

March 8, 2017 – Psalm 22:1-11 & Colossians 1:15-23

I want to do a little exercise this evening. I'm going to list off a few things and I want you to mentally categorize them into two groups. In whatever way they seem alike to you. It's kind of like the old Sesame Street “one of these things is not like the other.” Group together the things that alike. OK?

God, frogs, angels, rocks, humans, heaven, earth, your soul. Now, if you were following along and did what most people do, you grouped those things into the categories “physical” and “spiritual.” On one side you put God, angels, heaven, and your soul. On the other you put frogs, rocks, humans, and earth.

From our perspective, that makes sense. Physical things are familiar to us. We can see, smell, taste, hear, and feel these. Spiritual things? Not so much.

However, I think if you asked God to take these things and put them into two groups, he'd pick two very different categories. On one side, he would put himself. And on the other, he would put everything else. Because from God's perspective, there are only these two categories: creator and creation. Frogs, angels, rocks, humans, heaven, earth, your soul. All of it is part of God's creation.

I am not God. I know... I'm disappointed too. But it's true. I am not God. You are not God. No human being on this earth is God. No human being that has ever walked this earth – except for one – has ever been God.

We are not the Creator. We are creatures. No different, in that respect, from plants, animals, rocks, or angels.

Yet, that's hard for us to get our minds around. When the serpent told Eve that eating the forbidden fruit would make her like God, that was a lie. Eating that fruit only made her less like God, because it brought sin into her heart.

But that sin did change her and all of her descendants, including us. Because from that point forward, we were indeed convinced that we were like God. In every way. That sin convinced us that we are not creatures. That we are, in fact, the Creator.

That we have control over life and death. That can do with this world as we please, without consequence. That we can stand as judge over our neighbor while ignoring God's laws. That we need no one and nothing from anyone. Not our creation. Not our neighbors. And especially, not God.

It's almost funny, when you think about it. Because everyone, from the most pious Christian to the staunchest atheist, wakes up every morning with complete faith in God's provision.

We wake up with faith that the laws of physics haven't changed. That the chemical processes that keep our bodies functioning still hold true. That the oxygen we breath hasn't becoming poisonous to our lungs. That there is still gravity holding us to this earth. That when we eat, it will provide energy to our bodies. And that when we walk outside, there is still a basic moral code written on every person's heart that keeps my neighbor from murdering me with a chainsaw.

In short, every single human being has faith there is a God who is before all things and in whom all things hold together. Whether they realize it or not. Whether they choose to accept it or not. Because we are not in control of this world. We are not in control of our own existence We are creatures and we need a creator. We live by faith that God has not abandoned us. Because we couldn't possibly exist otherwise.

So does that mean I'm saying that all people have saving faith? No. Not even close. I'm simply saying that we are made to believe in something. We were created, designed, and programmed to have faith in our creator. It permeates everything we do.

But what we do with that faith can be wildly different. Because, as I said, many people spend their lives rejecting that faith. They spend their lives lying to themselves. That they are not creatures. That they do not need a creator. That they are their own gods, knowing good and evil. And running from any sort of dependance upon their heavenly Father.

But then there are men like David. David, who writes Psalm 22 in the depths of anguish. Feeling utterly abandoned by God. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

David knows what we already heard in Colossians. He knows that it is the Lord in whom he holds together. He knows it is the Lord who brought him out of his mother's womb. He says exactly that. From the moment of his birth, he was cast upon the Lord in utter dependance.

Which means that if God truly has forsaken him, abandoned him to his enemies, he has no hope whatsoever. He will not survive without God's provision and guidance and salvation. He might as well just give himself over to despair.

But that isn't the case for David, of course. It feels like it. He feels abandoned, but he's not. Just as his ancestors felt abandoned when God cast them out of the Garden of Eden. Or when God flooded the earth. Or when God let them become slaves in Egypt.

They felt abandoned. But they weren't. They trusted in the Lord and, eventually, the Lord delivered them. They cried out to him and they were saved. David is confident that will be true for him as well.

But there was another who said these words of David: Jesus himself. As he hung dying on the cross, Jesus cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.”

At that moment, Jesus felt abandoned by his Father. Because he was. You see, at that moment, Jesus traded his present for our future. He traded the Creator's present provision. The provision that gave him his very life and breath. So that we might know the eternal provision of our Creator.

He said, “I will die today so that they may live tomorrow. And the next day and the next. Into all eternity.” He died so that we might know without a doubt that God's care for us doesn't end at the grave. It continues into a new creation. Into a new life with Him.

You see, that's the key difference between an unbeliever and a believer. Between you and an atheist. You both have faith in God to sustain you in this life. Whether you realize it or not. Whether you accept it or not.

But the believer in Christ Jesus has faith that God sustains us in the next life as well. That all things in heaven and earth, every creature in God's magnificent creation, has been reconciled to the Father through the Son. No matter our sin and rebellion, we have peace with God through Christ's blood shed on the cross.

The creator became a creature. He took on a physical body and died a physical death. That we might be made holy in his sight. Without blemish or accusation. The creator became a creature so that we might be made the creatures we were always made to be.

This is, indeed, the faith we hold onto. Established and firm. Full of hope. As surely as I live and breath. As surely as gravity holds this world together and the sun gives light. As surely as God's people have always trusted in him for salvation. He will save us again on the last day.

For he is my God. He is not far from me. And in him do I put my hope. Amen.