

SERMON – PASTOR GREG  
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Colossians 1. *(Jesus Christ) is the image of the invisible God.* Let us pray. Imagine you are holding a family photo or maybe you are looking at an old football or netball team photo. Who do you look for first? Who do you spend most of your time looking at? If you are anything like me, you probably focus on yourself! Sure, you look at the others- mum, dad, brothers, sisters, children, nephews, nieces or grandchildren but again and again your eyes are drawn to your own face. It is not surprising really because while we see the face of our spouse or workmates or fellow resident again and again, we see less of our own face. Maybe while we are shaving or brushing our hair but otherwise we don't see ourselves. But even in the photo or in the mirror we are only seeing a reflection of ourselves. And usually only the front part of our bodies. Others see all of our bodies but still only what is on the outside. The only way to see what is inside is to spend time with another person. And even that knowledge is incomplete. Indeed, even what we know about ourselves is incomplete. There is nothing on earth that is a complete and perfect reflection of ourselves.

Do you remember the creation account? In particular Genesis 1:26: *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.* Adam and Eve were made in the image and likeness of God- of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. People have wondered and questioned what it means to be in the image and likeness of God. And it is many things but maybe the desire and ability to create and to love are good starting points. And to be in a right and proper and loving and holy relationship with GOD- without fear or pride or shame or guilt or jealousy. But of course all this changed when Adam and Eve sinned. Their original nature- their very being was also changed and since then every single human being is conceived with a corrupt nature. In the Augsburg Confession Article Two we hear: It is also taught among us that since the fall of Adam all (people) who are born according to the course of nature are conceived and born in sin. That is, all (people) are full of evil lust and inclinations from their mother's wombs and are unable by nature to have true fear of God and true faith in God. Moreover, this inborn sickness and hereditary sin is truly sin and condemns to the eternal wrath of God all those who are not born again through Baptism and the Holy Spirit.

And of course these words are based on the words of Holy Scripture in John 3: *Unless you are born again of water and the Spirit no one can enter the Kingdom of God.* Ephesians 2: *Like the rest, we were by nature objects of (God's holy) wrath.* Mark 7: *From within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.*

God created man and woman in His image to be stewards of His good creation, to love one another, to have family and to love, trust and obey GOD. They sinned and corrupted the image and likeness that GOD had given them. Sin entered the world and so did death. Romans 6:23.

And that is why the Eternal Son of God became one of us- made in our image but in his very nature being the exact Image of God.

Hebrews 1:3: *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his very being.*

Col 1:15, 19: *He is the image of the invisible God...For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him and through him to reconcile to Himself all things...by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.*

Philippians 2: *(Christ Jesus) being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but making himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.*

Luther once said, the only God I know is the Man Jesus Christ. We know something of God through His creation. But creation does not tell us that God loves us. Creation does not tell us that we are sinners and under His wrath. Creation does not tell us that *God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Son.* Only as the Holy Spirit working through the Holy Scriptures can we know all of this.

I began by considering who do we look at in photos. And what do we see in the mirror. Only a tiny part of who we are. The image is incomplete. And even each one of us does not know everything about us. But there is One who does. He created us. He died for us. He rose and he ascended for us. And it is he- Jesus Christ- who sends the Holy Spirit so that we can know ourselves. But more than that- so that we can know – in part- God.

To know Jesus Christ is to know God. To know Jesus Christ is to hear and believe these words: *Father, forgive them...This is my body...this is my blood of the New Covenant, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins. Go in peace.*  
Amen.