

3/3/19 - Col. 1:15-20 - "Supremacy in Christ"

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[0 : 00] you just wish would just continue on and on and on. It's kind of what I felt there at the end. You know, you just want to hold on to that.

You want to keep praying just to let that moment continue. But we know that God is God. We are not. We are His handiwork.

We are jars of clay. He molds, He casts, He refines. And it is an exciting season that they will be embarking on.

And it's just a shame that things happen. I mean, like the plague, the flu plague literally swept through our house. And I just got it this morning at 1 o'clock, and my two sons are sick, and so Bethany couldn't even be here.

So it's, you know, that just means we're going to have to get together another day for lunch. So we're going to be continuing in our study in the book of Colossians.

[1 : 08] And we've begun a journey through here, and specifically where we are in this book of Colossians.

It's actually so fitting. It's almost as if we look into God, and we're just like, God, you knew this was going to happen today. This section is actually known as a hymn that was sung in the early church about the person of Jesus Christ.

And it's highly significant about who He was, especially known as Christology. But we're going to read this hymn in Colossians chapter 1, starting in verse 15.

And let me turn there myself to His Word. The section of this is actually titled, The Preeminence of Christ.

And that's why I feel it is so fitting for the season today that we are in. His Word reads, Please join me in prayer.

[3 : 12] Father, thank You for this day. Thank You for this moment where we can open Your Word, which is so undervalued in this culture.

Something unknown as being absolute truth, being inerrant. Father, we know as Your children, as Christians, that this Word breathes life.

And Father, I pray that Your Word breathes life today. Help us to understand Your Word today. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. We're going to be entering into a little bit of a thick theology today, talking about Christ's preeminence, His supremacy.

How He relates to His creation. That He was the creator of the creation, but also how He functions within His creation as well.

So there's things known as theophobia, which is like the fear of theology. So if you have that today, it might be a good time to maybe step out for a couple of moments.

[4 : 21] Or actually, maybe I'll challenge you to endure the next 30 minutes. I'm going to try 30 minutes today. And learn something so deep and so rich about the person of Jesus Christ found in Scripture, especially in this book in 1 Colossians.

That's a new one. Colossians 1, 15 through 20. The Bible, supremely, is a book that the Old Testament points forward to Christ.

The Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, talk about Christ being revealed. And here, this section of Scripture in the New Testament that was written by Paul is actually known as a pivotal section of Scripture that presents the most reasoned and illustrated presentation of the supremacy of Christ than anywhere else in Scripture.

And so it is important to focus your eyes on this text and look at it and see how it applies to our lives today, because it does. The first point I want to speak about today is that just how this verse starts out is, he is, we're going to talk about a couple he ises today.

The first point is, he is the divine replication. In verse 15, it says, he is the image of the invisible God.

[5 : 51] That in this day, Paul writing to the Colossian church, Jesus was merely one of the many emanations of God.

Like, basically, emanations are like perceptions of a source of the invisible God that he was just one of the many of this cultural time period.

And the heresy that revolved around this time gave Jesus a skewed view. They didn't understand Jesus quite to the point of acknowledging his divine nature.

And they would, they never would acknowledge Jesus Christ as being the way, the truth, the life, as John 16 says, or John 14, 6.

Their perceptions of Christ at this time were much lesser. That he was like the bottom rung of the ladder, of the many rungs to God, to climb up to God.

[6 : 49] That he was just one of the many. John 1, 18 in the CSB says, no one has ever seen God, the one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father's side.

He has revealed him. That for us, church, that Jesus Christ is the literally, literally the exegesis of the invisible God to us. The critical explanation of the invisible God.

That's where we get his divine nature. And we see a word here, image, which it's pronounced a cone.

I was going to actually write it up on there, but it is significant. I think we, living in northeastern Ohio, traveling on a turnpike in the fall, we say that phrase, a cone.

Hey, cone, there's a, you know, cone here, cone there. I find myself, you know, definitely playing games on the turnpike with all the road construction.

[7 : 59] But it's pronounced a cone. And the first thing I thought about was a cone. So funny, not funny, we can move on. Okay, which is where we get our English word icon. And this is to be understood as the image or the representation or the portrait of God, the invisible God, God incarnate, receiving his divinity from God.

And also, if we look past, beyond the image, the meaning stretches even far, far vastly past physical, mere physical appearances in his flesh.

That when you study a cone, this word in Greek, it's one who understands that it's also a revealing, a continued revealing of his character, just as Jesus' ministry on this earth, that his miracles, his healings were to validate the very call that he was sent by God to fulfill, which is the cross.

And in so doing, he revealed his character, his personal character that he receives from God. The author of Hebrews recalls very similar, this powerful language.

In Hebrews 1.3, it says that the Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being. And there's a lot of, there's actually a close relationship between the word image in our text in Colossians and this exact representation in Hebrews, which they're actually derived from each other.

[9 : 29] But this means being the exact representation that, to literally, figuratively speak, it's like the wax seal. If you can imagine back in old fashion, the wax seals on envelopes, that he was the actual representation, the very imprint of God incarnate.

Or if we think of coins, how coins are stamped and pressed, he's the exact impression, the exact representation of God.

And Paul is highlighting Christ being supreme in eternity by being the icon, icon of the invisible God. Jesus is not just one of the steps of the many ladder, rungs of the ladder to God, as the early church thought. He is God. And just as icon represents Christ's relationship to the Father, Paul will now introduce the Colossian church to the idea that he is over all things and involved in all things, as we go to the second point.

And in so doing, he draws together his divine relationship with his very creation, as Christ is supreme in this as well. The second point, and we're going to sit on here for just a minute, is that he is head over all creation.

[11 : 02] As verse 15 continues, he is the firstborn of all creation. Now, if you speak with Jehovah's Witnesses or some other beliefs out there that don't value and don't validate the supremacy and high ranking of Christ, they will look at this text and use it to defend a lesser manifestation of God, of just being one of the many prophets, one of the many lowercase g gods in this text.

Because it looks like he may have been the first person created. However, in closer observation of the literary context, the historical context, and the whole entire biblical context of this passage, it suggests a stronger understanding that makes Christ the creator in head of everything when we see Christ is first born here.

This is a certain language being used that does not mean first child, first being created. But contextually, it refers to Christ's ranking and Christ's honor.

Being the firstborn is in reference to rank and honor. And that Christ was before all things and that first in all supremacy.

We see this language in Psalm 89, where David was, quote, firstborn over the covenant community. David was foreshadowing Christ in the Old Testament.

[12:37] In Psalm 89, 27, it says, I will appoint my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth. And also, if you consider Israel, the nation of Israel as the entire nation, they were also referred to being firstborn to indicate their status of recipients of God's provision.

Exodus 3, 22 refers to this. Then you shall say to Pharaoh, Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son.

So if you consider what's happening in this passage here, that when we're talking about firstborn, it's not talking about anything regarding Christ's creation. We know that Christ existed.

He has always existed. He is not bound by time. He is God incarnate. So if you want to take a Gnostic off of this day and age, or possibly a false teaching of today, refer to this passage, because it has huge implications of acknowledging that Christ is the firstborn, because in so doing, when you acknowledge that Christ is the firstborn, you're acknowledging that He has supremacy, the highest honor, the highest rank, after whatever these people are worshiping, whatever these people are doing, Christ is even greater than that.

And now since Christ is the exact impression of God, and the highest ranking position and authority, we now see how Christ is supreme over His creation. And I want to highlight three different aspects of this involvement in His creation.

[14:18] that in point two, that He is head over all creation. Number one, I want to talk about Christ being the creator.

Number two, that He is the objective. And number three, Him being the sustainer. In verse 16, it says, For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions, or rulers or authorities.

This passage has an all-encompassing reality of Christ being involved in creation of physical matter and unseen matter. Absolutely every detail that we see and we don't see, Christ is at the center of it.

This verse talks about heaven and earth, things that are distant, that are near, visible and invisible, matter and non-matter, thrones or dominions, rulers and authorities.

And if we look at this passage without bringing in the whole counsel of God as a whole, we will miss the significance of what Paul is telling this Colossian church of this day.

[15:37] Because we would miss the significance of thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities and what he's actually talking about because he's actually literally talking about Christ being supreme over four classes of angels here.

And especially the last two being the angelic orders known in Jewish literature back in this time frame, the rulers and authorities were known as the two highest orders of angels.

And this directly not only combated the Gnostic beliefs of their man-made philosophies and things like that, angelic worship, but it addressed the very heart of idolatry in this Colossian church.

all and everything belonged to him, even the unseen. I'm going to take you for a journey with my son right now.

Because I can consider numerous conversations, if anybody has kids, anybody has grandkids, or anybody has nieces, nephews, especially five-year-olds, are really inquisitive.

[16:49] They ask sometimes the most complicated to explain theological questions. But when we go on night walks, like in the summer, I'm going to think about summer.

We need to think about summer. I mean, snow's coming. Let's think about like nice, warm, maybe that, you know, just the sound of crickets, you know, right now, and night walks. You know, when I go on night walks with my son, and, you know, throughout the neighborhood and everything like that, you know, my son will be, he's asked this in the past, he's like, Dad, how did all the stars get

up there so far away?

And then, and then we see like a satellite, you know, I think it's a satellite, or a UFO, for any conspiracy theorists out there. But, you know, you'll see things out there, and his little mind, his little intrinsic, intrinsic mind, is just curious about it.

And we walk through questions like that. But if you consider the endless space, church, the endless space, millions of light years in vastness across, that every micrometer in space has a purpose. Every micrometer that we haven't even discovered, that we can't even see yet, has a purpose. Every star in the sky, every galaxy, every, every, uh, uh, planet that's rotating around the sun is put into motion by God.

[18:25] Also with my son, something more near, walking through the park, again, on a nice summer day, that we're all longing for, he'll ask, I remember this one time, he asked this question, he's like, Dad, why are there so many bugs?

And we're walking through, like, this, this gnat, you know, infestation, in Mill Creek Park. And at that point, moment, I was actually like, well son, that's actually a really good, good question.

I'm wondering that myself. Um, but consider the things on earth, the vastness of our earth, that, that it's known that 8.7 million, uh, identified species on this earth that we know of, 8.7 million species, and there's still 80% undiscovered.

Now, I don't know where numbers come from, but that came from nature.com, and it seems legit. But, regardless, there's a lot of vastness, vastness of, on this earth, not only in the heavens, up in, up in space, but also what we can see, feel, taste, and touch, here on this earth.

And finally, we're talking about those theological questions, that, that my son asks. There's a late night convos, you know, putting them to bed, or something like that, where he's navigating, like, the emotions from the day, like, talking about somebody who, wasn't sharing with them, you know, problems of, you know, preschoolers.

[19:54] You know, why am I feeling this way? And if we consider our brains, the most complex organ in the body, that's made up of billions of, of nerve cells, networks of nerve cells, that, within an instant, communicate with one another, the, the, the intrinsic, just, vastness of, our bodies, how it operates, it is just, it brings just so much awe, and wonder, to not only, that God created, but, how great is our God?

When we look at the stars, when we look at this earth, when we look at ourselves, how great, is our God? And we see that through Christ, all, all of this, was created by Him.

And we can also understand, that the purpose of, of His creation, that all things, small and large, major or petty, now, now we see the objective, of His creation.

The second point, within the second point here, of Him being over creation, He is the objective, as verse 16 talks about. It says, all things were created, through Him, and for Him.

And this passage says, that everything was created, through Him, and for Him. There's actually a translation, that says, everything was created, through Him, and toward Him. Which I love that, because you know exactly, what it's getting at, in there.

[21:28] And the observable complexities, of this life, are intended, to bring Him glory, to bring Him honor, and to bring Him praise. That all things began, at the word of His command, and all things, will one day return, at the very same word, of His command.

And the last thing, is that He is the sustainer. In verse 17, we see that, and He is before all things, and in Him, all things hold together.

He is the sustainer. We understand, by this passage, that without, His divine working, within the midst of creation, everything would fall apart.

Just as the author of Hebrews, continued to record, in verse 1, Hebrews 1, 3, that we stated earlier, the Son is the radiance, of God's glory, and the exact representation, of His being, sustaining all things, by His powerful word.

So the summary, of this passage, this Paul's hymn, in Colossians, that Christ is supreme, over all. He is the firstborn, the highest rank.

[22:46] He is the creator, of everything, every cosmic speck, everything unseen, in the spirit realm, of angels. He is supreme. He is the objective.

All creation, bends towards Him. We have a song, that talks about, this very thing, of creation, bending towards Him, the creator. And finally, He is the sustainer, holding all things together.

And if this, is true church, if, Christ, is that God, in which He is, public service announcement, this has tremendous, implications, in our lives, as we see, the third and final point, in this passage today, is that He is, the head, of the new creation, also known as the church.

Verse 18, it starts out saying, and He is the head, of the body, the church. Just as Christ, is sovereign, over all creation, He is also sovereign, over the church.

Not just a building, or organization, what we're talking about, is His people, the people who will, account to God, one day, in judgment, in whom He will mediate for, at that time, because you have been purchased, by His blood.

[24 : 10] Each person that belongs to Him, as members, of His body, we are absolutely dependent, on the head. The head controls, the movement of the body. We're not, a group of people, with our, like a chicken, with a head cut off, and just, you know, running around aimlessly, without direction.

Christ is the head, and He provides direction, He provides, the movements. In verse 18, it says, He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything, He might be preeminent.

Now, it's not saying that, Jesus was, the first, to be raised from the dead. He wasn't. It's not saying that, any more than He's saying, in verse 15, that He's the first person created, first child created.

No, firstborn here, refers again, to Christ's high status, His supreme status. But Christ had, the highest ranking, of all, who had been raised, from the dead.

Because of His resurrection, it validated, that there would be, resurrection of others. which now, if we move right along, with where this passage is going, this makes Christ, in this passage, preeminent, supreme, over salvation.

[25 : 35] Our very saving grace, He's supreme, over that. Verse 19, 20 concludes, saying, for, in Him, all the fullness of God, was pleased to dwell, and through Him, to reconcile, to Himself, all things, whether on earth, or in heaven, making peace, by the blood, of His cross.

He is, church. He is first, He is the only way, of salvation, that, knowing that, that, it speaks of blood here, should indicate suffering, that there is a payment, for sin.

But there's also, the sense of, it's saying, peace here too. Because He's the, the uniting factor, of peace, within the hostility, His blood, brings peace, through His cross.

God is the only mediator, between God, and man. He's the light, in the darkness, the hope, for the hopeless. He's our peace, our joy. He's our source, our supply.

He's the rock, of our salvation, church. How do we even, respond to this, today? The only thing, I can come up with, is one word, and it's worship.

[27 : 04] Because God, of this universe, is inviting you, to participate, in His supremacy. To respond, to His supremacy.

You're a part, of this as well. In order to make, much of Christ, we have to make, much, much little, of ourselves. In order to make, much of Christ, we have to make, much little, of ourselves.

And it's verse 18, going back to verse 18, that in everything, He might be preeminent, or in other words, that in everything, He might be supreme. While it is true, church, I know, you know, we have, we have, like the objectives, like, Christ will be supreme, no matter if we, respond properly, or not.

Like, Christ is sovereign, whether we respond, or not. It's not contingent, upon us. No matter if we, acknowledge it, or not. However, the glory to be revealed, when His body, each and every person, responds, and actively participates, in light, of His supremacy, this being, this brings in, a shifted attitude, of self-supremacy, and submits, to divine supremacy, which is in Christ.

And this is the way, that we are called, to be, as His church, His blood-bought church. When Christ reigns supreme, over His church, it is, unmistakable, to identify, that He is the one, holding all things together.

[28 : 50] And definitely, at times, completely illogically, holding all things together. For us, at Youngstown Metro Church, if we strive to be, this type of church, a church that, puts Christ as supreme, over us, we start here, at His word.

We have to be, rooted in His word. Mark Dever, states about this church, it's not a church, it's not a church, it's perfect, or without sin. It has not figured everything out. Rather, it's a church, that continually strives, to take God's side, in the battle, against the ungodly desires, and the deceits of the world, our flesh, and the devil.

It's a church, that continually, seeks to conform itself, to God's word. if we are to strive and respond in light of Christ's supremacy over this church over our very own souls we have to strive to glorify

him in our lives individual lives and also to place him give him first place in our marriages in our families give him first place in our singleness in our time our money our intellect our jobs our plans I'll say it again if this church if this is true church for us today if this is if Christ really is this God and he is

Christ Christ is the very purpose of life that we must seek after he knows how to best fix and order our lives we also have hope now in all things that are brought into our lives whether it's feast or famine through sick or thin through challenges through the light stuff that life can sometimes bring which is a blessing when things are just going alright but also through the hard times because we know that it is him at work and it is him who will sustain he holds all things together and he will hold all things together worship him Youngstown Metro worship him church as he conforms us to the image of his son as well as Romans 8 talks about I'm not going to go into it but I think it's time for us to wake up to wake up and put our eyes on him and not to lose sight of him and the work that he's already begun in our midst as a church as a blood-bought church individually and corporately let us come together and make it clearly evidence to everyone who sees this church gathering in the streets in homes and wherever we may be let it be clearly evident that Christ reigns supreme over us and our gatherings let us respond in worship with hands high knees on the ground face on the ground however that looks like let this very hymn written between verse 15 and 20 be written on our hearts because it is something we're singing about today so let's go into our time of singing and exalt this supreme authority over us and this church and glorify him through this message father we thank you for our time together we thank you for your word we thank you for the things that we see the things that we don't see

I pray for the families in this room father that that if there are broken families if there are if there is strife if there is anything that needs mended and redeemed and reconciled father that by placing you first in our families father you bring unity father I pray for marriages in this room father as we place christ supreme over our marriages father that is not a domineering game back and forth of fighting and bickering father but a mutual submission to one another which is a beautiful picture of how christ deals with his church sacrificing for his church father I pray for the singles in this room father that in this in placing you first place and supreme over singleness father that's that there that these eyes can be fully fully fixed on you and that nothing else matters that their only longing is to serve you that they have an abundance because it is found in you father let this church reign you as supreme over us and let us respond properly in light of that supremacy in jesus name amen as you