

In just a minute I'm going to give a peak of a text message that I had with Doug Modic this past week. If you don't know Doug, he is the one who leads us in singing each Sunday morning. And he does more than that too, without Doug's serving and leadership, we would really struggle on Sunday morning. Because he doesn't just stand up there and sing, but also organizes our media team there in the back as well as getting just about everything on the stage set-up.

Anyways, I was in my office this past Monday studying Colossians 1. After several hours of reading, and thinking, and writing, and praying... Do you know what I wanted to do? I wanted to sing! If you would have stopped by our offices at about 2pm last week Monday you would heard me singing songs like,

- All I have is Christ
- Jesus Paid it All
- In Christ Alone

So I texted Doug this message... Text Message

So we will close today with the song In Christ Alone. But I hope that you will walk out into your week with Christ on your mind and a song for Him and of Him on your heart. The entire Bible points to Jesus; now some passages allude to Jesus indirectly and other passages put Jesus front and center in a very intentional way. That's what Colossians 1:15-20 does! It precisely points to Jesus Christ as Supreme. Jesus Christ supreme Over Creation, but He is also Supreme over the New Creation.

Read Colossians 1:15-20

Jesus is Supreme over Creation.

The very first pronoun we see is "He." *He is the image of the invisible God.* We know that this is referring to Jesus because of the previous verses tell us that, God has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son (which is Jesus), in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin.

And the first thing that we're told about Jesus is that He is the image of the invisible God. That phrase (image of God) echoes the very beginning of creation where we're told in Genesis 1 that God brought all of humanity into existence and formed them according to His own likeness and his own image. Let's look at Genesis 1,

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

²⁷ So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

So God created us in His image. But we do not reflect Him perfectly, and I think that's obvious. I am not going to study you and you are not going to study me in order to have the clearest picture of who God is. Now I don't want to discount humanity completely, as I think that we can learn something about the character of God by studying how/why He formed us in His likeness... but that's a dim picture at best.

We can also learn about who God is by looking at the created world around us. That's what Paul argues in the opening words of his letter to the Romans,

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. –Romans 1:20

But if you want to have the most accurate view of who God is, look at Jesus. You see, looking at each other, and even looking at the created world, it gives us some framework of who God is. But Jesus Christ brings clarity to our hazy thoughts of the immortal, invisible God, who dwells in unapproachable light. You ask yourself the question: What is God like? Look at Jesus and you will discover that God is One who takes sin seriously, but God is also filled with love, with mercy, with grace. He is fully aware of what is taking place here on this earth, He's intimately involved, and is willing to go to whatever lengths are necessary to rescue.

In Jesus, the nature and being of God the Father has been perfectly revealed. No one could have said it more clearly than Jesus himself. For He said in John 14,

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. *If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.*”

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? *Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.* How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? *Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?* The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that *I am in the Father and the Father is in me*, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

Jesus puts it very clearly that He is the image of the invisible God and backs up what Paul said here in Colossians 1. Then Paul goes on to say that Jesus *is the firstborn of all creation*. Let me say this, and I want to say it loud and clear: **JESUS WAS NOT CREATED!** Let me say that again: **JESUS WAS NOT CREATED!** The reason I want to emphasize that is because I think that word “firstborn” brings our mind to think of a firstborn child.

Like: I am the middle child, and I have an older brother Matt, who is the firstborn child in the Rosenberger family. That is what we often think of, but that is not what this is talking about. So we can take that idea and just punt it out of here. When Paul talks about Jesus as the firstborn of creation, he is not talking about time, he's not talking about a chronological order; Paul is referring to Jesus' position and rank.

Psalm 89:27 refers to Jesus as

“the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.”

Jesus is at the highest position available. Jesus is the one who is most significant. He is the one who reigns supreme. I've entitled our entire series through the book of Colossians, Proclaiming the Greatness of Jesus Christ, because that is who He is. Jesus is the greatest! And He does not stand alongside of creation, for Jesus is the One who spoke it into existence.

Read Colossians 1:16

Jesus Christ brought everything into existence; Jesus is the Creator. The false teachers that were embedding themselves within the Colossian church wrongly viewed Jesus as the first and most important of the productions of God, and they were convinced that it had to be a lesser being much further down the chain who eventually created the material universe. But Paul rejects that blasphemy, insisting that Jesus created all things.¹ And that's backed up in other parts of Scripture.

John 1:3 –All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.

Hebrews 1:1-2 – Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

Paul argues that Jesus made all things, both in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. There was this heresy within Colossian church that was beginning to arise that believed that God only cared about the spiritual matters and the physical matters weren't a concern to God. Well, that's a lie! Jesus is God, and He is concerned about both, because He created both.

And by studying creation, you can get a glimpse of the power, and the knowledge, and the wisdom of the Creator. But also within creation you can gain an understanding and an appreciation for Jesus' creativity. Now, I haven't told too many people this, but I love birds. My family gets a little bit of a laugh out of me because I've got a couple of birdfeeders in the back of our house and I'll stand at the window with my little Bird App trying to discover how many different species of

¹ John MacArthur Colossian & Philemon Commentary pg. 47

birds we have in our area. And my hope is to eventually to get some chickadees to feed out of my hand.

But I love God's creativity. I am so thankful that He didn't simply create everything in black and white, and didn't just give us just the basic necessities, but by His grace He gave us so much more.

Everything that is in existence can trace its roots, trace its beginnings back to Jesus; everything in heaven, everything on earth, everything visible, and everything invisible. And that includes the thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities. That part (thrones, dominions, rulers and authorizes) is referring to the various ranks of angels. Whether they be angels that are still worshipping and serving Jesus. Or they be the angelic/demonic realm that is serving within the domain of darkness that is referenced back in verse 13.

I will shoot straight with you: that is sometimes hard to grasp. Jesus stands at the forefront and at the beginning of everything. Nothing came into existence by itself. Jesus is good... so good... and yet here we stand watching a world that is in so much pain. We flip on the news and observe natural disasters like tsunamis, hurricanes, and wild fires. Or we see the depravity of man released upon each other within school shootings like Columbine or here in Chardon. And our anxiety is increased as we contemplate what took place on 9/11 or with ISIS on the prowl.

How are we held up in all of this? We can have endurance in all this by our faith that God's gracious purposes for this world are being worked out and will be worked out. We can have confidence knowing that Jesus is at work right now. Think about this, history is not just one event after another; but it has purpose and is moving somewhere by the sovereign plan of God. And we may not be able to place it all together as we vaguely see things... but we trust in the One who does. We trust in Jesus.

And if all the things "in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions or rulers or authorizes" were created by Him... what do we have to be afraid of? What do we have to be anxious about? I'm not saying that you will never be afraid, but you can rest in confidence in the One who is in control.

For everything was created by Jesus, but verse 16 and 17 close out by saying that everything was created through Jesus and for Jesus, and he holds everything together.

Colossians 1:16-17

There have been wrong ideas that have surfaced about the beginning of earth's history. Some have declared, in an attempt to harmonize evolutionary thought with a belief in God, that God simply got the ball rolling with the evolutionary process and then stepped away. But is that what is described here in Colossians 1? No. Jesus was

at the beginning, he's holding everything together now, and he is the ultimate aim in creation.

Another wrong concept comes from a quote that I saw this past week that I found rather interesting. "He keeps the cosmos from becoming chaos." What's being described here is not necessarily a person but an impersonal force.

I don't know how many of you are Star Wars fans. But if you've ever seen the movies you'll know that the Jedi's, as well those who are on the dark side and follow the Sith traditions, are always talking about the force. "May the force be with you." Trust me, with my name being Luke, I have heard that phrase more times in my life than you could ever imagine.

But Jesus is far more than a force that preserves the orderly arrangements of the cosmos –He is its rationale, its rhyme, and its reason. Creation was brought about ¹through Jesus and ²for Jesus... and ³Jesus holds it all together! What holds the universe together is not an idea or a virtue, but a person: the resurrected Christ.

And life, your life, will not make sense without Him at its center. Many feel a void, an emptiness in life, and this includes those who have placed their faith in Christ as well as those who have no idea who Christ is, because they have no real relationship with the One who created them. Many attempt to fill that emptiness with something else. Many settle for something lesser. We run through life searching for pleasure, longing for something to fulfill us, something to meet our deepest needs. Those cravings are not met in something, but in Someone.

Jesus is the One that we were created by, and the One that we were created for!

The search is over: You were made for Jesus. Jesus is the only one that can satisfy the longings of your soul for you were made by and you were made for Him. And in understanding that everything flows from Jesus Christ, He holds everything together, and that He is creation's ultimate aim; that revolutionizes the way we look at life and the way that we live our life.

Jesus is Supreme Over Creation and as we step in further to see that, we are also made aware that Jesus is Supreme Over the New Creation.

Read Colossians 1:18-20

Jesus is supreme over all, and I say over the new creation because when Christ stepped onto this earth, lived His life, died on the cross, was placed in the ground, and then was resurrected and returned to sit as His Father's right hand, something new began. Specifically, His church. We've been stressing that Jesus is supreme over all, but that supremacy displays itself most visibly within the church. Christ is the head of the body, the church, as verse 18 declares.

Christ is the head, He supplies life to the body and is exercising control and direction over His body, over His people. You see, Cornerstone Bible Church, as well as any other church, does not have one particular person *within the body* that the church rises and falls upon. For instance; I am saddened that my pastor, Thad Bergmeier stepped away from the ministry here at Cornerstone. I sat at my desk the day after his last Sunday, and sat there praying and I sat there journaling... And the last thing I wrote in my journal that day was this,

I'm confident in the midst of all of this that God will be glorified. I am hopeful that God will use this time in the life of our church and in my own life to shape us into the image of his Son. And I guess that is how I can best describe my emotions at this time: I'm sad but I'm hopeful.

I was hopeful five months ago, and I'm hopeful now because this was never Thad's church where he was the head of the church. This has never been my church, this has never been your church. I hope that you could say that you connected as *a part of the body of this church*, but Jesus has always been the head and will always be the head of this church. And without a doubt He is preeminent, He is in first place, He is far above everything. He is supreme.

And I know I say this all the time, but I can't emphasize this strong enough, in order for you to be placed into the body of Christ, Jesus paid a dear price for that.

Read Colossians 1:20

It says that through Jesus we can be reconciled to God. In order for there to be a need for reconciliation, there must have been a falling out, an estrangement. That brings us all the way back to the beginning. Adam and Eve, mankind was created in the image of God. They were created by God and for God, but they chose to rebel against their Creator. Which brought a divide, the curse that would now fall on all mankind, where we are now all born into this world separated from the One we were made for.

But Jesus, the One who is supreme, who is preeminent, stepped down to earth and provided the way of salvation, the only way towards peace with God, and He took the punishment that we deserved by being nailed to a cross.

Is there any doubt as to why we would proclaim the greatness of Jesus Christ? What further proof do we need to sing praises to His Name? He is without a doubt, supreme!!

Conclusion:

You may be sitting here this morning going, yes, I believe. I believe that Jesus created the earth, He created me, and I believe that through Him, I can be reconciled to God, and I want to live for Him. I'm tired of living for myself and I want to live for Jesus... but where do I begin.

¹If you've never come to place your faith in Jesus Christ, have never trusted Him with your life, have never believed on Him as the Lord of your life, why not make today the day?! You see, Jesus is not far away. Jesus is not absent in the world that we live, in fact He is as close as the confession on your lips. Look at what Romans 10 says,

"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved...everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

You say I want to follow Jesus, start by placing your faith in Him. For He alone is the One who can save you from your sin. He alone is the One who can establish hope within your life. He alone is the One who is righteous. He alone is the One who has the power over death. So I plead, if you have never done this, confess Jesus as your Lord. You won't regret it for this is Whom you were created for.

²Then some of you here, you have trusted in Christ. But something that you've never done before is follow after Him in baptism. You say that Jesus is the Lord of your life but you've never taken that next in faithfully following after Jesus by proclaiming to the world that you are His follower. Now, baptism doesn't save you, but it's an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior. It symbolizes believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus.

And baptisms are not something that have been happening very often around Cornerstone Bible Church. And that's sad. I know that I can make the excuse that it would be a whole lot easier if we had a church building and a baptismal in the place that worship on a Sunday morning. And that may be true; but that should not stop us! Shame on us for not providing more opportunities than once a year... I apologize for that. But can I ask you not to wait for us to open an invitation to be baptized. Demand that of us. The New Testament church could not fathom an unbaptized believer of Jesus Christ. Jesus is supreme over creation, He is supreme over the new creation, so don't be ashamed of that. Place your faith in Jesus Christ and do not rest until you have proclaimed that to the world through baptism. That is not just a religious activity but a faithful step in following Christ.

³And if you would testify that you have done this already, you've placed your faith in Christ, you've followed after Him in obedience of being baptized, I encourage you now to experience the freedom of what you were created for. I pray that you will

joyfully pursue and live for the One you were made for. Put the empty pleasures of this world aside and live for Jesus. Intentionally go through your day seeking to bring Him honor and glory. Rest easy, knowing that if Christ can/does sustain the whole universe, He for sure can care for you. Have confidence that Jesus is working His greater plan in the midst of this sin-filled world. And know, that since Jesus is supreme over all, and He works most visibly through His bride, the church, joyfully engage with the body of Christ, not just as an activity on a Sunday morning, but as an opportunity to be involved in the work of God, our Creator.

I'm going to pray...

- I'm going to invite the band
- I'm also going to invite you... the front of auditorium is nothing special. It's not holier than your seat. So you need to sit there in your seat and do some talking with God that is fine. But if you would like to come forward to pray with someone else, that's great too. You may want to talk about it further what it means to place your faith in Christ. You may want to have a conversation about baptism, and we'd love to talk with you. You may want to prayer for strength in pursuing Jesus, and we want to walk alongside of you. So I invite you...
- Let's pray