THE GOSPEL IS NOT ALL ABOUT ME

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The Bible paints an amazing picture of God at work through history reconciling creation to himself. The breadth of His work is absolutely incredible.

I was recently at a Christian event during which the worship leader read one of my favourite passages from Colossians 1.

> *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

I can never hear these words without being staggered at the greatness of Jesus and the wonder of what God the Father is achieving through him. But on this occasion, I was left bemused. The guy leading the service read these verses and then told us to turn to the person next to us and say 'Jesus died for me'.

Here we have one of the great Scripture passages about God reconciling the whole of creation to himself and yet we were told to talk about our own individual salvation. There are aÂ couple of things that bother me about this. Firstly,Â Jesus did die for me, but he died for you, and everyone else. It is good to meditate on the individual benefits of salvation, but this Colossians passage has so much more to say. I was really pleased when the lady behind me grinned broadly and said, "Jesus died for US".

The second thing that concerned me was the way in which Scripture was poorly used. If it was necessary to stress our individual relationship with God, rather than looking at a broader picture, there are other passages which could have been chosen. If we take the Bible seriously, then we need to let pay attention to what it is saying and not take passages out of context to fit in with our programmes.