

SCRIPTURE

Colossians 1

¹¹ May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled^[a] you^[b] to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.^[c]

The Supremacy of Christ

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶ for in^[d] him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He himself is before all things, and in^[e] him all things hold together. ¹⁸ He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ 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.

SERMON

Let Us Pray,

God Who Makes Love Visible,

Be in the words spoken and the words heard this morning that we might sense our Oneness with you. In the way of Christ we pray. Amen.

So, I've been thinking about this quite a bit over several decades. And I have become thoroughly convinced that we have been taught to see the invisible the wrong way. And if that statement sounds a little confusing, let me say it again so that it becomes completely confusing. We have been taught to see the invisible the wrong way.

Now some of you may be thinking to yourselves. But isn't that the point of something being invisible? It can't be seen? Well, yes and no. And that is what we are going to dig into a little bit today. And at the end of our conversation today, I hope you either leave questioning or affirmed by the idea the the nature of invisibility is that while something may be unseen, it does not mean that it is necessarily unsensed.

I'll never forget what my instructor said to the class on my first day of military tech school for satellite communications. "In order to do this job well, you have to be able to see the invisible." He went on to introduce us to the world of frequencies and throughout the course explain the nature of unseen waves and their different characteristics and how the all of the instruments that humans use to enhance our ability to "see the unseen" are based on functionality of either the human body or what we observed from other creatures in nature. But the very philosophical question he posed that has been working on me for decades now is, "How did we know to look for these invisible frequencies in the first place?" It would make no sense to create a tool to find something that you didn't suspect was there. And an even deeper question that he and I talked about outside of class was, "is it possible that what we are looking for wants to be found just as much as we want to find it?"

[Mind blown gesture]

Now, as I said, I have been thinking about this for decades and have been doing my best to figure out how to articulate this in a transmittable way. But I am not quite there yet. So bear with me.

So one day after prayer, meditation, and contemplation on some of these ideas, I started thinking about our teachings in this tradition that say that we are created in the image and likeness of God. And without going into the long train of thought that got me here, I arrived at the thought, "If God is invisible and I am in the image and likeness of God, then I must be invisible too. And so, I said to myself, "I am invisible."

Now at first, I thought about the cartoonish idea of invisible--a hat and a shirt floating around that demonstrates my invisibility. But from there, the idea expanded when I considered that in many ways I had experienced invisibility my entire life. And it wasn't because my body wasn't seen. But rather, it was precisely because my body was seen, that the greater part of who I am was rendered invisible. And I bet each and everyone of you knows what that is like in your own ways. And so, emboldened by this awareness, I decided to embrace my invisibility and amazing things started to happen.

For one thing, I felt a lightness of being come over me as I considered that as someone who is largely invisible, I cannot expect people to really "see me". It is amazing how freeing others from our expectations lightens us. As Anne Lamott said, "Expectations are resentments waiting to happen."

Now, being guided by the two great commandments that invite us to love God and neighbors as myself, I desired that lightness of being for everyone. And so, as I went about my day, I would say to myself of every person I encountered, "that person is invisible." What this did was free me from any presupposition that I could tell anything

about anyone simply from looking at their bodies just as I would not want people to suppose that they know anything about me simply from looking at mine. But more than that, this practice reminded me that behind everyone and everything there is a story of how they came into the world that I do not know. And so, I extended my witnessing of the invisible nature to everything. "That tree is invisible. My car is invisible. My phone is invisible. This Church is invisible." And suddenly, the world was full of wonder.

From there my mind went to Hebrews 11 which is all about faith. Specifically I thought about verses 1-3 which say,

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a *good* testimony. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

Think about that. Everything we see is made of things that we cannot see. Too often we take for granted that the visible world tells most of the story. But, how often do we think about how little we see in the world? Like the proverbial "tip of the iceberg" we only see a small portion of what is actually here. But this notion goes even deeper than that. It says that even if you see the rest of the iceberg, there is infinitely more that you cannot see that has allowed the iceberg to even come into being. It's as if what we see as the "real thing" is just a shadow of the real world that we cannot see—the world of God that pours into our world as we come face to face with the light.

James 1:17 – Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above (beyond), and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

Can you consider the possibility that almost everything about you that can be seen or observed in anyway only says as much about who you really are as your shadow when the sun is at your back? What if you and all of that you can sense through corporeal and cognitive (physical and mental) means says almost nothing of the magnificence from which you emerge? James called God the Father of lights. Jesus told his listeners they were the light of the world. That light that you and we all are comes from everything we cannot see. Our faith tells us that. And when we forget, it is because we are putting our faith in shadows. We are more than shadows (ego). But the question we have to ask ourselves is if we are ready to see who we really are?

Hebrews 10:1 – Since the law has only a **shadow** of the good things to come and not the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who approach.

How cool is that? Way before talk of quantum physics was making its way into everyday life, there were some people who were already going around telling people that everything we see is made out of things that we cannot see.

Centuries before the book of Hebrews was even written, there was an understanding that the power of the invisible was infinitely beyond the power of that which is seen—the Unknown more powerful than the known. When Paul described God to the people of Athens, he pointed them to their own ideas of the [Unknown God](#) who they worshiped without knowing it.

Sure, some people may have tried to write them off as idolaters. But, hey they were smart as all get out. Greek philosophers like Leucippus and Democritus who came up with the atomic theory were arguing against other thinkers who contemplated an all powerful void out of which all things emerged. My point is that people knew that the really real could not be found in the limited manifestations that we make the end all and be all of life.

They were looking for that which was in them more so than that which appears to be outside of them. Like John said, "Greater is the One within you than the one that is in the world." Now there are a lot of interpretations of that scripture, but the way I take it is that the invisible One (Christ, our intended Self)—the person within you, but the world cannot see—who lives within you is greater than what the world can see.

A recent criticism I heard about religion is that it does seem to produce beings like unto the type of being as the founders of these religions. I.e. Christianity does not produce Christs, just as Buddhism does not produce Buddhas. But if any other program did not produce people who were clearly on the path to do what the teacher could do, we would consider that program as failing.

"Now the whole offer which Christianity makes is this: that we can, if we let God have His way, come to share in the life of Christ. If we do, we shall then be sharing a life which was begotten, not made, which always existed and always will exist. Christ is the Son of God. If we share in this kind of life we also shall be sons of God. We shall love the Father as He does and the Holy Ghost will arise in us. He came to this world and became a man in order to spread to other men the kind of life He has — by what I call "good infection." Every Christian is to become a little Christ. The whole purpose of becoming a Christian is simply nothing else."

Unfortunately, many of us have seemed to forgotten or have no awareness of the greatness within us. We think that if we will ever be great, it will be some time in the future. We don't realize that we are that greatness now and that we can live it and embody it now—right where we are no matter what our circumstances. We don't need the world's permission. We don't need outward signs. We don't have to trick people into seeing it by trying to conform to some made up idea of what greatness, beauty, wealth is. You are it now. I know this is true. I think there is this other cliché making its way around that says, "If you can see it then you can be it." I like that so much more than the most popular cliché which of course is "fake it til you make it". But I want to start a new cliché. That is "Be it til you see it." What I love about "Be it til you see it." is that it is not time dependent. It is simply saying "Be awesome now." It isn't trying to tell you that in some future you will be awesome. It is saying that even though you might not see the outward manifestation yet, you are already the greatest you that you can imagine. Just live out of that space and you will eventually see it. If other people see it too, then that is icing on the cake. But if they don't then oh well. What do they know?

The only reason we can't see how awesome we are right now is because we are trying to reconcile our inherent greatness with the messages that are perpetuated about who we "should be". Take my word for it. We are great because we emanate from the Greatness. Even if you don't believe in God, with very little thought you can see how amazing it is that in order for you to be here and deny your greatness and the greatness of everything in Creation, it took the coordination of an incalculable number of ancestors and circumstances and in fact all of the created Universe. All you need to see is that from God's point of view you were worth all of Creation. Anyway. That's how I think. If you are stuck thinking something less and would like to stretch your concepts or drop them altogether, you know where to find me.

One of the most popular archetypes in human storytelling is the rags to riches archetype. And it doesn't matter how many ways we tell it, we tend to love it. In fact, I would say that in America in particular, rags to riches is the quintessential American aspiration. Someone is poor, perhaps living in obscurity, or perhaps has been oppressed by some person or system. But somehow, by sheer force of will and determination, they rise up from their lowly state to become respected and perhaps even an intimidating and imposing figure as that would ensure that they are less likely to return to the lowly state from which they came. For an example, consider Edmon Dantes from Alexander Dumas' Count of Monte Cristo. If you haven't read it, it is a great story of a young sailor whose life is progressing until some enemies set him up and he is thrown in prison for life. In prison, his only companion tells him of an escape plan and a treasure that will secure him for life. When his cellmate dies, Edmon escapes by getting into the body bag

with the cellmate and being thrown into the ocean. The cellmate's death is the gateway to Edmon's redemption enabling him to return home and reclaim the life he almost lost.

Doesn't that sound exciting just hearing it?

[Holy Spirit]

This is our story:

- Imagine that someone found out our true identity and knew that we were given an inheritance. But instead of telling us that our parent had given us access to all of their resources, they told us that our parent thought we were worthless but they did leave us \$300 because they thought we couldn't handle the responsibility of knowing the truth of who we are. That's what it seems religion has done too often
- Jesus is a riches to rags story so that we can become a rags to riches story.

RUNNING THOUGHTS

Express in to press out

Depress is to press down

Oppress is to press against

Suppress is to press under

We already express the invisible relationships unconsciously.

Our work is to consciously express who we are with God.

Become a We (Us)

- I never was alone
- The highest We is You and God.

Expression is us taking active part in Creation. It is giving form to the invisible. It is the essence of ART.

[Holy Spirit]

Our Guardian Whose Art Is Heaven

Our Guardian Whose Art is Heaven

On this and every other plane

Thanks for calling us into being

And holding us in Your Name

We seek to find your Kingdom

We live for it to come

A world beyond division

Where all are known as One

A place of infinite creation

Where all that's good will last

Our future and our hope

Without the burdens of the past

Thy will for us is done

By Your Heaven born Design

As soon as we surrender

And walk the narrow line

By Your Word You feed us daily

With everything we need

Satisfying Holy hungers

That this world could never feed

You share the joy of Your forgiveness

By instructing we do it too
Forgiving others when they trespass
For they know not what they do
This frees us from temptation
From error we're delivered
We enter into the Kingdom
When we imitate the Giver
In that State we behold Your Glory
And Your unassuming Power
That's been our Light in a world of darkness
Preparing us for our hour
You've been creating us in Your Image
Though invisible it may be
Teaching us to practice the Art of Heaven
That only opened eyes can see

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RUNNING THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

"How have you been with me this long and yet you haven't seen me?"

God's invisible attributes are clearly seen.

Yet people still don't see him

Our eyes open yet our minds closed

On the possibility that you, god and you, Christ are with us every step of the way

Guiding our everyday lives

So that we may prosper

Although they may seem invisible they always have a watchful gaze on us