

Week 2 – Colossians 1:15-23 The Supremacy of Jesus

Recap

Last week we looked at an overview of the Book of Colossians. We learnt that Paul had written this letter from his prison cell to the Church in Colossae – a church that he didn't set up himself. The followers there needed to be reminded about the whole sufficiency and supremacy of God. The Colossians were being influenced to fill all their gaps in life or add to their lives other beliefs as well as that of God. Paul is teaching them through this letter that they don't need anything other than God. They had forgotten the simple truth of Chapter 1:13-14 'For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins'.

For us, we need to remember the truth of the Gospel. It is only and all about Jesus and how he has opened the way to our Father God by reconciling all things on the cross, nothing less, nothing more. We finished by thinking about what it is to live a life worthy of God. A worthy life looks like a transformed heart, which overflows into how we treat other people, what we say, and our attitude towards the things God asks us to do.

We took away possible actions for the week ahead.

Pray: thanking God for delivering you from sin and death. Praying for His Spirit to show you what it means to live a life that reflects the salvation you've received.

Memorize: Commit Colossians 1:13–14 to memory

Write: writing out the gospel story as simply as possible, considering how we might have added to it or taken away from it.

Act: choosing one way to show someone God's love

Thanks : Sending a thank you text, note, or email to the people in your life who led you to Jesus.

So how did you get on – did you think any more about it this week?

So, before we get into this week, remember that each of you can access the participant's guide via our website. Also my transcript of this bible study will be available on the website for you to download. If you go into Latest News, you will see a Category for the Colossians Bible Study.

The Participant guide will follow each week in the same format, of which you will get the answers either from my introductions or from the video. Some weeks we will use the video to help discussions, some weeks we won't. You have a section for your

own notes about the passage. But then, and I realise that this is a stage further from our previous midweek bible studies, but it is important to come away from this and consider how this applies to you and me today. Straight after the study, before you do anything else, it would be great if you could take 10 mins to stop and using the reflection space to consider how it has impacted you today. And then into this week ahead to do something about it, so the final section called 'Live it out' gives you ideas on how you can live out the passage we have studied.

Introduction

So if you have your participant guide you will see that the big idea is outlined. But if we were to consider how this study today will affect your head, your heart and your life, here's how we would describe it :

Head Change: To know Jesus is supreme over everything in life—creation, authorities both spiritual and not, and the Church.

Heart Change: To feel secure in Jesus's authority over all things and rooted in the hope of the gospel.

Life Change: To stand firm in our faith—faithful to God and obedient to His Word—regardless of any circumstance.

DEFINITION : *So if we think about supremacy, the dictionary describes is as "the highest in rank or authority; paramount; sovereign; chief; of the highest quality, degree, character, importance/*

So think today about ways where the word 'supreme' is used.

- Supreme Court, Supreme Leader in Star Wars. If you go onto the web and type in Supreme, the first 3 pages are all about a clothing brand called Supreme.

If you think of supremacy in our culture and supremacy in the bible, what is the difference between these? Cultural defines supremacy as the best or highest or something that has the most. Biblical supremacy refers to God's authority, rulership, and power over all creation.

Remember again the context of this reading before we read it. Paul is teaching that there is nothing else required in life than God.

READ : Colossians 1:15-23

WATCH : Let's watch Louie as he explains this passage (Start video at 00:20)

- Jesus is the originator of everything. Everything exists because of Jesus.

- This then answers the big questions of whether our life matters, and why am I here.
- We exist to be in a relationship with God
- Jesus is the sustainer
 - All things hold together through him
 - Laminin is an example of a cell adhesion molecule that literally holds us together. (Do not get too caught up in the idea that the Laminin structure looks like a cross, but it does give us a good comparison for what Jesus is). However v17 tells us that Jesus holds everything in all of creation together.
- Jesus is the leader of the Church
- Jesus is the peacemaker between us and a holy God (v 20)

So as we look at this passage from verses 15-23, are there any other observations about Jesus in here?

- If we want to know what God looks like all we have to do is look at the character of Jesus (v15)
- Jesus is the complete and sufficient reconciler (sacrifice) between Man and God. (v22)
- Our security is steadfast as long as we stay firmly rooted in the faith (v23)

So if Jesus is described as the image of the invisible God (v15), what ways do we see that displayed in his character while he is on earth?

- He said it many times (John 8:18 - I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me. John 12:45 ESV: "And whoever sees me sees him who sent me.")
- He fulfilled so many of the prophecies in his life that were laid out in the OT
- His numerous miracles demonstrate that he had a power that was not from this world.

In verse 15, Paul says Jesus is the "firstborn over all creation." **Does saying Jesus was "firstborn" mean He was created? If it was that, then why would Paul go on to say 'in him all things were created' and John says 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God'.**

The Message paraphrases this verse as, 'We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at this Son and see God's original purpose in everything created'.

Some people take this verse to mean that God created Jesus, since Paul calls Jesus "firstborn over all creation." The early church councils deemed this view heretical, but we still see it pop up among groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses. Paul isn't saying Jesus was created. Rather, the term "firstborn" refers to Jesus's position of privilege. He exercises authority over all creation because, as we see in verse 16, all things were made through Him and for Him.

Let's now apply that authority to ourselves. **What specific things does Jesus have authority over in your life?** (Some answers include: your job, family, boss, salary, friendships, president/representative, spouse, habits, natural disasters, etc.)

What areas of your life are difficult for you to view as under Jesus's authority? Why is it difficult?

So the video describes how Jesus holds all things together, and the video gave the illustration of Laminin. He is everything, he is in control of everything, he is the Alpha & the Omega (Revelations 22:13).

Read Hebrews 1:1-4, and read Philippians 2:5-11

How do these verses contribute to the supremacy of Jesus?

- Hebrews informs us that Jesus was appointed as heir of all things and that he made the universe. Jesus is the radiance of God and an exact representation of everything that God is.
- Philippians demonstrates a lot about the mercy of God. Jesus didn't see his position as Lord as something he could use to his own advantage. It also demonstrates the sheer love that God has for his children that he would stoop so low.

Alienation from God

²¹ Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour'.

Do you have an idea of what it feels like to be alienated from God, and what ultimately does it lead to? It is about being cut off completely from a relationship with a loving God, no intimacy, our sin is the barrier that cuts us off. It ultimately therefore leads to death because God cannot have anything of sin in his presence. We see this alienation today in our world with the chaos that exists, the destruction around us.

Consider what it was like before you came to know Jesus as your Lord and Saviour? How is life different now? What is the biggest difference you see? Where would you be today if you didn't have Jesus?

Because of Jesus' reconciliation between us and God, verse 22 says that we can now be presented as holy and blameless and irreproachable (without fault) before God. **How does that make you feel?**

Conclusion

Jesus reigns supreme over all creation. All things were created through Him and for Him. He rules over the seen and the unseen—the physical and the spiritual world. From the foundation of the world, He has authority over the created realm. By defeating death, Jesus rules over it and made a way for us to be reconciled to God. His sacrifice solidifies His supremacy. From your salvation to your work to your inner thoughts, Jesus has authority over it all.

We live under Jesus's supremacy. His rule changes everything for us. As we learned from Colossians 1:13–14 in the last session, we now live in His kingdom—the kingdom of light. We've been freed from sin and death and have been presented as holy before God. We owe our lives to Jesus for what He's done for us. So the question for reflection is this - are we living in a way that reflects that truth?

This week, take time to consider whether or not your life reflects the supremacy of Jesus. A life surrendered to His authority isn't ruled by fear or swayed by opposition. Instead, it is characterized by faith, perseverance, and hope.

Living It Out

Pray: Ask God to reveal the areas of your life that need to submit to Jesus's authority. Pray that the Spirit would guide you in surrendering those things to Jesus.

List: Read back through Colossians 1:1–23 and list all the attributes of Christ mentioned in these verses. Take a few minutes to reflect on who Jesus is and revisit the list throughout the week.

Share: Write out your testimony this week. Focus on what life was like before you knew Christ and how He's changed your life since. Share your story with someone this week.

Create: Make something to remind yourself that Jesus is supreme over all creation. Display your creation so you can see it and remember this passage throughout the week.

Worship: Choose a praise song that exalts Jesus. Listen to that song at different points this week to remind you of His supremacy over all things.