

I Am Not Of This World  
John 8:21-30

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May the words of my mouth and the ears of our hearts be open to the word of God this day. AMEN.

Do you ever measure anything? We use rulers to measure right? Do you know how to use it? What if we wanted to measure something, you line it up and read the thickness by comparing it to these numbers. My sheet of paper is about .1 mm in thickness. It's pretty thin paper and near impossible to measure with this ruler – I am just kind-a-of eye balling it. To get more factual I would need a better instrument to measure with, especially if I wanted to get measure anything smaller like a human blood cell (which by the way is around 10 million sized smaller then this thickness of this paper. Or what if I wanted to measure the atom that makes up the blood cell, or the nuclei that makes up the atom or the proton that makes up the nuclei or the quarks that make up the protons, or the preons that make up the quarks (which by the way is something smaller then a decimal point and 21 zero and one. Now that is small and definitely impossible to measure with this ruler.

So lets try something easier, lets measure say the size of this folder – that's about 29 centimeters or 11 and ½ inches; easy! But what if we wanted to measure a person that might be tougher with this ruler. The average person is 5' 7". We could measure it but it might be harder. What if we wanted to measurer this church from floor to ceiling, now it is getting almost impossible with this ruler? What about measuring the square footage of Hanover, or Pennsylvania, or the US. What about the earth, our Sun our Solar System, our Galaxy, our Galactic Super-Cluster, or how about our known universe (which by the way is estimated to be 93 billion light years across and one light year is equal to 6 trillion miles.

Okay lets review because it is hard to really understand these measurements with our ruler. A preon that makes up a quark that makes up the proton that makes up the nuclei that makes up atoms that make up us all, is (show diagram with all zeros) And on the other side is the known universe that is (show other diagram with zeros).

So in this vastness of our cosmos from the smallest preon to the universe itself why do we think we are the all important center of everything. We are not. We are simply dust and to dust we shall return. Those words remind us each year on this night that we shouldn't think of ourselves so highly. Those words knock us down a bit and remind us of what and whom is really in charge. We are just a small part of this vast creation, who are we to make judgment, to demand answers from the creator of it all.

In Chapter 8 of John's Gospel, Jesus has come into the temple in Jerusalem and there the Lord, made man, is confronted repeatedly by his own creation, questioning him and challenging him. They try to discredit him and humiliate him. But Jesus reminds them and all of us who he is in this reading – the great I AM. The one who was, is and always will be, God almighty.

In several passages of John's Gospel we get the great I Am statements of Jesus. These words harken back to the days of Moses when he asked who it was that is sending him, and God said out of the burning bush, tell them that "I am who I am" is sending you. God identifies himself as the I Am (past, present, and evermore shall be). This Lenten season we will look at many of these I Am statements from John.

Tonight we hear Jesus telling the crowds of naysayers "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world." Another way to look at that passage is that Jesus is saying that we are of the earth and he is from heaven, we are of this kosmos and he is beyond the kosmos. The Kosmos is the Greek word here for world. I kinda like that Kosmos word better. You and I are of the kosmos and Jesus is beyond the kosmos. We can see the world around us and say that it is real. We can measure it and humans have even tried to count to the smallest sub preon or counted the vastness of our known universe. But we are still limited to our Kosmos, our world that we can see and touch, the laws of gravity and mass, repelling and attraction, scientific formulas and sub-particles. But Jesus is saying that he is beyond all of that. We so often forget that part of Jesus.

We instead picture Jesus the man, the one who lived and died on the cross for us. But Also Jesus is God, beyond the laws of this world. Beyond the measurements of this world, beyond the ashes and dust that we are all limited to. God breaks into this kosmos. Remember God chose to come into this world, to be born into this realm. Leaving behind heaven, Jesus is sent by God to be born of the virgin Mary and grow as a human being. He has always been and always will be and now has entered into this kosmos where he clearly tells us that he is not of this world but his enemies are of this world.

But yet God is not separate from this world. He cares for us and has created this world for us. It was through God's very Word that this creation came to be from the smallest particle to the vastness of space, it was spoken into creation by the Word.

And in addition God loved this kosmos so much that he sent Jesus for the very reason to save us and redeem us. No matter how different this kosmos is from the divine nature of God's kingdom, he still gives his love for us and grants us his grace and sacrifice.

But we know that this kosmos, this world has its problems. Even though God has created it, God sustains it, God sends his son to show us the way, we still live in our fallenness. We are dust and to dust we shall return. We live in this world and measure things by the things of this world. Our sinfulness turns us away from God and we cherish the things of this dust. Even in our Gospel reading tonight Jesus is being confronted and troubled by the naysayers.

And yet even in those troubling words, Jesus offers us a connection with hi, He reminds us that if we live in our sins we will die in our sins. If we live for this dust we will die for this dust. But if we turn and believe in him, the one who is outside of this kosmos, the one who can not be measured or defined with boundaries, If we believe in God then we shall live with him in that place.

We know we are limited, we are dust and to dust we shall return. We know that this world is limited from the smallest preon to the expanse of the universe itself, it is still finite, limited, and will end. But thanks be to God that we have this one who is not bound by this world, but overcomes and shows us a way into that Kosmos of heaven.

Let us turn away from the things of this world, for we are of this world. And instead turn to the one who is not of this world, Jesus the Lord. Let us follow him and hear his call to believe. Amen.

May the peace and Grace of God be with you now and throughout this Lenten Season. Amen