

Excellency of Jesus Christ

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Bible Text: Colossians 1:15-22
Preached on: Sunday, April 1, 2018

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Well, grab your Bibles and go to the book of Colossians. Colossians 1. We'll beginning in verse 15. Colossians 1:15. I've entitled the section, this exposition, "The Excellency of Jesus Christ." Of course, to unpack all that is here would take many hours. Not going to do that but I want to show you some things about the glorious excellency of Christ from this text. Colossians 1, beginning in verse 15. Paul writing to the church at Colossae writes,

15 He [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. 19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach--

Excellency. Excellency, what does that mean? It simply means to be in the state of excelling or superiority. Jesus Christ is indeed most excellent and superior in every way.

I remember seeing a little documentary some years ago where they were training young men in Germany to be German engineers and they gave each one of them a little iron rod and they had to put that little iron rod in a vice and they had to literally take hand files and by hand they had to sharpen down and remove down that piece of iron until they got it to just a perfect precise predetermined mark. Someone asked them, "Why would you train an engineer in this technique? We've got computers and machines that can cut metal to the exact perfection." They said, "As German engineers, we want them to feel the discipline of doing something in an excellent way, then we'll move them on to the

computers and the machines." They said, "German engineers aren't good, they are to be excellent."

You know, there is something about us that is drawn to excellence. I think about how our wives and our daughters and the women in our lives watch these shows on TV where they remodel and re-create these homes, and they like it because those people are professionals and they can remodel that home and redecorate that home in an excellent way and you are drawn to that. And our men perhaps might admire an automobile that's a fine automobile and the engineering and the technology involved and we see the excellence of it. But there's a problem. We always want to watch that next remodeling show. We always want to find that next fine automobile. You see, that's because down here though we are drawn to excellence and we admire excellence, we are never satisfied. You see, God has put that desire in all of us. God has planted that there so that we would be one day, hopefully, drawn to find full satisfaction finally in the one and only truly excellent one, Jesus Christ. He is all excellence.

Three thoughts from our passage. There are many others and there are many things we will have to skip over but three thoughts. I. Notice that his excellency is seen in that he is both God and Creator. He is both God and Creator. Paul says writing to the church at Colossae in verse 15, "He is the image of the invisible God." He says it again in 2 Corinthians 4:4, "Christ who is the image of God." Now the idea of image means stamp; it means the very stamp of God, God of very God the theologians would say, is Jesus Christ. Down in verse 19 he elaborates and says God was pleased that "all the fullness dwells in Him." In other words, everything that is God is in Jesus Christ. He's not just sort of God or kind of God, he's not just a little above humanity but below God. No, he is, again as the theologians would say, he is God of very God. Philippians 2:6 tells us, "who, although He [Jesus] existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped." Jesus is God.

Now, the mystery and the wonder about Jesus, at least from a biblical perspective, is not that Jesus is God, the mystery is why would he ever become man. But he did. He became what we call the God-man. Jesus is 100% God as if he were not man at all, and at the same time he's 100% man as if he were not God at all. Great is the mystery of godliness. Jesus reminds us in John 14:9, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father."

Now he elaborates further here, he said not only is he the image of the invisible God in verse 15, he says he is "the firstborn of all creation." The firstborn does not mean what the Jehovah's Witness cult teaches it means. They would say, "Well, you see there, Jesus is not God, he's just created. He's the highest of the created order." That is not true. Firstborn here does not mean chronological order like he's the first thing created or the first one created. That's not at all what it means. It means firstborn in rank or in position. You and I know that in ancient Israel the firstborn male child had head of the family. In the absence of the father, he gained the inheritance and he was looked to as head or ruler over that segment of the family. Now, Jesus Christ being fully God, put on humanity and became the God-man and by his life and by his death he has purchased the title deed to men's souls and to all of creation. So therefore he is firstborn, he is head over all rule and

over all authority. Just like Esau was the firstborn, but by the workings of God, Jacob became the firstborn and received the inheritance, it speaks of his rule and his reign. In Psalm 89:27 speaking of David, and of course ultimately being a prophecy of Jesus Christ, the Bible says, "I will make him My firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth." Revelation 1:5, "Jesus Christ...firstborn from the dead." It means of the resurrected order of all those who are in the family of the resurrection, the Christians, believers, he's the head, he is the rule, he is the authority.

Now in all these statements, he is the image of God. He's the firstborn. He's the head. He's the highest. In all of these statements, what Paul is saying to us is the same thing he is saying to the church at Colossae, Jesus is God. Jesus is deity. This is the doctrine of the deity, the full deity of Jesus Christ. Now brothers and sisters, be careful because there are so many subtle manipulative false teachings out there in the world today that has a high view of Jesus but not as high as the Scriptures give him. Remember, he's God of very God.

Now also as God, Paul elaborates further on the excellencies of Christ and says he is also, of course, Creator. Look at what he says in verse 16, "For by Him," that's Jesus, "all things were created," or you could literally say all things stand created. Creation is something he did and now it still stands. Now, this truth completely destroys the false doctrine of the Apostle Paul's day and the false doctrine of our day, and that is those who teach again, that Jesus is just a part of the creation though a superior part of the creation. But that is not true. Jesus has no beginning and Jesus will have no end. Jesus is, indeed, the uncreated Creator. In Genesis 1:26, the Bible says, "Let Us make man in Our image." Who is the "Us"? Well, there are only three people there: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is Creator and the word "created" here when the Bible says all things were created by him, it's the Hebrew equivalent, bara, and the Hebrew word bara means something out of nothing. There was a time when God alone was all that there was and God wasn't lonely. He wasn't insufficient. He wasn't incomplete at all, but then God spoke and God brought something out of nothing. You see, when it comes to the origin of all that is, or you might say the origin of matter, this truth destroys everything and all the false notions that are against the teachings of the word of God. I don't know about a Big Bang Theory of origins but I do believe in a Big God Theory of origins. Romans 4:17 reminds us he "calls into being that which does not exist." Only God could do that. In Hebrews 11:3, "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible."

The Bible makes it very clear. God existed before time, before matter, and God spoke and God brought something out of nothing. Jesus is God and Jesus is Creator. You see, every atom, every molecule, every grain of sand, every leaf that trembles, every mountain, every hill, every ravine, every valley, all the continents, the oceans, the vast galaxies and the entire universe was spoken into existence by Jesus Christ. By the way, there is not one square inch of anything anywhere that Jesus can't put his finger on and say, "Mine." He is God and he is Creator, the excellencies of Jesus Christ.

This simple and profound statement, "For by Him all things were created," soundly refutes all of man's false philosophies concerning the origin and the meaning of life. It refutes atheism because the universe was created by God. It refutes pantheism because God transcends, he is separate from that which he created. It refutes polytheism because all that is created, or rather because God created all that exists. He's not just a part of everything, he's separate from it. It refutes materialism because matter has a beginning. If you listen to the scientists today, they can't explain the beginning of things so they just begin to say, "Well, matter is eternal." No, it's not. God is eternal and he spoke matter into existence. It refutes dualism because God was alone when he created all things. It refutes humanism because God created man and man is under God's authority. It refutes evolution because God created all things and they stand created. I'm not saying there are not some changes within species but the concept that you and I came from some tiny molecule or some tiny speck of protein in some primordial slime is just not biblical. God created and it stands created and this refuted all the pagan philosophies of the day when Paul was writing to the church at Colossae because they believed that their thrones were established by the Greek gods and Paul said, "No, there are no Greek gods. There is just one God and his name is Jesus and he created all things." Paul boldly and emphatically states that Jesus is God and he is Creator and this excludes all others. He is the most excellent one. He is God and Creator.

II. We see his Excellency in that he is the all-powerful sustainer of all things. The Bible says in verse 17, "He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." In him all things hold together. First he is before all of them, again he's eternal. If there is anything that is, he is before it. Like he told the Jews when they were disputing with him about his heritage and about what authority he had to teach with such a mandate that he was sent from God, he said, "Well, you all place your beginning back to father Abraham," he says, "Well, before Abraham was, I am." I am. You just place anything on the chronological calendar of history and Jesus still "am." He was "am" before anything else was.

Then verse 17, "in Him all things hold together." That means right now as you and I sit here in this church, Jesus Christ is holding all things together. Indeed, he holds the entire universe together. Now this is no strain on him. He is omnipotent and it's no strain on his omnipotence to hold all of this together, but it is a natural part of his great omnipotence. Apart from the personal, present, persistent power of Jesus Christ, the entire universe would immediately fall apart into chaos. His power holds in order all the universe and all the intricate parts therein. We know that there are unknown numbers of planets that orbit around unknown numbers of suns that exist in unknown numbers of galaxies and he holds every one of them in their place and in their proper orbit.

How do you think this thing just happened and we have these vast galaxies of solar systems and suns and planets and moons circling the planets and they all just stay right there? If you read science books, do you know what they will say? "Well, gravity does that." I'd say, "Wait, timeout. Where did that come from?" "Well, gravity." Well, what do you mean gravity? What's gravity? Where did gravity come from? Explain gravity. They'll say, "We can't. We just know it's there and it's very faithful." Do you know why

it's very faithful? Because the one holds it all together is the faithful one, Jesus Christ. From every individual grain of sand to the immense galaxies, all are held in place by him. Listen, the sun does not rise until he says. The moon does not shine until he says. The rain does not fall until he says so. The wind does not blow until he says so. He holds all things together. The psalmists in many ways said this but in Psalm 104:3, "He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters; He makes the clouds His chariot; He walks upon the wings of the wind." He is over all of it.

You see, actually scientists have some real explaining to do. Now listen to this: if we go to the building block of matter, the tiny atom, we find some interesting facts. For example, an atom is a million times smaller than the diameter of the average human hair. That's little. Atoms combine together to form what we call matter and there are 118 known types of matter and we call them the elements, like hydrogen is an element, or oxygen is an element, or sodium is an element, and on and on it goes, 118 of them that we know of. Now, they are still discovering one or two along but that's matter. Atoms come together to form matter.

Now, the tiny atom has an even more tiny nucleus within it and that tiny nucleus in the tiny atom is made up of even tinier protons, and protons that are in the middle of an atom have enormous energy and power in them. But here's what scientists know as a fact: all of those protons are electrically charged, they have a positive charge. That's a curious thing because you know when you put two magnets together and you put the positive side to the positive side, they repel each other. There is nothing negative in there. It's all a positive charge. In the center of the tiny atom is a nucleus where the protons are positively charged, they should fly out from each other and emit enormous energy. As a matter of fact, when there is a nuclear bomb, that's what we do, we force the atoms to split apart. We force those protons to repel out and great energy is released. Today's nuclear bombs can seriously harm or kill you 50 miles from the epicenter. That's power.

Physicist Karl Darrow said it this way, "After being created, the nuclei of an atom should have blown up instantly, yet here they are." He says, "Some inflexible inhibition is holding them relentlessly together. The nature of this inhibition is a secret one and thus far reserved by nature for herself." Do you know what this esteemed physicist says? "We have no idea how these protons stay together in the nucleus of these atoms." They should be flying apart.

Now here when they talk about this, science just says there is a force in there and this is the scientific term. Are you ready? This is real sophisticated: they say there is a power in that tiny atom in the protons and the nucleus of an atom that holds those positively charged protons together and what we're going to call it is the strong force. Boy, that's deep. Is that all you've got? Can you not explain that for us? "We don't understand it. We don't know why it's there. We don't know where it came from. We don't know how it works. But in every other aspect of reality, positively charged materials repel each other but not in the nucleus of an atom. It's just a strong force."

Physicist George Gamow, one of the early proponents of The Big Bang Theory, said this about the atom, he says, "We live in a world in which practically every object is a potential nuclear explosion." His point is if somehow this mysterious strong force that holds the protons in the nucleus of an atom were to release its hold, an instantaneous explosion of galactic proportions would result. Heat, wind and force would come out from them beyond our imagination.

Here's the point, brothers and sisters: you and I live in an entire universe, you and I live in a world that is preprogrammed with a self-destruct mechanism and only Jesus knows where the switch is. This is science. These are facts. Scientists haven't a clue as to what that strong force is, where it comes from, or how it works, but we know that the force that holds the atomic protons together is not some thing, it is someone and his name is Jesus. The smarter science becomes, the more we realize God was right all along. He holds all things together by the word of his power and if he for one moment said, "Release," a gargantuan atomic explosion would occur of all that is.

Wait a minute, there is a verse about that, 2 Peter 3:10, "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar," a perfect description of a nuclear explosion because the wind just roars in violence after a nuclear explosion, "and the elements," the very basic particles of matter to the smallest part, "will be destroyed," how? "With intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up." That's a great 2,000 -year-old description of a worldwide nuclear explosion and all it's going to take is for the sovereign Lord Jesus Christ to speak one word, "Release your hold," and every single tiny proton and every single tiny atom will react and that energy will be released from every atom in existence and immediately everything is destroyed.

Not only just in the physical realm but in the realm of humankind, he is the one who holds all things together. Mark my word, watch it, watch it, give it some time and you'll find that individuals that abandon God find their lives and all that they touch falling apart because he holds all things together. Now, if you know him, you may fall but you will not fall apart. There's a difference. Families that abandon him fall apart. We have some minority communities where they say that 75% of the homes have no father present. Drug abuse. Crime. Murder. Abortion. Delinquency. Increasing astronomically in these communities. And then whole societies or countries that abandon God will fall apart. Hatred. Strife. Discord. Lying. Cheating. Slander. Malice. Every form of evil under the sun will increase and keep increasing because it is Jesus that holds all things together and they will not be held together without him.

Well, the last thing you want – listen to me, sir – the last thing you want is for Jesus to let go of you. Husband and wife team, the last thing you want is for God to leave your marriage. Family, the last thing you want is for God to not be the center of your home because if Jesus is not there, things unravel. And all this silly nonsense unbiblical movement today to make serving Jesus and make church one big carnival and one big entertainment complex, that kind of Christianity will not hold you. It won't hold you. You've got to find the real Christ and know him from the heart because all things hold

together in him. Only Jesus can hold us together. Only Jesus can keep us from falling apart. He is the sustainer of all things.

Oh, we see his excellencies. We see his excellency, Paul says, in that he is God and Creator. We see the excellency of him as he is the all-powerful sustainer of all things. Now number 3: we see his excellency in that he is Savior and Lord of the second and greater creation. A new and greater creation. Look at it there in verse 18, "He is also," so when Paul begins 18 he says, "I'm bringing a new dimension out now, a new aspect of the excellencies of Christ. He is also head of the body, the church." You see, God's first creation was great but the second creation he is now working on is greater still. The first creation was built around Adam and Eve before they sinned, of course, in the garden. The second creation is built upon a far greater one, the Bible calls him the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen to 1 Corinthians 15:45 and 47, "So also it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living soul.' The last Adam," that's Jesus, "became a life-giving spirit." 1 Corinthians 15:47, "The first man," Adam and Eve in the garden, Adam, "is from the earth, earthy; the second man," Jesus, the second Adam, "is from heaven." The first creation was held together by the first Adam who failed and sinned and corruption filled everything and so now the creation that you and I are presently a part of is part of the first creation, this world we live in, and it is decaying, it is corrupting, it's dying and it will soon be completely destroyed. But there is a new creation going on. It's formed not by the first Adam but by the second Adam, Jesus Christ, and his work is incorruptible, perfect and eternal and will not pass away. This second Adam, Jesus Christ, is now securing a people for this new creation, that people is called the church, ekklesia. God is calling out ones from belonging primarily to the world to now belonging to Jesus and his new created order, his called out people, that's what ekklesia means, the church. He is now securing a people and he is now securing a place, a new heavens and a new earth, and all of this makes up the new creation.

Now let's break this down. Paul goes a little further. He breaks it down a little further and he more specifically wants us to see Christ's excellency in how he is securing his people for this new creation. Two sub points here. A. He saves us through his work, that is, his work of his death and his resurrection. Let's talk about his death first. In verse 20 he talks about "having made peace through the blood of His cross." In verse 21 he talks about how we have been reconciled through his fleshly body through death. Now here's what I want you to note here: note the emphasis on the personal literal body of Jesus Christ. Note the emphasis on the literal blood of Jesus Christ. Now, liberal theologians try to tell us that Christianity is not about emphasizing Jesus' suffering and bleeding and dying, that that's not necessary. They would tell us that, "Well, Christ's death on the cross was just an example of giving yourself to help others and that's the way we all should live. It's just an example for everyone." They will either teach and dismiss the cross that way or ignore it altogether. But listen, someone who is just demonstrating a good and selfless act cannot atone for my sin or remove my guilt. You see, I owe God's justice a great debt. I am a sinner unclean and undone. I do not need an example, I need a miracle. Somehow, some way I need to gain a right standing before the infinitely holy God.

Now, the law, the law given in Scriptures centered in the 10 Commandments, is an example. It's a standard for us to follow to please God, but when we try to keep the law, instead of helping our situation, we are only more condemned because the law says do not lie and sometimes I've lied. The law says do not commit adultery and we've all had lust in our hearts. But Jesus by his literal body hanging on the cross, Jesus by his literal blood being shed in our place, has satisfied the justice of God that was against me. I've said it you before but justice before Jesus died was a roaring lion replete with all strength and sharp teeth in his mouth, but after Jesus died, justice has sat down and said, "I ain't got nothing else to do." Do you know why? Because it was all poured on Jesus. It's finished. That's why Jesus cried, "It is finished."

Romans 8:3, listen to this, "For what the Law could not do," now the figure of speech there is what man couldn't get accomplished by keeping the law, "what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh." As verse 20 of our text says, he has made peace between holy God and sinful man through the blood of his cross. That's the work of Jesus and that's how he is securing for himself a people, a church, to inhabit his new creation and all this work illustrates the excellency of Jesus Christ.

But not only the subpoint about his death but also his resurrection. Paul mentions here in verse 18, "He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning," now here is the phrase, "the firstborn from the dead." That's the resurrection. The firstborn from the dead. You see, one absolutely inseparable truth about God's children is that we are of the resurrection. Listen, if any true believer in Jesus Christ is not raised from the dead unto eternal life, then Jesus Christ is a fraud, he's a liar, and Christianity is a lie. There is no Christianity without the cross and without the resurrection. Everything hinges on that. Jesus promised in John 6:39, "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day." Notice the resurrection there, "I will raise all of mine up in the last day."

Now, one of the glories of Jesus is the great seemingly contrasting diversity of his excellency. I mean, how diverse he is in excellency. First of all, notice the greatness of his condescension. He died for us. He shed his blood for us. He gave his body for us. Paul keeps telling us that. He was arrested, the Bible tells us. He was falsely accused. He was tried in a kangaroo court. He was spit upon and he was punched. His back was ravaged with whips. He was stripped down naked. He was nailed to a cross in the utmost shame and humiliation. A spear was plunged into his side and it's probable at that moment on the cross in his agony he had not one disciple left who was unashamed to call him their own. The condescension. The shame. The humiliation.

At that moment, God turned his back on the Son and then he died and God darkened the earth. A holy transaction was being executed, one that they had established between themselves before the foundation of the world. God the Son, Jesus Christ, was lovingly

yielding his life for his own. He was yielding himself to be the guilt offering for all of us. He was dying in our place.

The Father looked upon his Son and he held Jesus guilty for all of our sins. The hot and holy dagger of justice plunged through the heart of Jesus and he died in agony beyond comparison. The physical torment was extreme but the spiritual horror of bearing our sin and being judged for our sin was far greater. The Bible says the wages of sin is death and he became our sin and he died. But what a glory for us. In his agony and death and darkness, he found and secured his sheep. "No one knows how dark the night/ nor how deep were the waters crossed/ 'Ere he found his sheep that was lost." And he found every one of them.

He was laid in a borrowed tomb. A huge stone is rolled over the cover of the entrance. Roman guards were stationed outside to make sure that he did not get out. Would he live again? In Christian theology, again, the resurrection of our Savior is essential to our doctrine. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:13 and 14, "But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain." You see, if Christ is not risen, then he did not conquer. If Christ is not risen, then he died with our sins and without atoning for them. The resurrection is the only sure proof that the Father accepted in full the payment Jesus made on our behalf. The wages of sin is death. If Jesus remained in death, then the wages he paid were not sufficient. Death wins. Jesus would be dead in sin, we would die in our sins and be owned by death, our bodies decaying in the ground, our souls banished to eternal death in hell.

He died on Friday. Then Saturday. Then Sunday. The earth trembled. The tomb shook. In a mighty swoop of divine power, the stone rolled away, not to let Jesus out but to let us in so that we would know indeed he's alive. "Up from the grave he arose/ with a mighty triumph over his foes/ He arose a victor from the dark domain/ and he lives forever with the saints to reign./ He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!"

You see, when Jesus entered death's house, he didn't find death's house to his liking so he proceeded with a complete makeover. You might call it an extreme makeover. In fact, he found death's house so unpleasing to himself, he literally turned death's house inside out. Now for his children, death has completely changed its character. Death is no longer the horror that it used to be for us. It is no longer our final destination. Death is now but a short bright passageway that welcomes us to our eternal home. Death is a lion with no teeth and little roar. When we go into death's front door, we immediately see the brilliant light of glory for Jesus left a massive hole in the back wall of death's house. So we walk in the front door and immediately see the brilliant light of glory and walk right on into the glory of God's presence.

What a diversity of excellencies in Jesus Christ. In the cross and the resurrection, we see the lowest of condescension and shame and humiliation, then in the resurrection we see the heights of power and glory and majesty. All the excellencies of Jesus Christ.

One of his excellencies, I said, the last point, that he is saving for himself a people to inhabit this new and greater creation. He is now doing this new creation. You can't see it with the human eye but it exists in the hearts of those who are saved. We know we are part of something bigger and better and more glorious, we're just not there quite yet.

Secondly, not only does he save us through his work of his death and resurrection, he saves us for himself. Paul says here in verse 20, "to reconcile us to Himself." Not just to reconcile us, reconcile us to himself. Hebrews 12:2 is an interesting verse. It says Jesus "for the joy set before Him endured the cross." Think about that. Not that the cross itself was a joy. It was his duty. He was pleased to do it to honor the Father's will to save the children, but there was a joy through what he was accomplishing. On another occasion Jesus said to his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you that where I am you may be with Me." You've got to understand something, are you listening to me: Jesus did all that he did so that you could be with him.

He saved you for himself. Verse 22, the last part, "in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach." Jesus said, "I'm going to do such a work so that I can have you with me but you're a mess and I'm going have to fulfill the dictates of holy justice and get you to a place where you actually bear my own righteousness so that you and I can stand before the Father and the Father looks at me," talking about Jesus Christ, and he'll say, "You are certainly welcome at home," then when he looks at you and I standing with him, the Father would say, "And you look just like Jesus. You are holy before my eyes. You are blameless before the omniscient discernment of divine justice. You are beyond reproach. Neither I nor any being in heaven can bring any charge against you because Jesus was saving you that you could be with him." He saved you for himself.

Isaiah 53:10, "But the LORD," that's God the Father, "was pleased To crush Him," that's Jesus, that's the cross, "putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering," that means in our place he became our guilt offering for us, but notice that next phrase, "He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand." He'll see his offspring. In other words, he'll save his children through this agony and this death and this victorious resurrection that he might have his children with him forever. He will see his offspring.

He saved you for himself. Women don't give birth to babies to give them to other people. They have them for themselves. And in the travails of his cross and the suffering and agony and anguish, he birthed us to be his own that he might have us for himself.

Oh, the excellencies of Jesus Christ will one day finally be seen in the full when he is crowned Lord of all, and then us, his glorified church, will attend him and together we will dwell in glory and in perfection in the new heavens and in the new earth. You know, as you mature in life, you begin to find your greatest joy in seeing others have joy. Have you noticed that? As you get older, you look at your children, your grandchildren, your great grandchildren, and your great joy is when they have joy. Perhaps our greatest joy in heaven will be watching our Lord Jesus as he finds his greatest joy in us because he sees

in us the accomplishment of his work. He sees in us the result of his anguish. He sees in us the fulfillment of all he participated in and performed. Are you listening to me? I am 1,000% convinced when we get to heaven Jesus is going to be tickled to death with us being there. It's going to thrill him. It's going to be a joy. He's going to say, "I carried you. I labored for you. I anguished for you. I suffered for you. Welcome home, I love you."

He saved us for himself, to reconcile us to himself, Paul says here. The prophet said he will see his offspring and, of course, we will have ever increasing joy because finally we will have those perfect hearts and those perfect minds to ever increasingly consider the glories and the excellencies of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The excellency of Jesus Christ. He is God and Creator. He is the Almighty sustainer of all things. And he is Savior and Lord of the greater and new creation. That's why he died and that's why he rose again.

Let's bow together in prayer.