

Texts: Colossians 1:15-20; Romans 8:1-9 & Galatians 5:22-23;

Have you ever been late for an appointment and stuck in traffic jam? Has it ever rained every day of a long-awaited family vacation? Sooner or later we all face situations beyond our control. The Bible teaches that even when we find ourselves in unpredictable, uncontrollable, and frustrating circumstances, we can still know two things: First, we can trust God to work in our lives to bring order, hope and peace out of chaos. And second, we can always, with God's help control one thing – ourselves.

Today we continue in our sermon series: God's answer to our daily struggles. And this morning we'll talk about CONTROL. The truth is that all of us struggle with control on every day basis. Many of us struggled in situations when everything seemed to be out of control, and many of us struggled with situations when we needed to give up our control. Today we'll tackle two questions and through God's word we'll seek God's answers.

The first question is: **With all that is out of control in the world, how can people still say: "God is in control"?**

This is a question people struggled with since the beginning of human kind. With all the bad things happening in our everyday lives, and with all of our struggles, whether it's the loss of a job or someone we love, whether it's illness or an addiction of a family member, whether it's our personal struggle of faith as we try to make sense out of all these things. How can God be still in control? And how can all of this be happening?

Let us look at our first reading and see what God has to say. The Apostle Paul writes to his brothers and sisters in Colossae who were struggling with many of these issues. Many of the new Christians were from generations of Jews who had to flee their homes because of persecutions. There were false teachers that arose among them bringing chaos and confusion to this young church. And so Colossians has to overcome many different challenges and struggles of faith.

It is into this situation of confusion and chaos that Paul writes about the supremacy of Christ. You know it's very interesting. Paul could start naming one problem after another and

then giving an individual explanation for every struggle, but he doesn't do that. Instead he first gives thanks and then he prays. No matter what is going on, no matter how out of control things might seem, there is always something to be thankful for. And so Paul gives thanks for their faith and love and he prays for their spiritual wisdom and understanding, he prays that they might be strengthened with God's power having endurance and patience in all the things they're going through.

And then he writes you'll be able to do all these things because of our God who has rescued us from the dominion of darkness, and darkness could be translated as chaos, but God has rescued us from this power and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, and the forgiveness of sins.

Paul says: God will not let the power of darkness, sin and chaos rule over you for you belong to Jesus, who has power over these things, who is in control of these things.

No matter how confused you are no matter how badly things are spinning out of control, there is Christ, the image of invisible God, he was before all things and in him all **things hold together**. When I read this text I imagined a twister, where everything spins out of control in the strength of the wind, but in the center there is the eye, and in the eye, there is no wind, everything is still, no matter where the twister goes the eye still remains calm like an oasis. That is Christ my friends.

No matter how bad the winds are around us, he's the one who is always stable, who is in control, who can give comfort, and peace that surpasses our human understanding. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. Now that's huge! Can you even imagine the fullness of God? And this great powerful God decided to dwell in Christ, his Son and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. The chaos of sin and death was overcome by the blood of the cross of Jesus Christ.

And so we know that at all times, in all situations, and in all circumstances we can come to the cross and let Christ be in control, let him lead us and guide us, let him comfort us and strengthen us, let him forgive us and save us. He can do that, for he is the head of the body, the church. But we will all agree that these things are easier said than done. Especially when we

struggle it is hard for us just to come to the cross and say, here Lord you be in control. And so our second question is: **If Christ is the head and we are his body, how can we let Christ be in control of our lives?**

Well we already said that as a church we are Christ's body. And the body is controlled by the head, the brain. But sometimes we know there is a struggle between the body and the mind, or the flesh and the Spirit. Paul writes: There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And then he continues and says: Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of flesh. Or we could rephrase these words and say those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things. And when we are dominated by the sinful things it is the sin that is in control of our lives.

But those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit, and to set our minds on Spirit is life and peace. That's when Christ is in control of our lives. And then Paul continues and reminds us all that as children of God, as his body and his church we are in Spirit and the Spirit of God dwells in us. And through his Spirit Christ is in control. And when Christ is in control we bear the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

And so how can we let Christ be in control of our lives? All we need to do is stop rejecting his invitation and let him lead us and enable us to live the life of the Spirit. If we'll let him lead us in our everyday lives by the power of his Spirit, we'll be able to trust him and we'll be truly able to be his body, his hands and feet. And as Christ will take control of our lives, we'll be able to bring love, joy, peace, kindness, generosity and gentleness into the lives of people around us, into the places and situations where these things are missing.

Amen