

Fourth Sunday after Resurrection

Lectionary Title 22: **Knowing God through the Risen Christ**

Old Testament: Psalm 2:7 (NRSV)

⁷ I will tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to me, 'You are my son; today I have begotten you.

New Testament: Colossians 1:15-17 (NRSV)

The Supremacy of Christ

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or ominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

General Concept: Jesus Christ is the expression of who God is for us.

Key Concepts in the Different Age Levels in Sunday School

N/K/YE: **Jesus tells that God is for us.**

ME/OE: **Jesus tells that God is for us.**

Y: **Jesus Christ is the expression of who God is for us.**

A: **Jesus Christ is the expression of who God is for us.**

Exegesis of the Biblical References

Psalm 2 belongs to the category of Royal Psalms whose primary concern is to give a clear definition of the significance of the choice of King David as the king of Israel. This also includes the religious-theological justification for the Davidic Dynasty. This kind of choice or election may be seen as a manifestation of the very special relationship established by God with the Davidic Kings but first and foremost with King David himself. Messianic prophecies have foretold the anointment of one who will come as messiah-king and whose description is identified in a very close relationship with God to the extent that he will be called God's son. King David and his successors had established the Davidic dynasty particularly in the southern part of Israel which is Judah. They had never extended its boundaries until its collapse into the hands of the Babylonian invaders. The Israelite ruling elite was brought into exile in Babylon in the years 597BCE and 587BCE.

Psalm 2:7 as a royal psalm was expressed primarily as a tribute to the Davidic king, and as a message also to peoples beyond the boundary of Israel whom the Davidic dynasty had failed to conquer and control. The ends of the earth or the whole world are destined to be governed by the Davidic person identified in Ps.2:7. It is by God's initiative in line with the Davidic dynasty that the appointed one or Messiah will soon arise. Historically, the Davidic dynasty had failed to establish its kingdom beyond the territory of Israel. The insistence on the long ignored special relationship that has been revealed in Ps 2:7 represent a paradigm shift in the revival of the royal and divinely inspired claims of the Davidic dynasty.

Pauline Christological understanding presents Jesus Christ as the head of all creation and the representation of the unseen image of God. Christ holding the authority and power over the whole creation is a fact that must be asserted by the believers; thrones, dominations, sovereignty and all powers and all things were created through Christ and for Christ alone. The death of Jesus on the cross has brought to the forefront the significant shift of meaning in the re-establishment of the relationship of God with God's chosen one and the redemption and reconciliation (instead of domination) of all peoples and nations in the most universal and inclusive sense. Jesus has set a new standard as far as concern and reconciliation for all humanity is concerned. The new universal norm set by Jesus as

the chosen son of God means that humanity will regain their dignity and real freedom by looking at Jesus and believing, following in the way he had blazed for them. The love of God has been revealed to all humanity through Jesus Christ. This love of God is not a simple walk in the park for this will involve pain and sacrifice in faithful obedience as people become imbued with the spirit of the truth that will set them free. Thus, the awakened child of God emerges as a new being in Christ with a clear sense of purpose and mission in life, filled with the spirit of God's liberating love, reconciliation and peace.

The special relationship revealed by God to the Davidic dynasty as the sole appointed ruler of Israel had met strong opposition. The Davidic dynasty eventually collapsed into the hands of the Babylonians. But the Royal Psalm was not forgotten by the people. They kept praying for an eventual time of the return of their much awaited Davidic messiah. After some time, Christians found the new and ultimate meaning of the messiah in the image of Jesus the Christ who suffered but whose family lineage could be traced back to King David. Paul in the letter to the Colossians has identified Jesus Christ as the head of all Creation, the sole holder of all power and authority and the revealed image of God. Jesus the Christ is truly the fulfillment of the Psalmist's messianic hope and affirmation as Jesus according to the Colossians is the fulfillment of God's revelation, the God revealed in human form. The risen Christ has something to tell us, that God was in Him and that all humanity can find its meaning, purpose and dignity in Him.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

According to the apostolic testimony, Jesus Christ is the fullest expression of who God is for us. The law and the prophets of the Jewish Scriptures testify to this truth but in Jesus Christ this testimony has become flesh and blood. The doctrine of God's becoming human in the person of Jesus is the fountainhead of Christian doctrine. The conviction that God is holy and eternal has been revealed to all faith-communities. It has also been revealed to them that God is just and merciful. The unique Christian witness is that which has been revealed in Jesus: that the holy and eternal God took on a real human existence, lived and died for the salvation of the world and the whole creation.

This testimony separates the story of Jesus from all human conceptions about God. Knowledge of Jesus' life and work on earth provides a sufficient knowledge of God. It also discloses to the believer God's design and goal of creation. The question as to how human beings should live and relate to one another and in relation to the natural environment finds answer in the way that Jesus lived. Knowing Jesus' destiny as it was fulfilled by his resurrection and elevation to God's very glory holds the key to understanding what awaits us after death and at history's final destination.

That God is there-for-us has the same sense of a child's truth that parents exist in order to be there for children. The conventional theological line is that humans are created for God's glory, meaning that being human is there-for-God. The truth of God's descent for our salvation puts Christian theology's feet back on the ground rather than its head. This reversal of role is not new but actually based on the classical doctrine of the incarnation (Athanasius' *Cur deus homo? Why God became human?*), which says that God came down from glory in order that we may be raised to glory. In other words, God became that we might become. The divine self-reduction was graphically demonstrated as Jesus passively submitted himself to total humiliation and defeat by human powers. How salvation is wrought via this incomprehensible divine act has been a subject of endless theological speculations. But the "how" is not the point. What is certain is what God did to Godself for our sake, which revealed God's immeasurable love for us.

Nursery/Kindergarten/Younger Elementary Levels

I. Objectives

At the end of the session and with the consistent example shown by parents and other significant adults, the children will be able to:

1. begin to affirm that God is for us through the coming of Jesus;
2. begin to describe the love of God to God's people by sending Jesus to us, and
3. demonstrate one's appreciation of God's love for God's people.

II. Concept: Jesus tells that God is for us.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), offering plate, activity sheets

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Greet the children warmly as they arrive. Introduce them to visitors to get them to know each other.
2. Opening prayer: Loving God, we are here again your beloved children to learn with fun about you. Guide us now in our learning activities. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.
3. "The Love of Jesus"
The love of Jesus is the love of God
The love Jesus sweet and marvelous
The love of Jesus is the love of God
Oh, oh, wonderful love.

B. Getting Ready

Teach the following poem.

"God Is for Us"

God is for me. God is for you.

God is for us for God loves us.

Teach the accompanying movements:

God (Point fingers upward) is for me (Point fingers to self).

God (Point fingers upward) is for you (Point fingers to others).

God (Point fingers upward) is for us (Hands stretched out).

For God (Pointing fingers upward) loves us (Crossed hands on chest).

C. Learning Time

Prepare the class to listen to the dialog.

Narrator: At dinner on a Friday evening, Esther shares something to the family.

Esther: My friend Ria and her family will go to the beach on Sunday.

Elyse: Why?

Esther: They will celebrate Ria's birthday.

Elyse: Mother, Father, can we also go out on a Sunday?

Parents: Yes, we can go out. But not on a Sunday.

Esther and Elyse: Why not on a Sunday?

Father: We go to our church on Sunday to worship God.

Mother: We do lots of things there. I teach children. Your Dad sings in the choir.

Esther: Oh, yes, I also play the violin.

Elyse: I play with my friends in Sunday school.

Esther and Elyse: Why do we do that?

Mother: We show appreciation to God for God's love for us and the blessings God has given us.

Father: God gave his son Jesus to save us by dying on the cross.

Esther: My teacher says that Jesus died but he rose from the dead. He lives and continues to help us.

Elyse: If not on a Sunday, can we go on a Saturday?

Parents: Yes, of course.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Discuss the dialog.

1. Who are the characters? (The parents, Esther and Elyse)
2. What did Esther share to her family? (Her friend Ria and her family going to the beach to celebrate her birthday)
3. What is their wish? (For the family to go out, too, on a Sunday)
4. What is their parents' answer? (They cannot go out on a Sunday) Why? (The family goes to church to worship God and to do other things related to church work.)
5. Do you agree with the parents? Why or why not?
6. Why do you think it is important to set aside Sunday to do church activities?
7. Why is it right to give priority to God?
8. How did the story end?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "Why does Jesus tell that God is for us."

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Teach the first stanza of the song "For the Beauty of the Earth (HFJ # 233).
2. Ask the children to say in one-sentence what God gave to each of them.
3. Tell the children to tell what things they can do to show that they love God.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "For the Beauty of the Earth (HFJ # 233)
3. Closing prayer: "Dear God, thank you for Jesus who tells us about your love for us. We want to tell others about your love by saying kind words and doing good deeds. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen."

Middle and Older Elementary Levels

I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. affirm that God is for us through the coming of Jesus;
2. describe the love of God to God's people by sending Jesus to us;
3. list ways of how Jesus lived; and
4. demonstrate one's appreciation of God's love for God's people by doing creative activities.

II. Concept: Jesus tells that God is for us.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), big bag with miscellaneous materials that are available in your locality found inside, garments and other materials that will be worn and will help create our common image of Jesus (remember, Jesus had dark hair and dark dyes like us), activity sheets

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome Time: Smile and greet the children as they come. Check the attendance.
2. Opening prayer: Loving God, we believe you join us always every time we are joined together for worship, fellowship and study. We acknowledge your presence through the Holy Spirit now. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.
3. Opening song: "The Church that Is Called by God" (HFJ #315)

B. Getting Ready

1. Prepare the class to play the game "Seeing God in Everything". Put a big bag in front of the class. Inside the bag are miscellaneous materials that are available in your locality.
2. Ask each child to get one object inside the big bag. Let them return to their seats and observe the object. Ask these questions.
 - a. How useful is the object to you?
 - b. To whom are you thankful for this object?
3. Process the activity. Discuss their answers by directing them to the truth: how they see God in all the things that they have observed. Assist the children to face the school pressures by knowing that God loves them and will help them.

C. Learning Time

1. Assist the class in understanding the meaning of the following words using the dictionary and getting the meaning from given commentaries.

a. begotten	e. created through him
b. image of the invisible God	f. created for him
c. the firstborn of all creation	g. before all things
d. visible and invisible things	h. all things hold together
2. Tell the class to read the biblical texts and refer to the meaning of the difficult words to help them say the verses in their own words.
3. Invite someone, possibly a youth, who is ready to portray the resurrected Christ with nail marks on his hand. Provide for the garments and other materials needed to make the invitee look like our common image of Jesus. His task is to talk with the learners about God's love—the God who is for them. Challenge him to learn by heart the following suggested lines below to tell the learners.

4. Before calling your guest to come in, tell the learners to imagine that Jesus Christ is coming over to talk to them. Here is a sample message.

Peace be with you! Hello! How are you today?

I was invited by your teacher to talk to you about the love of God. Let me assure you that God loves you and the whole world very much. God is for you.

God became human through Jesus Christ to let people experience this wonderful love. Jesus showed God's love for the people when he proclaimed that God's kingdom is for the poor. He healed the sick. He fed the hungry. He pardoned the sinners. These things Jesus did plus many other great things he did to show God's love for the people.

And though he died on the cross, he was raised from the dead as proof of God's power over death. Do you see these nail marks on my hands? Do you know why I have these nail marks? Yes, I was crucified and I am the resurrected Christ..

I will leave now. But before I leave, let me say again God is for you and cares much about you like your parents do. Please be good children to your parents and friends to other people. You are blessed! Goodbye!

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

1. Based on the Bible readings, ask these questions:
 - a. What is the message in Psalm 2:7? Who do you think is giving the message? To whom do you think is the message?
 - b. What is Paul's message about Jesus Christ? How similar is this with the message in Psalm 2:7?
2. Based on what the guest speaker told, ask these questions:
 - a. Who is for us and became human through Jesus Christ? (God) What does this show? (God's immeasurable love for us and the rest of creation)
 - b. What are some of the things that Jesus did to show the love of God to people? (Jesus proclaimed that God's kingdom is for the poor. He healed the sick. He fed the hungry. He pardoned the sinners.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "Why do you think Jesus tells that God is for us?"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Tell the children to memorize the verse: 1 Colossians 1:15
2. Let the class think of their response to God's love for us through how Jesus lived. Ask them to say what they can do to others to express their appreciation to God.

Jesus loved the poor.	Our response:
Jesus healed the sick.	Our response:
Jesus fed the hungry.	Our response:
Jesus pardoned the sinners.	Our response:

G. Closing Worship

1. Tell the class to recite the memory verse.
2. Offering
4. Closing song: "The Church that Is Called by God" HFJ #315
5. Closing prayer: "God of love, we thank again for the love your people experienced through Jesus Christ. You want the best for us. Help us to tell with conviction that you are for us. Help us also to do things for others that reflect your love to them. In Christ's name we pray. Amen."

Youth Level

I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. affirm that God is for us through the coming of Jesus;
2. describe the love of God to God's people by sending Jesus to us,
3. discuss the attributes of Jesus Christ; and
4. demonstrate one's their appreciation of God's love for God's people.

II. Concept: Jesus Christ is the expression of who God is for us.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), hymnal, activity sheet copies of KWL Chart

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "God of wisdom, we come as we are learners of your kingdom to listen to your instructions. Guide our teacher and guide each and one of us to come to the full knowledge of who you are, and what you are, and yet to what you do for the sake of your beloved people. You are with us through the Holy Spirit who empowers us to live out our faith, especially in this time of lingering challenge for us to be a community of hope not only of the future but today in this very hour. This is our prayer in Christ's name. Amen."
3. Opening song: "The Church that Is Called by God" HFJ #315

B. Getting Ready

1. Say: "Speak out your mind. Tell us what you think now. Share your insights or questions you have in mind from the last session."
2. Divide the class into two groups. Present the K-W-L chart and let each group fill up the first two columns first and the last column after discussing the lesson.

What I Know

What I Want to Know

What I Learned

3. Tell each group to share what they have discussed in the first two columns.

C. Learning Time

1. Tell the students to read Psalm 2:7 and Colossians 1:15-17.
2. Discuss the supremacy of Christ over everything using the following outline:
 - a. *The begotten son of God*. He is brought forth by God.
 - b. *Image of the invisible God*. God is not seen because God transcends space and time. Since Christ is being fully God, we are able to have a tangible look at him when he was on earth and this makes it possible for us to look at an intangible God. If we want to look at God, we have only to look at Jesus Christ.
 - c. *The firstborn of all creation*. Jesus has the highest honor, first rank in authority and importance.
 - d. *All things created by him and for him*. Creation was made as an expression of God's love for us and the rest of creation. Creation's main goal is to glorify Christ.
 - e. *His being before all things*. Christ is eternal. He was not created. He has always existed. He has no beginning and no end.
 - f. *In him all things being held together*. all things hold together Christ is the One for whom we exist and have meaning; He also gives us substance and community. The case of the significance and superiority of Christ continues. He not only

made the universe, He sustains it by holding it all together. He is also displayed throughout the universe

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

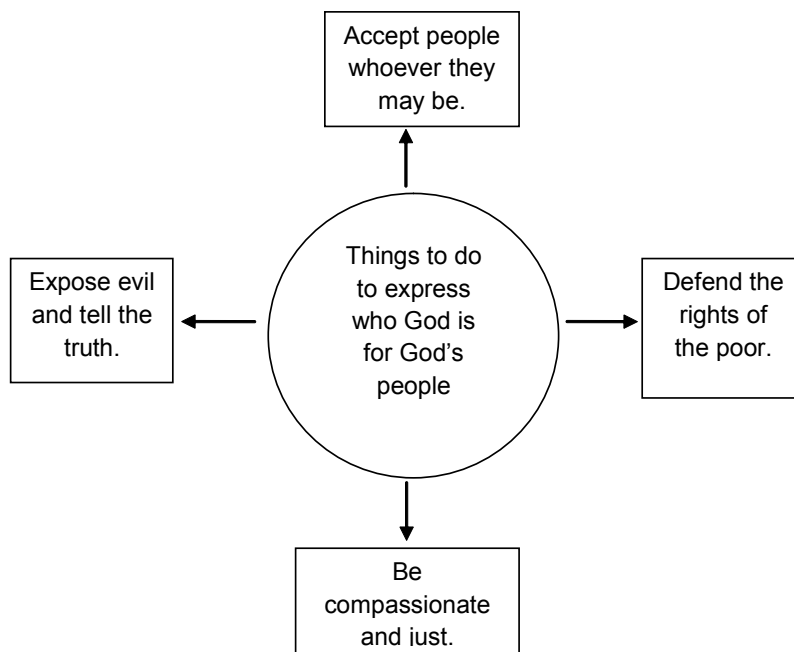
1. Back to the KWL Chart, learners in groups continue to brainstorm and write what they learned in the third column. Plenary follows.
2. Ask these questions:
 - a. Does Paul's description of Jesus in Colossians 1:15-17 support our claim that God is for us through the coming of Jesus Christ? How?
 - b. What conclusions can we draw from our discussions? (God loves His people and the whole creation that He became human in Jesus Christ to show that God is for us.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "What did Jesus Christ do to express who God is for us?"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Draw a graphic organizer on the board or cartolina or manila paper and solicit what they can do to express who God is for people.



G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "The Church that Is Called by God" HFJ #315 and "Ang Tanging Alay Ko"
Salamat sa iyo aking Panginoong Jesus. Ako'y inibig mo at inangking lubos.
3. Closing prayer: Invite learners to pray silently as they thank God for God's love for all of us shown in Jesus Christ in his lifetime and ministry. Encourage learners to ask God to empower them so they might be able to express who God is to the people they meet this coming week. Say this prayer to end: "Now we want to thank you God for the love you gave to us. Thank you for becoming human in Jesus Christ to live with people and tell of your wonderful love. Christ lived out your unconditional love. You are God for us."

Adult Level

I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. affirm that God is for us through the coming of Jesus
2. describe Christ in relation to God, to us and the whole creation;
3. discuss the attributes of Jesus Christ to prove his supremacy; and
4. share how they trust Christ in all areas of their lives.

II. Concept: Jesus Christ is the expression of who God is for us.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), hymnal, activity sheet

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: : "God of wisdom, we come as we are learners of your kingdom to listen to your instructions. Guide our teacher and guide each and one of us to come to the full knowledge of who you are and what you are, and what you do for the sake of your beloved people. You are with us through the Holy Spirit who empowers us to live out our faith, especially in this time of lingering challenge for us to be a community of hope not only of the future but today in this very hour. This is our prayer in Christ's name. Amen."
3. Opening song: "The Church that Is Called by God" HFJ #315

B. Getting Ready

Have the adults recall any experience related to being witness in court. Let the discuss the importance of telling the truth.

C. Learning Time

1. Start the lesson by telling the class that Paul wrote the Letter to the Corinthians to inform them about the attacks against Christ from false teachers and to protect them from their false teachings.
2. Have the class read the biblical references.
3. Discuss how Paul described Christ's supremacy over God's people and the whole creation to contradict the teaching of the false teachers in Colossae.
 - a. *Christ in relation to God.* Paul describes Christ as "the image of the invisible God" (v.15). This image is not related to his physical appearance but his character and nature. When Adam and Eve were created, they had the image of God (God's character and nature). However, when they committed a grave mistake against God, their whole image was marred with sin. There is only one whose character and nature of God can resolve humanity's fall. Only Christ who is the image of the invisible God can reveal God's glory and save human beings from the certainty of death. Jesus Christ came to us to fulfill God's purpose for His glory and the salvation of humanity. The truth of God's descent for our salvation puts Christian theology's feet back on the ground rather than its head. This reversal of role is not new but actually based on the classical doctrine of the incarnation, which says that God came down from glory in order that we may be raised to glory. In other words, God became that we might become.

- b. *Christ in relation to creation.* To contradict the false teachers, Paul discussed another attribute of Christ as "the firstborn of all creation" (v.15). What Paul meant was that Jesus was not created, In fact, he added, "All things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together." (vv.16-17). His being firstborn means supremacy over everything created. According to the apostolic testimony, Jesus Christ is the fullest expression of who God is for us.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Encourage the class to share their thoughts and interpretations of the texts.

1. The false teachers in Colossae seemed to teach that Jesus is not enough for humankind’s salvation, to which Paul assures the Colossians of the sufficiency of Christ as God’s image and only begotten son.
 - a. Why do people fashion God after our own thoughts and desires?
 - b. How can our knowledge of Jesus Christ keep our view of God in check?
2. Paul emphasizes the authority and dominion of Christ over all “thrones and principalities” in heaven and on earth.
 - a. How can this knowledge sustain us in our life’s journey?
 - b. How can the certainty of Christ’s supremacy bring peace in our hearts and enable us to exult Christ always?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: “What did Jesus Christ do to express who God is for us?”

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Ask the class to complete the table. Discuss their answers and ask them to share the reasons for their choices.

Areas in life that I can completely surrender to Christ	Areas in life that I cannot completely surrender to Christ

2. Ask the class how they can share these thoughts to others. Let them list the persons they would like to reach out.
 - a. At home
 - b. In the place of work
 - c. In the church

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: “The Church that Is Called by God” HFJ #315
3. Closing prayer: “Father, you have shown us the way how to love ourselves to be able to love others. Help us become more loving and caring people for others, especially those whose rights are abused by saying no to injustice that make others hurting. In Christ’ name we pray. Amen.”