

## “You” and Every “You”

Colossians 1:21–29

Dear friends in Christ,

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God the Father and from the Savior of the world, Christ Jesus. Amen.

I think we are all familiar with the use of this letter, the letter X. X could mean a lots of things.

This morning, I would like to ask you to write an X, use the bulletin, or a piece of paper you have, or have a mental X, or focus on the one up here, on the screen. This is going to get us somewhere, I promise.

And to start with, this is going to help us illustrate God’s good news for you and every other person around you. So, is your X, ready?

Leave a little room around it though in case you want to add your notes this morning.

X has different usages, it could mark a spot on a map to show you where the treasure is; X could be used to mark an answer in a questionnaire, about your gender, for example. X can identify the size of your clothing, eh?! And in some cases like in Guatemala, XX means “unknown.” When a dead person found on the street is inhumed as XX, it means no information about the deceased is found, so is buried as an unknown person.

But for our purposed this morning we are going to go ahead with the first usage of it, it marks the location of the treasure, it indicates you. So the X you marked, is actually “you.” And for our purposes, this morning it will illustrate that God’s good news is for you and, through you, for every other “You” around you, your neighbours.

### **I. Jesus creates, sustains, and reconciles all things.**

The proclamation of God’s word this morning is based on the epistle reading of Colossians 1, we heard a few minutes ago.

Just before our text this morning, Paul writes that Jesus: “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup>For by him all things were created, in

heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together”

“All Things.” Really in all things. “All things” includes . . . ALL things. Every thing. All things includes the bugs living underground. All things includes our pets. All things includes your home. All things includes all trees. All things includes all streams and rivers. All things includes all oceans and continents. All things includes all planets and moons. All things includes our sun and every star in the heavens. All things includes all galaxies and every visible and invisible spiritual power or force or heavenly being. All things includes . . . ALL things!

So what about all things? Paul goes on in verses 17–20: Jesus “is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”

Now, all of that, can be shown with the top part of the X you drew. Let’s call it the extent. The boundless, limitless extent of God’s reconciling work in Christ Jesus. Jesus creates, sustains, and reconciles all things, our text says. The top half of our X shows us the extent, although in a V shape, think of it as encompassing all, all things.

## **II. God’s Good News in Christ Jesus is for you.**

Now, we focus on the middle of our X. The intersection if you wish. Where it all comes together. The center is the “you” each one of you. In verse 21, Paul brings us to you... “And you,” and you... he says at the beginning of verse 21, You! Even though Jesus controls and governs all things, “you” is at the center of his heart. So, from “all things” the message moves to “you.”

Here, in the middle of our X, having heard and seen how Jesus creates, sustains, and reconciles all things, Paul speaks to you, and says: What Jesus did for all creation, he did for you. God doesn’t just love the “world.” He loves you! God doesn’t just love everybody. He loves you. You! Of all people! You!

He knows you. He knows how far away from him you've wandered. He knows that your thoughts don't line up with his thoughts, in fact they are opposite. He knows that it's much worse than just being out of sync. Your ways have been opposed to his ways. Your actions and words have spit in the face of what he values the most. He knows that. He knows you, the real you, the "you" you try so hard to hide from others that you sometimes even hide it from yourself. He knows you. And still . . . nevertheless . . . against all odds . . . he loves you.

And his love for you isn't just a feeling. He moves on it. He acts on it. You, who "once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him" (vv 21–22).

We can't miss the obvious, can we? An X is one of the shapes crosses could take in the ancient world. It's called the crux decussata, and according to tradition, St. Andrew, the brother of Peter, was crucified on such a cross. But every cross is a reminder of the love that Jesus has for you. As he hung in agony on his cross, the sin of the whole world on his shoulders, his heart was longing for you—personally, individually.

This reminds us God's good news, that in the cross of Christ Jesus is for you. The top of our X shows us the extent of God's love: Jesus creates, sustains, and reconciles all things. The middle of our X shows us the intersection: God's Good News of the cross of Christ Jesus is for you.

### **III. And through you, God's Good News is for every "you" in Christ Jesus.**

But it doesn't stop there. Focus on the lower part of the X. Jesus creates, sustains, and reconciles all things. God's Good News of the cross of Christ Jesus is for you. And through you, God's Good News is for every other "you" around you. Your neighbours.

Notice Paul's progression. In verses 15 to 20, he describes the cosmic extent of God's reconciling work through Jesus. Then, in 21 to 24, he zooms in to show how God doesn't just love the world generally; he loves you personally. And then in 24–29, we see that God's Good News is not only for you but it's for every other "you" out there. And how does God go about this? Through . . . you!

Jesus creates, sustains, and reconciles all things. God's Good News in the cross of Christ Jesus is for you. And through you, God's Good News is for every "you," the yous out there, especially the ones who one day will be in Christ, and the more special, because the "you", you, were a special link for them to receive the gift of Christ.

As Paul puts it today: "God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ" (vv 27–28).

In other words, Paul says to each of you: Now this is a mystery. A glorious mystery. Christ, the one who created all things. Christ, the one who is before and in and beyond all things. Christ, the one who reconciled all things by the blood of his cross. Christ, the one who now lives eternally as King over all things. . . . This very Christ . . . is in you! Now, think about it for a moment. He is in you!!... it is a mind-blowing knowledge, isn't it, that Christ is in you!

And this Christ in you, this very Christ is at work through you. As we talk about his work—and use our words to describe his work and tell anyone and everyone about his work—in those words, Jesus is doing his work!

Now, I know what you're thinking. "Not me. Surely you are not talking about me. Paul, I don't know as much as you do. I'm not as articulate as you. I'm not as eloquent as you. I can't quote the Bible like you."

And you know what? You might be right. But guess what? It's not about you. It's Christ, in you. Christ, through you. Christ, not only for you but also for every "you" through you. Through you, God's Good News of the cross is for every "you" in Christ Jesus. Think about this, would you allow your "you" to be renewed and be kept by Christ, always, if so, then know that Christ is the one who will lead, and work through you.

Yes! Jesus creates, sustains, and reconciles all things. God's Good News in the cross of Christ Jesus is for you. And through you, God's Good News is for every "you" in Christ Jesus. Through you, God's Good News of the cross is for every "you" in Christ Jesus.

Every person you meet, every person you see, every person you bump into, every person you're stuck in line behind, every person who frustrates you, every person having a great day, every person having a miserable day . . . every single "you" that you encounter is one for whom Christ died. Every single "you" out there is one for whom Christ rose. Every "you" you will see this week is one for whom Christ lives.

**IV. Wherever we are as the Church, this is the intersection where God's saving work reaches individuals by faith.**

And every single one of you in this room right now, Christ is in you according to his word of promise. This is the moment of intersection. X marks this spot. X shows us where the treasure is. X marks where the goods are. This is the moment of intersection. As a broken person like me speaks to a broken person like you. As the cosmic work of Christ comes through a forgiven child of God so that one more person, one more "you," would hear and believe. So that you would know and receive . . . life . . . peace . . . purpose... hope.

This is the moment of intersection. X marks the spot. Not just this building. Not just me as pastor. But Christ. Christ from eternity. Christ for eternity. Christ in you. Christ through you. This moment of intersection, this simple X, it goes with you, because Christ goes with you.

Jesus creates, sustains, and reconciles all things. God's Good News of the cross of Christ Jesus is for you, and through you, God's Good News of the cross is for every "you" in Christ Jesus. Through you, God's Good News of the cross is for every "you" in Christ Jesus.

Now may God, who has begun this good work in you, bring it to completion on the day of Christ Jesus. Amen.