer of the universe. In all three He is benevolent—in all three He is good—but especially as Savior. That's the emphasis. In verse 14 he said—in Him "...we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." And now he shows how that can be. It is because of who He is that He is able to save forever: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." (vs15).

Now that word '*image*' is the word for "portrait." An ancient papyrus text was discovered in which a Greek soldier in Italy wrote home to his father and added that he had sent "a little portrait" of himself. Well, that's this word. Christ is the '*image*,' Christ is the "portrait," the true representation of God: Because He Himself is God, the Second person of the Trinity. Only God can reveal God. An angel can't reveal God. Only God can give a true representation, a true revelation of God—And Christ is that.

So, when Philip asked the Lord in John chapter 14, to show them the Father, Jesus could say, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9). Not physically, of course, for "God is spirit." (Jn 4:24), and 'No man can see God and live', (Ex 33:20), and 'He dwells in unapproachable light'. (1 Tim 6:16). But Christ, His Son, has revealed Him in His incarnation.

As Charles Wesley said, (and as we often sing every Christmas), "Veiled in flesh the God-head see; Hail th' Incarnate Deity." He is Immanuel – He is "God with us." So, if you want to know what God is like, look at Christ. He revealed God's character; His life, His power—He is the exact portrait of God.

In addition, Paul says, "He is... the firstborn of all creation." (vs15). That is a title of privilege and authority. It means He is the heir of all things and He is the governor of the universe. It is really an Old Testament term. In Deuteronomy 21: 15-17, the law states that the "*firstborn*" son is always the heir of the fortune and the one who becomes the head of the house—the head of the clan. So, this is a title of authority and rank. It has nothing to do with time or a beginning of existence, (though it has been interpreted like that by heretics like Arias and cults like Jehovah's Witnesses).

Now Arias was very significant figure in church history. He was a popular preacher in Alexandria, Egypt in the early 300's. He had trouble with the doctrine of the Trinity—that there is one God in three Persons. And it is a difficult doctrine. James Packer said in one of his books that the doctrine challenges us “...with perhaps the most difficult thought that the human mind has ever been asked to handle. It is not easy—but it is true.”

Arias would have agreed it is “difficult” but didn’t believe it was “true.” He denied that Christ is eternal and taught that Christ had a beginning. He’s the highest of God’s creatures, and Arias honored Him in that sense—but He is still a creature. And he cited our text; he cited Colossians 1:15 to support that. Christ is “...the firstborn of all creation.” Or, ‘He is the first of all beings to be created. What could be plainer?’ Well, it seemed plain to a lot of people and they didn’t have to strain their minds to understand how ‘Three could be One’.

And this heresy spread like wildfire throughout the eastern church—the Greek speaking Church. And it has done so down through the ages. In the Reformation, there were the Socinians, who were men who denied the deity of Christ. They honored Him—They even prayed to Him—but they didn’t believe that He was the eternal Son of God. And then in the Enlightenment there were the Deists; and then in modern times the Unitarians. And then, as I mentioned, the cults and sects like the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Mormons...It’s with us today.

But even if the title here, *‘firstborn’*, might suggest that Christ is included among the ‘created things’, (and I say ‘might’ because if you understand this verse correctly it has nothing to do with that), verse 16 excludes that interpretation from being a possibility. He created everything that has been created. Therefore, He could not be a created thing. “For by Him...,” Paul said, “...all things were created...” (vs16). [Now let me pause to say that this verse is probably *better* translated—“For *in* Him all things were created,” since “by Him” really doesn’t saying anything different from what Paul will say at the end of the verse when he states that “through Him” or “by Him” all things have been created.] But “...*in* Him all things were created...,” means He is the source of all things. The ‘stuff’ of creation came from Him. The plan for creation, its arrangement was in Him. He is the architect of the universe;

the source of it, the architect of it...He is also the builder of the universe. 'All things were created by Him' or created 'through Him', and Paul leaves nothing out of that. The list that he gives of what He created is a list that is all inclusive. You can't find anything that's left out. All things "...both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him." (vs 16). If it was created, Christ created it—which logically excludes Him from being among the things of creation. Things of creation are the things that He created— It means He is God.

That is not only the logic of the verse, it is supported by its language. The universe, Paul says, is "...through Him and for Him." (or 'to' Him). That expression that ends verse 16 is very important because those are the words that Paul uses elsewhere. He uses those words in Romans 11:36, where he concludes that great section of Romans, (Romans 9, 10, & 11), with his doxology. He breaks out in a word of praise—and he says, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." He is using the same kind of language here.

So then, the One who is the Savior — "...in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins," (vs14), is also the Creator. He is the Son of God, 'very God of very God.' Only a person such as that, who is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable would be sufficient to redeem us from sin and judgment. And only He is sufficient to protect us throughout this world and throughout this life, whatever the threat may be.

And what are the threats to us? What are the agents that are opposed to us in this world? Well, Christ made them all; whether "...thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities..." or spiritual powers organized as 'government' or 'army'. Though many of those are not hostile forces, many of those are. And in Ephesians 6, Paul speaks of the war that we have with 'spiritual forces' and with their 'fiery darts'. But there are also forces of nature that we have to deal with; and there are also overwhelming circumstances that simply confound us, that we just don't know how to deal with, and we are at our wits end to know how to extract ourselves from a situation.

But they don't confound Him. He made them and is Master over all. He is more than sufficient. The disciples learned that many times. They learned that when they were on the

Sea of Galilee in the midst of a storm and about to sink— And He calmed the sea. Well, the application is obvious from all of this and from all that we know about our Lord from the Gospels—and the way He dealt with crises. And the application is this: We need to trust Him, and we need to obey Him. We need to rest in Him.

Paul supports that further in verse 17—a spectacular verse—in which he describes the present sustaining power of Christ Jesus over the entire universe: “He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” This is a statement of the deity of Christ. He is eternal. “He is before all things.”

Now, that means more than He is preexistent. It means He is eternal. He is without beginning and without end. Go back to the beginning of all things; go back to the Big Bang (if such a thing happened), but before the first nanosecond of the universe, Christ “is”. It’s a point of grammar. And the grammar is theologically significant — “He is” — **present tense!** He always **is**. He **is** eternal. And what He is doing is keeping everything that He created in existence. He is sustaining all things. That’s what Paul says here. Were He to relax His will for just a moment, everything would evaporate—in an instant.

Now, we have little idea what all is involved here—for the cosmos is so vast and complex. In the early 20th Century, to show how our knowledge has expanded about this, (really, relatively recently), in the early 20th Century scientists thought that the Milky Way was the universe! Then Edwin Hubble’s telescope found other galaxies. At present, (and I checked this out on my computer this morning (*Fall 2018*), I typed in “How many galaxies are in the universe?”) the number of galaxies estimated is 200 Billion! 200 Billion galaxies in the universe!! And then I kept looking and I got the figure: ‘2 Trillion’ galaxies (I like the second one the best), 2 Trillion galaxies! Well. There is some dispute over how many galaxies are out there. I’m sure lot of that is just estimation, and I will not be surprised if in a year or two I go back to the question and find out that it’s even more! That is vast and you wonder, ‘What must be out there?’

Scientists can study what is ‘luminous’ in the universe, what they can ‘see’. But that makes up about 5% of the contents of the universe. The rest is made of “dark matter” and “dark energy.” And the person who discovered “dark matter,” Vera Rubin (1928-2016), said,

“We don’t know what it is.” So, scientists really know very little about the universe. They can study about 5% of it...and don’t know much about that 5%! The more we learn, the bigger the Cosmos becomes, the more complicated and mysterious it becomes, and the less we know and the less we understand it. And yet, scientists – some scientists – are supremely confident about their understanding of it all.

One of them, Mario Livio, wrote an article in “The Wall Street Journal” a year or so ago. He said that Galileo and Newton looked upon the universe as a “morality play”: In other words, the universe had purpose; the universe had God behind it; it is a ‘moral’ universe. That has been replaced, he said, “with a clockwork universe in which events are caused by conditions in the present, not goals for the future.” In other words, ‘it’s all material.’ ‘It’s a great machine with no reason for being.’ So, **who is in charge?** — **‘The Cosmos!** —It’s carrying us all along to nowhere; for no reasons; with no purpose.’ I think that is the common view among so many people today; at least in the west. — And that’s bleak.

How could anyone know that? That’s just a statement of faith. It is a faith in scientists and their ability to explain. It is faith in what scientists know, (or what they think they know; which isn’t much because they can only study maybe 5% of it—and how much do they really know of that 5%?)

Look, I’m all for science and think I’ve made this statement periodically when we come to a subject like this; I’m for telescopes and for studying the stars and sending probes out to the planets and all of that. That fascinates me; I want to learn about it. But that statement— ‘this universe is a clockwork universe’—is not science! — That is theology... and its bad theology which comes from studying the wrong book—the book of nature rather than studying Scripture. Now the book of nature is worth studying. For ‘the heavens are declaring the glory of God’ (Ps 19:1). Paul makes the point in Romans 1 that there is enough revelation, what we call general revelation, (which some people call ‘The Big Book’), to know that there is a Creator. And that is important to know. But even at that, man subdues that truth; and he subdues the truth in unrighteousness—which is what you see in so many of these scientists. But ‘The Big Book’ tells us enough that there is a Creator, but it doesn’t tell us much more than that.

Rather, it's the Bible that reveals to us who God is and what He has done and what He has made—And the kind of God He is and what His purpose is: And it reveals to us that this universe does have a purpose and has a glorious future. And God's people will be part of it. That's our future: Which is to say our future is GLORY. And that is assured because Christ holds all things together by His power and is moving it all according to His will. That is the all-sufficient God. That's the reason Paul revealed this.

We are impressed with the size of the universe, (I am—200 billion galaxies or 2 trillion galaxies, —it's all about the same to me). Its vastness is beyond my comprehension—and it's mysterious! But as vast and overwhelming that is to my mind, it is tiny to the Lord God. Christ, in His deity, holds it all in His hand: He holds it, as it were, on the tip of His cosmic finger. —That's Isaiah 40:15. And Paul revealed this to encourage us with confidence in Him. How can you not be confident in this One? —In this second Person of the Trinity? —In the Godhead? He holds all creation together, and He blesses us with the abundance of His creation.

James said 'Every good and perfect gift is from above', (1:17). Paul told Timothy "...everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude..." (1 Tim. 4:4). And we should be grateful. God has made this world burgeoning with life. It's unique. We don't see anything like this in our solar system. We know of nothing like this in the galaxy. This world is burgeoning with life, and He provides for His creatures daily, from bugs and sparrows to people and angels. He gives and sustains existence. Christ does that because He is head over it all, Sovereign over the entire creation. He made it. He sustains it.

But He is also '*head*' over His new creation, the Church. That's what Paul says next. And because He is, we can be confident He will sustain us and provide for us, as His people. "He is also head of the body, the church;" Paul writes (vs18). Paul often describes the church as 'the body of Christ.' And just as a physical body has a 'head' that governs it physically, Christ governs the church spiritually. "...He is the beginning," Paul says, "the firstborn from the dead..." He is the '*head*' of the church as the risen Savior. He is the 'head' of the church

as the one who triumphed over death and the forces of evil. He the first to be resurrected. In fact, the only one to be resurrected, meaning, 'raised in a glorified body.' But He is the first of many. "...the first fruits..." of many to come, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:20.

Christ is the 'beginning' of the church, in that He established it through His death. He is the '*head*' of the church, having been raised from the dead. And He is sovereign over the church. 'Sovereign over the Church'—Now this is vitally important to understand if we want to have a church that functions as God would have it to function and have us to function. Christ, not men, is the 'head' of the church. The local church can only function well and remain **faithful** by looking to Christ for guidance and wisdom. Others, like Peter and the writer of Hebrews, call Him "the Chief Shepherd" (1Pet 5:4), and "the great Shepherd of the sheep" (Heb 13:20). Now that means something doesn't it? — **He's the Shepherd!** He's the Great Shepherd. He's the One who guides us and leads us. And He's the '*Guardian*' of our souls we are told. (1Pet 2:25). Now, we can't do better for ourselves than that—than Jesus Christ as our Shepherd and Guardian. And He is the One we are to look to as the leader, the guide of our souls and our Church.

We have in the New Testament the blueprint for the local church; and it's very simple. I think I made this point a few weeks back, while we were studying Psalm 127, and how Solomon built the temple according to the tabernacle: The whole model of it was really quite simple, when you think about it—it's a big box with two compartments, with a laver of water and an altar for the sacrifices— That's very simple.

And the Church is also set up in a very simple way—It's not complex. The New Testament tells us the structure of the church—how it's to be governed; and how it's to function. We have officers: elders, (under-shepherds to Christ); and deacons that have their special functions. And all of us are priests—are believer-priests—that have our function. It's very simple the way it's set out. But we must look to the Lord for the wisdom and the faithfulness to carry it out; to do it—to function properly—And then trust Him to provide for us and to look to Him for wisdom and guidance.

Now this is a challenge. Christians live by faith not by sight. That is the kind of statement that we all know. We hear it; it's Biblical; we use it and we believe it— But that is a

difficult thing to do at times. It's much easier to 'fix things' ourselves rather than wait upon the Lord and pray and trust in Him for what we are to receive. But if we will look to Him, if we do that, if we trust Him by obeying His Word, He will always prove Himself faithful to us and provide what we need—He will always do that! He may bring us to the point of a crisis where we wonder—but He will always provide for us. If He provides for the sparrows daily won't He provide for us? Of course, He will! We can trust Him. He is sufficient for every need and always faithful.

Now what Paul has said so far in this chapter, in this passage, certainly indicates He is **sufficient** (a word that, just in using it, I feel like it is inadequate; for He is infinitely more than sufficient). But Paul reinforces that in verse 19 where he speaks of the '*fullness*' that is in Christ. In other words, He is sufficient for every need and challenge because He lacks nothing. He has everything. "For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the **fullness** to dwell in Him." (verse 19).

The '*fullness*' is a reference to His deity (2:9). He is fully God— All of the divine attributes are in Him. All of the glory and the power that is in the Father is in the Son; He lacks nothing. Of course, the '*fullness*' has always been in Him as the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Trinity., but this is speaking of Christ as the incarnate God, as the God-man. Deity dwelt in Him when He was born into this world and the '*fullness*' of the power to save was in Him with that Deity. So that the 'head' of the church, "...the great Shepherd of the sheep...", the "...Guardian of our souls...", is adequate for all of our needs.

This may be aimed at the heretics who taught that, 'We need help; we need the help of angels or cosmic forces for communion with God. And at death we need their help to get us through the universe on the way to the heavenly light and past all of the 'evil' spirits there.' They had 'the formulas'; and they had the 'incantations' and 'secret knowledge' that would help a person with all of this...But Paul was saying, 'it was all myth!' Now Paul didn't have to say those exact words, but what he is saying about Christ demonstrates that it is 'all a myth!' Paul's statement is, 'Christ has the fullness. His person and work are complete. —Nothing is lacking. — Nothing stands between Him and us. — He is everything!

We can apply this to the present; to the circumstances of today. We don't have this particular heresy afoot within the Church, but we have other things. And this addresses the situation of today. We don't need 'Saints' or 'priests' or 'rituals of water' to bring our prayers to God or make us acceptable to heaven. Christ has done that. Christ alone has done that. He is 'the only Mediator between God and man.' (1Tim 2:5). That is explicit and clear. There is nothing lacking in Him or what He has done; He is absolutely sufficient! He has already brought us to God—those who have put their faith in Him. This is the reason that God was pleased for the '*fullness*' of Deity to dwell in Christ, to dwell in Him in the incarnation, because through Him He has 'reconciled all things to Himself'. (vs20)

Now think of all that Paul has said so far about Christ. He is the revelation of God because He is God—God the Son. He possesses all of the attributes and power and glory of the Father. He is before all things because He is eternal and unchangeable. He created everything that is both visible and invisible, material and spiritual—He sustains it all. He holds everything together. The vast universe is kept intact and kept functioning by His power and directed by His will. Dark matter and dark energy are not mysterious to Him. He made them – all of it!

He constantly gives everything its life and existence. You are existing at this moment because it is His will that you exist. Isaiah said, He "...spread out the earth..." and "...gives breath to the people on it..." (Is 42:5). Every breath you take is a gift from Christ (Dan 5:23). Did you just take a breath? — He gave you that. It all comes from Him. He is great and glorious and generous—Who can even begin to comprehend that? Even so, this is what God can do effortlessly. He is infinite and eternal. The universe is a speck of dust to Him.

What is really astonishing is that this same, perfect, all-mighty person would leave His glory to become a creature—and a servant at that—in order to '*reconcile*' rebels to His Father. That word '*reconcile*' is an important one in the Bible. It means to make peace between two warring parties; to bring them together. This is what a mediator does—He is a middleman and a peacemaker. That was Christ's mission. That is why God sent Him into the world—to '*reconcile*' the world and the universe to God

In the next verses (vs 21-22), Paul narrows his focus to Christ's reconciling activity in regard to mankind and redeeming fallen humanity. But here he is more general and explains that God sent His Son "...to reconcile all things to Himself...whether things on earth or things in heaven." His work has, what F.F. Bruce called, "cosmic significance." It will ultimately '*reconcile*' the Cosmos.

This is what Paul explained in more detail in Romans 8:20, where he said, "...the creation was subjected to futility..." due to man's sin; but it will be 'set free' from corruption and into the glory of the children of God (vs20-21). When we are glorified, it (the Cosmos) will be glorified. Behold the great and glorious change!

Well that's the hope given to the entire universe. But until then, Paul said, "...the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth until now" (Rom 8:22). And that is seen in everything from the '*thorns and thistles*' a farmer fights in his fields (Gen 3:17), to cosmic disturbances in deep space like stars exploding and black holes colliding. Everywhere, from here to there, displays disorder; and everything indicates that things are not right. This universe is not quite right—Things are in disorder. But the sacrifice of Christ will fix even that. Paul says He has "...made peace through the blood of His cross...whether things on earth or things in heaven." (vs 20). The Lord's sacrifice at Calvary, the Lord's death on the cross, paid the penalty of our sin and in that way satisfied God's justice, so that man is forgiven and the curse for sin which affects nature now, will in the future, be lifted—and the result is there will be a new heavens and a new earth: Great Glory!

The work of Christ in creating and sustaining the universe is awe inspiring. But His work in saving sinful man and redeeming the cosmos is even more remarkable. He sacrificed Himself for us. Now, the One who has done all of this from creation to redemption and reconciliation; and who will bring about our glorification, is the One we can trust now and always, for everything. He is in control. He is in control!

Years ago, I was in the Atlanta airport. I had returned from a long trip from Europe, (probably from Romania), and was standing in a line to check-in for the final flight home. We were all running late, and the line was long. While I was wondering if I would make my flight,

a man came running up, very anxious, and carrying a big briefcase. He was delivering a paper; he was running late, and he wanted to be at the front of the line, (We all did)! But he began to work his way up then...what do you know...he cut in line, got his ticket; and I remember him happily waving good-bye and running off to the next terminal. Well, I finally got through and arrived at the domestic terminal, (Now, if you have been to the Atlanta Airport, you know you have to go between terminals on one of those little trains (or Trams), and you come to an elevated area), so I came to the terminal and as I looked down...there he was!...in a heated conversation with an airport employee. He'd gone to the wrong place and he wasn't getting any help from the man—and in frustration, he looked up at the ceiling and yelled – “Who is in charge here!” And then he grabbed his big briefcase and ran off, I guess in search of his lost gate. So there's that question here... “Who is in charge here?”

Well, I thought to answer it, “Hey! It's the Lord Jesus Christ Who's in charge here and maybe He's teaching you not to be so self-centered.” I didn't say it, but it is true. And for us who know Christ that is a great comfort because when things seem out of control, we have this **certain** revelation that Christ is “...before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” So, we can, and we should, rest in Him. Live wisely; plan for contingencies; be active and obedient—But don't despair when life turns difficult, (when we get late for an appointment, or circumstances seem to conspire against us...That's the preacher talking; and I have to confess that when my times get difficult I get a little bit despairing myself), there is no need for that. This is what Paul is teaching us.

Shakespeare was right. “The fault...is not in our stars.” (They are the Lord's creation. He controls them. They don't control or influence us, at all. We are not beholden to angels or planets or anything.) But the rest of that quote is true too. “The fault...is not in our stars but in ourselves.”

That is especially true of man's separation from God. Sin has caused it and it is our fault. We are guilty. And there is only one way to correct it. It is by recognizing our guilt, recognizing our “fault,” and turning to the only One who can save us, the Lord Jesus Christ. He has reconciled man with God through the cross. And all who trust in Him, who lay hold of Him through faith, are reconciled: Are made to be at peace with God; made sons and

daughters of God; and given a glorious destiny with this glorious future for the universe:
That's ours in Christ.

If you have not believed in Him, have not put your trust in Him—look to Him, trust in Him. And you who have, (I hope that it is everybody in here), rest in Him and live for Him. God help us to do that.

LET'S PRAY:

Father, We thank you for this glorious text of scripture that sets forth the greatness of Your Son, the sufficiency of Your Son, (but to even say, "sufficiency" seems to be inadequate. He is sufficient, but He is so infinitely more than 'sufficient'). That being the case we can rest in Him and rely on Him and know that He is always faithful. There is nothing in this vast universe that can frustrate Him or can frustrate the Godhead. And by His work You have reconciled us to Yourself; we are reconciled to the Triune God. We give You praise and thanks for Your Grace that saves. And we pray these things in Your Son's name. Amen

(End of Audio)