

Colossians 1:21-23 May 4, 2008 - Skip MacMillan

Mountain Analogy

The belief that all religions are different pathways up the mountain to the same God. This is false in regard to Christianity. All other religions are pathways up the mountain, attempting to work their way up to God. Christianity states that God came off the mountain to us, before we even cared to climb the mountain.

Once you were alienated from God, Colossians 1:21

"Alienated from God"

"transferred to another owner" from life to death; from God to ourselves, this world, the devil.

Estranged from God, disconnected from our Creator, our Father, moved from harmony to disharmony.

Greek perfect tense emphasizes a "fixed state or condition" without hope, stuck, unable to get back.

"Enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior"

"Thought and act are both tainted, each pushing the other into further corruption" -NT Wright.

Contrast Colossians 1:9-10, Knowledge of God moves you to the actions of God which, in turn, moves you into a deep understanding of God. Yet, a corrupt mind moves you to evil behaviors and these behaviors move you into a deeper corruption of the mind (see Romans 1:21-23).

The Deal

1. Who moved away from whom?

We purposely and intentionally pushed away from God; we came off the mountain, Genesis 3, Romans 5:12.

We alienated ourselves from God; we chose to become the enemies of God.

God did NOT push you away.

2. Total Depravity, see Ephesians 2:1-3

"Because of the fall, man is unable himself to savingly believe the Gospel. The sinner is dead, blind and deaf to the things of God; his heart is sinful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore he will not, indeed cannot, choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently it takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ – it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation. Salvation is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God."

3. This is our past reality without Christ, alienated and enemies of God

But now He has reconciled you, Colossians 1:22

Who reconciled you? The Creator, Sustainer, Eternal One, Head of the Church has NOW reconciled you.

How did He reconcile you? Through Christ's physical body through His blood shed on the cross. Believers in Christ "find their sin already condemned in Him (Jesus), and themselves reconciled to God" -NT Wright.

God came down the mountain to reconcile you. You did not reconcile yourself to God.
Jesus Christ has made you: holy, without blemish and free from accusation.

“Holy”

Christ imputes His righteousness onto us, making us holy like Him.

Wishful thinking? No, God is deeply embedded in reality. He knows who you really are and loves you enough to take on every bit of wrath due you and, in turn, place on you His holiness.

“Without blemish”

Like the sacrifices of the Old Testament, those presented to God were without blemish.

Christ took every blemish of yours upon Himself; there is no blemish left on you.

“Free from accusation”

Legally, without accuser (John 8:10-11), not even casual gossip – NT Wright.

Christ took on every accusation that could ever be hurled at you.

You are free! “Blessed are they whose transgression are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him” (Romans 4:7-8).

The Deal

1. God came off the mountain and onto the cross for you

God did this by Christ’s physical body (body of flesh), shedding blood on the cross.

Holiness before God, blemish free, and free from accusation came by One Way, Christ on the Cross. What other sacrifice has been made for you?

Remember the question: “Why should I let you into My Heaven?”

Because of my faith in Jesus Christ and His payment for my sin; He alone has made me holy in God’s sight.

When you really screw up remember Christ’s physical body, shedding His blood on the cross to pay for that specific sin. You are without blemish.

2. Present reality and future fulfillment

This is how God looks at you, it is how He sees you, it is who you are in Christ: holy, without blemish, free from accusation.

That is why there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. He took all your unholy-ness, all your blemishes, all the accusations that stood and stand against you upon Himself once and for all. There is nothing against you in Christ, there is nothing between you and God in Christ, there is no blemish, no accusation that can EVER be brought up to embarrass or separate you from the love of Christ.

This is who you are definitively in Christ; feel it or not, it is an eternal truth.

God has made this reality by the death of Christ’s physical body, the truth of it is manifested by the Spirit’s work in you called sanctification and He will bring it to completion in glorification.

You are without shame or fear before God. God has kissed you on the cheek, called you His son and daughter, His dearly loved children.

This is who Christ is: holy, without blemish and free from accusation and so are you who are in Christ.

This is what will be said of you on judgment day: she is holy, she is mine!

If you continue in your faith, 1:23

In Colosse, were they being tempted to place their faith in something else, was their enthusiasm waning, were they becoming complacent and apathetic in the relationship with God, were they shifting from the secure foundation in Christ? See ch. 2.

Call to Movement

"If" "indicates not an uncertain prospect but a necessary condition and an almost certain assumption . . . Paul is at once insistent and confident; they must (continue), and he is sure that they will" -Vaughan.

". . . fight the good fight, finish the race, keep the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7).

Faith – Faith brings righteousness: "Abram believed the LORD, and He credited to him righteousness" (Genesis 15:6); "the righteous will live by faith" (Gal. 3:11).

You have a role, this is a relationship.

God sees this relationship with you as a marriage (Hosea and Ephesians 5), He said His vows, gave you a ring, lived, died and rose for you and now is with you and in you, interceding for you and loving you.

Now you must continue in this relationship,

"Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and act according to His good purpose" (Phil. 2:12-13).

Continue in the truth of who Jesus Christ is: "He is the image of the invisible God . . . by Him and for Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth . . . He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:15-17). Continue in this eternal truth, do not be swayed, there is none like Jesus Christ.

Continue in the faith, hope, and love we have heard about.

Continue in living a life worthy of the Lord and seeking to please Him in every way.

Continue bearing fruit in every good work, putting your faith into action.

Continue growing in the knowledge of God, know what you believe and why; read, contemplate, study the Scriptures.

Continue to be strengthened with all power, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

Continue in the Gospel – you were alienated and an enemy of God, but now God has rescued you through Christ physical body making you holy, without blemish and free from accusation, created to do good works.

Continue to live in the truth that you are now and forever, declared holy, without blemish and free from accusation in His sight through Jesus Christ.

Continue to live in the truth that He came down off the mountain to you and for you.

Leave with:

One

"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).

Two

"...that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light" (Colossians 1:10-12).

You are to continue believing these truths, placing your faith in these truths, and living in the truth that God has come off the mountain, He has come for you, made you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation – Live in this truth.