

Remove the head coach, and the team flounders; break the fuel line, and the car won't run; unplug the electrical appliance, and it has no power. Whether for leadership, power, or life, connections are vital!

Colossians is a book of connections; written to a community that had begun to gather an assortment of different spiritualities, philosophical traditions, and rituals, including things such as the worship of angels. It is clear that throughout the letter, Paul is deeply concerned that this community lacked a coherent set of beliefs. There were so many competing versions of reality out there and there is evidence to suggest that the Colossians were creating a confusing collage of beliefs, as if they were ordering from a tapas menu at a restaurant. Yes, we will definitely have some Jesus, but bring us a side order of Stoicism, and yes maybe a little Gnosticism as well. If we are still hungry after all of that we can always order some folk religion for dessert.

Stoicism was an ancient Greek school of philosophy and Gnostic doctrine taught that the world was created and ruled by a lesser divinity, and that Christ was an emissary of this remote supreme divine being.

To combat this, our text from Colossians this morning brings us a measure of what is called high Christology. In other words, it speaks of the cosmic implications of who Jesus Christ is.

Christ is described as "the image of the invisible God...all things have been created through him and for him...in him all things hold together...in him the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things..." From this text we are given a vast and compelling depiction of Jesus Christ as a being with his hands on every lever of the universe, as the connective tissue which holds all of reality, including us, together.

We believe in God. We envision the divine up there or out there somewhere, eternal, perfect, and all powerful. We experience humanity first hand. We bumble around in our bodies each day, bumping our knees on the coffee table and forgetting where we left our spectacles. We are remarkable but significantly imperfect creatures and we know that from personal experience. Now we are given the hypothesis that this eternal perfection, all the way up there, has travelled all the way down here and become one of us in all our grand imperfection. Verse 19 tells us, "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell." We are not talking about a hint of God to be found in this man, but the fullness of God dwelling in flesh. What is eternal has entered into mortality. What is all-powerful has entered into vulnerability. What is

transcendent has found a home in creaturely limitation.

In the human body of Jesus “the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.” The divine is stepping right into our imperfect, muddy shoes, with pleasure no less. And not only that, but we are promised in verse 27 the “riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you the hope of glory” We are actual participants, each and every one of us, in this remarkable crossing of boundaries.

There is something ironic about the effects of this high Christology, this powerful understanding of who Jesus Christ is. You would think initially that a high Christology emphasising Christ’s power would distance us from Jesus Christ, who we often think of in terms of the gentle teacher walking along the dusty roads of ancient Palestine. But to the contrary, this high Christology brings us word of a God powerful enough to dwell right within us, to connect all of us together and to God himself. God’s power in Christ, unlike other forms of power which often divide and raise one person above and beyond others, is travelling in the exact opposite direction. God’s power in Christ is reaching out and into each one of us and creating a union with the divine and all of creation.

As William Barclay tells us, there are gifts we will never possess; privileges we will never enjoy; but the good news of the Gospel, the love of God in Christ and the transforming power which can bring holiness into life is open to everyone. How wonderful is that? In Jesus name. Amen.