

The Pre-eminence of Christ for All of Life

Colossians 1:13-20, 2:9
Leader Discussion Guide

Illustrations Used:

- Grand Canyon.
 - o We are all glory seekers. We are made to see God's glory and enjoy him.
 - o Mark's daughter: "Where is God? I can't see him." How do we know someone? When they speak → God speaks to us through the Bible.
- John Owen quote: "One of the greatest privileges the believer has, both in this world and for eternity, is to behold the glory of Christ."
- Man's experience of being strengthened as our church sang last Sunday morning.
- Jonathan Edwards quote: "What is there that you can desire should be in a Savior, that is not in Christ? Or, wherein should you desire a Savior that should be otherwise than Christ is? What excellency is there wanting? What is there that is great or good?"

Comprehension Questions:

1. What is the church? How should God's view of the church impact the way we view the church? (The church is God's idea, Christ established and is building the church, Christ loved the church and give himself for her.)
2. How do we know from this passage that Jesus is both fully God and fully man?
3. What does it mean that Jesus is the "Firstborn of all creation?"
4. How do we have peace with God? How would you explain this to an 8-year-old?
5. Is the Gospel only for non-Christians? How is the Gospel useful for Christians?

Application Questions:

- "As a church, we are called to follow Jesus. But this is not just one among many things, following Jesus should be the main thing." What are other things that can take the place of pre-eminence (first importance) in our lives or as a church?
- We are meant to "Fix our eyes on the glory of God in Jesus Christ." Knowing that Christ is no longer physically on earth, but with the Father in heaven, how do we do that now?
 - o We are meant to see his glory revealed in Scripture. Read paragraph on in Mark's outline that starts with, "Open the Gospels and walk with him..."
- "We don't just want to declare [the good news] to others. We want to believe it way down deep." How do we allow the Gospel go deeper and deeper into our own hearts?
- The Gospel shouldn't just be in our hearts, it should RULE our hearts. What are other things that can rule our hearts? (bitterness, fear, comfort, anger, anxiety, etc.)
- What are the things that are currently ruling or trying to rule your heart? How does the word of Christ speak to those things? (i.e. the man who needed to hear the truth from the hymn).

Extended Outline

Series introduction:

- From one perspective the church is not all that exciting.
- The church is God's idea. Christ established the church, and is building the church. Christ loved the church and gave himself for her. You are a part of a church. For all these reasons it is important for us to pause occasionally and be reminded what the church is all about.
- The goal is to grow in our understanding. To align our individual lives and our church more and more with God's purposes for the church.

The Church: Following Jesus, in community, on mission.

- Upward component – us relating to Jesus Christ.
- Inward component - us in relationship with one another through Christ.
- Outward component - us in relationship to the world, on mission with Christ.

Sermon introduction:

As a church we are called to follow Jesus. But this is not just one among many things, this is the main thing. Jesus Christ is the foundation (1 Cor 3:11), the chief cornerstone (1 Peter 2:6), the head of the Church (Col. 1:18), the life-giving vine (John 15). His death, burial, and resurrection is of first importance (1 Cor 15).

App: We must build our lives and our church upon Jesus Christ and His work. Our individual lives and our life together must be intentionally and explicitly built on the reality of Christ and His work.

Read Colossians 1:13-20; 2:9.

Who is Jesus Christ?

1. Jesus Christ is God.

- a. 1:15 – Jesus Christ is the perfect image of God.
- b. 1:15b-16 – Jesus Christ is the Creator God.
 - i. 15b – Firstborn of all creation.
 1. In ancient times firstborn meant the supreme one, the superior one, the one with the right of inheritance. Ps. 89:27.
 - ii. V16 - He is supreme because by him **all things** were created.
- c. 1:17 – Jesus Christ is the eternally pre-existent God.
- d. 1:19; 2:9 – Jesus Christ is fully God.
- e. 1:13-15 - Jesus Christ is God the Son

2. Christ is fully man. The humanity of Christ.

- a. 1:22 – Has a body of flesh.

- i. He is like us in every way, but without sin. He has a human mind, a human soul, a human body.
- b. 2:9 – Fullness of deity dwells bodily. Fully man and fully God.

Why? Why did God become a man? What are the implications of this for us as a church?

3. For revelation: so we can see God’s glory.

- a. 1:15 – Image of the invisible God. Heb 1:3 – Radiance of the glory of God.
- b. **Illus:** We are all glory seekers. **App:** We are made to see the glory of God himself and to enjoy Him forever.
- c. But it is no simple thing to see God. God is invisible.
 - i. **Illus:** One of our girls used to ask, “where is God? I can’t see Him.”
- d. **Illus:** Think about how you know someone. When they speak.
 - i. John 1:1 - the Word. 1:14 – we have seen His glory. Jn 1:18 – He has made him known.
 - ii. Hebrews 1:2-3 – “in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son.” Jesus is the “radiance of the glory of God.”
 - iii. In Jesus Christ the glory of God is put on display uniquely, fully, perfectly, radiantly.
- e. **App:** As a church, we want to see and know God.
 - i. **Illus:** Church 101 – Glory of God is our highest aim.
- f. **App:** Fix your eyes on the glory of God in Jesus Christ, revealed in the Bible.

Open the Gospels and walk with Him, grow in faith as you witness His miracles, have your mind renewed as you hear His teaching; see His love as He goes to the cross; witness His power as He emerges from the grave. Immerse yourself in the good news of Christ in Romans, experience all the spiritual blessings we have in Christ as you memorize Ephesians; be made humble and joyful as you watch the humble and exalted Christ in Philippians; read of Him saving the chief of sinners in 1 Timothy; hope in His glorious return in Thessalonians; let His greatness and the greatness of His salvation draw you near to God in Hebrews; follow His steps as He commits no sin even in the face of terrible injustice in 1 Peter; see the exalted Christ in Revelation ruling over human history and returning to make all things new. Luke 24 says the OT is about Jesus as well.

- i. John Owen, in *The Glory of Christ*: “one of the greatest privileges the believer has, both in this world and for eternity, is to behold the glory of Christ.”
- g. **App:** Church, we exist primarily to glorify/exalt Jesus. To point people to Him by our words and our lives.

4. For salvation: So we can have peace with God.

- a. 1:20 – God makes peace by the blood of his cross.
 - i. There is a lack of peace between sinners and God.
 - 1. V21 – People are hostile toward God in our sin.
 - 2. 3:5-6 – God is against sinful people. – Wrath of God coming.
- b. Christ came to reconcile us by dying. 1:20, 1:22.
- c. Jesus Christ had to be God and man to accomplish our salvation.
 - i. Since Jesus is God His life and death had infinite value. We deserve eternal punishment. Jesus, since He is the infinite Son of God was able to bear the eternal punishment sinners deserve at Calvary.
 - ii. It was also necessary that Christ be fully human.
 - 1. God says the wages of sin is death. But God cannot die. So the Son of God took on our humanity to pay the wages of our sin through His death.
 - 2. God says that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22). So God the Son took on flesh and blood in order to give his body and shed His blood as our substitute.
 - a. Isaiah 53:5
- d. **App:** This is the gospel. This is the message of the church. It must be prominent in all we do.
 - i. Our goal is not to tell people all the works they must do to get an angry God to be happy with them. Our task is to declare the good news of what God has done through Jesus to reconcile us to Him.
- e. **App:** But we don't just want to declare it to others. We want to believe it way down deep.
 - i. Colossians 3:15 – Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.
 - 1. Don't just let it be in your hearts. He says, let it rule in your hearts.
 - 2. **App:** What is it that rules your heart most of the time? That guides your thoughts and feelings at your core? Fear? Or your personal wants? Or your to-do list? Or bitterness? or discontent? Or a desire to look a certain way or have a certain amount of money? Or is it the peace of Christ? This will only happen as we focus on what Christ accomplished.
 - ii. **3:16** – Let the word of (about) Christ dwell in your richly.
 - 1. Let this truth dwell richly. Let it make itself at home in you.
 - 2. V16b tells us how to do this.
 - a. Speak it to one another.

- b. Sing songs full of truth about Jesus.
 - 3. **Illus:** A man strengthened by the words of “How Great...”
- 5. For preeminence – so we will make Christ central in everything. v18.**
 - a. He is pre-eminent in all things: creation – v16-17; church – v18a; new creation/resurrection – 18; God’s redemptive work – v20.
 - b. Through the rest of the book, Paul tells us we are to make Jesus pre-eminent/central in our individual lives and our life together as a church. Our individual lives and our life together must flow from an intentional, persistent focus on the reality of Christ and what He has done. We must be Christ-centered, gospel-centered.
 - i. 1:28 – Christ is to be central in our teaching.
 - ii. 2:6-7 - Christ is to be central in in our discipleship.
 - 1. Don’t just receive him. Be rooted in Him. Be built up in Him. Cling to Him, and you will grow.
 - iii. Christ is to be central in our community. 3:10-15
 - 1. V11 – Here, in the church, the greatest racial divides and the greatest social divides can be overcome. How? Through and in Jesus Christ – “Christ is all and in all.”
 - iv. Christ is to be central in our corporate worship. 3:16.
 - v. Christ is to be central in our evangelism. 4:2-4.

Jonathan Edwards: “What is there that you can desire should be in a Savior, that is not in Christ? Or, wherein should you desire a Savior that should be otherwise than Christ is? What excellency is there wanting? What is there that is great or good?”