

Brothers and sisters loved by God,

There exists an ancient kingdom stretching farther than any eye has seen, farther than the maps of old explorers like Marco Polo or the ships of Magellan ever sailed. In this kingdom there is a usurper on the throne—a dark prince who never built a single stone of the palace, never planted a single tree in the garden, yet he sits there in stolen robes, claiming everything as his own. His rule is cruelty, decay, and death. And every one of us was born inside the walls of his prison, breathing his poisoned air.

That is the picture Paul paints with one short sentence in Colossians 1:13: *“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.”*

The Greek word behind “domain” is *exousia*—authority, the right to rule. The devil never had true *exousia* over creation; he seized it by deceit. But the Father has now ripped us out of that false dominion with main force and carried us—kicking, blind, and half-dead—across the border into the bright country of His Son. You did not walk there on your own two feet. You were rescued, snatched, translated like Enoch who one day was simply “not,” because God took him.

And who is this Son into whose kingdom we have been dropped? Look at the hymn Paul sings next, verses 15 through 20. It is one of the earliest Christian songs we possess, and every line is a hammer blow against the darkness.

He is the image—the *eikon*—of the invisible God. When the eternal God wanted to be seen, He did not send a painting or a statue; He sent a Person. Jesus is the exact likeness, the perfect photograph of the Father’s heart. If you have seen Him, you have seen the Father—no guesswork, no shadows.

He is the firstborn of all creation. Do not stumble here. “Firstborn” is not about time; it is about rank and inheritance. In the ancient world the firstborn received the double portion, the authority, the name over the house. David was the youngest of Jesse’s sons, yet God called him “firstborn” because the kingdom belonged to him. So Christ is the heir, the crowned prince, the one to whom the entire estate already belongs.

And now the great thunderclap: *“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.”*

Everything was made for Jesus.

Think of that the next time you watch the sun rise over a cornfield or the snow fall on a city street. That sunrise was painted for the delight of Christ. That snowflake, with its six impossible arms, was designed to make the eyes of the Son of God sparkle with pleasure. Galaxies spinning a hundred million light-years away? They exist because He wanted them, because they sing to Him, because they are His possession and His joy.

Even the dark powers—the thrones and dominions Paul mentions—were created through Him and for Him. They were made to be loyal cabinet ministers in the royal court, not rebels. When they fell, they did not cease to belong to Him; they only became squatters in a house whose title deed still reads “Property of the Son.”

And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. The Greek word is *synistēmi*—literally, “stand together.” Scientists tell us that if the nuclear strong force were just a fraction weaker, every atom in the universe would explode. If it were a fraction stronger, no atoms could ever have formed. Right now, as I speak, the nails in these pews, the blood in your veins, the distant stars—all of it is being held in existence by the same voice that once said, “Let there be light.” If Jesus let go for one second, everything would vanish like a dream at waking.

That is the tension we live in. We have been rescued from the domain of darkness, yet we still walk through a world that groans under the tyrant's boot. Cancer wards, broken marriages, children who will not come home, nations tearing at each other's throats—every headline screams that the usurper is still prowling. And some days the darkness feels stronger than the dawn.

But the hymn is not finished. Verse 18: *“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.”*

On Good Friday the powers of darkness thought they had won. They nailed the rightful King to a Roman cross and laughed. Three days later the stone rolled away, and the King walked out wearing the scars of battle like medals. Death, the last weapon of the dark domain, was broken in half. The resurrection was the first province reclaimed, the beachhead of the final invasion.

And one day soon—maybe sooner than we think—He will come again in power and glory. On that day every knee will bow, every squatter will be evicted, every stolen thing returned to its Owner. The same hands that were pierced for us will lay final claim on galaxies and sparrows, on mountains and city streets, on every atom and every angel. Darkness will not fade away; it will be swallowed, abolished, gone like a nightmare when the morning light floods the room.

Remember the raising of Lazarus. Jesus stood before the tomb and shouted one Greek word: *“Deuro!”*—Come out! And the dead man came. On the last day that same voice will thunder across the universe, and every grave will open, every sea will give up its dead, every wandering star will be called home. All things—broken, rebellious, beautiful, and ugly—will be summed up, brought under one head, reconciled through the blood of His cross.

That is what we wait for on this last Sunday of the church year. The church calendar itself is dying tonight, and next Sunday a new year begins with the cry of Advent: “Come, Lord Jesus.” We stand on the border, citizens already of the bright country, yet still feeling the chill wind from the dark domain behind us. The tension is real, but the outcome is not in doubt.

So lift up your hearts. You belong—body and soul, past and future—to the One who made you, who redeemed you, who is right now holding you together by the word of His power. The darkness has already lost its legal claim. The King is on His way. And when He appears, every shadow will flee before the blazing glory of the Lamb who was slain and who lives forever.

All things were created through Him. All things are held together in Him. All things will be gathered up into Him.

And we, once prisoners of the night, will walk in the eternal morning of His kingdom, where there is no more darkness at all—only the light of His goodness and the endless delight of His presence.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

The peace of God guard your hearts and minds as you believe and trust in Him.

Pastor Ron Breight

Christ Lutheran Church Forest Hills, Pennsylvania

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