

Sermon: Jesus: He is Lord (Part 1, Colossians 1:15-23)

IN Opportunities to connect and pray as a group

1. In your family, whom do you look most like? Act like? Same personality?
2. What have you heard from other people about who Jesus is to them?
3. When have you had a misunderstanding about who Jesus is?

UP Time that is devoted to the Word of God

1. If there is time, ask a couple of people to read information from study Bibles to introduce the reason for Paul's writing this letter.
2. Compare the use of 'image' in Genesis 1:27 and Colossians 1:15. How are we similar to God? How are we different? How does Phil 2:6-8 help us to understand more about who Jesus is as the 'image'?
3. Review Col 1:15-23 to list all Christ's aspects emphasized by Paul.
4. What significance is it that Jesus is described as 'The firstborn over all creation' (v. 15) and the 'firstborn from among the dead' (v. 18)? (Also, Ps 89:27) List several meanings of 'firstborn'? What meaning does Paul intend in the statements of v. 15 and v. 18? In what ways do these statements affirm '...the gospel that you heard...'? (Col 1:23)
5. The religious leaders were enraged at Jesus, and wanted to kill him because He called God his Father (John 5:18). How can the following verses be used to explain to someone about the Deity of Christ? (Gen 1:27; John 1:1, 14; 10:30; Col 1:16; 2:9; Heb 1:6-8; Rev 4:11)

OUT Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community

1. Which of the 'aspects' from #3 (above) stands out for you? Why?
2. Review Pastor Henry's call to action in responding to Christ: **Trust** Jesus with your life; **Love** Jesus with all your heart; **Follow** Jesus without compromise. Reflect on how Christ the Man modeled these in His relationship with God. How are these playing out in your life?
3. How can you be a 'servant' (v.23b) to others this week because of who Jesus is as Lord?

UP – IN – OUT reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).

THE WORD (NIV)

Colossians 1:15-23

¹⁵The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.¹⁶For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And 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. ¹⁹For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰and 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. ²¹Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. ²²But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— ²³if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Genesis 1:27

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

Philippians 2:6-8

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Psalms 89:27

And I will appoint him to be my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth.

Sermon Study Summary

Who is Jesus to us? While we may never be forced under threat of death to reveal what Jesus means to us, the reality is that what we believe about Jesus will not only impact how we live this life, but also what we believe about eternity. Which do we believe: That He is mythical or historical? That He is God, or someone God created? That He is one of many ways to God, or that He is Lord and the only way to God? Some 2000 years ago, the believers at the church of Colossae were challenged by infiltrators who taught a heresy now known as Gnosticism: while Jesus was a good man, He lacked the authority and power to meet their needs. True salvation came through Jesus AND special knowledge, special experiences, and special rituals and self-discipline. When Epaphras of Colossae (who likely started the church there) visited Paul in Rome, he told him of the good things happening, but also about the concerning heresy. This inspired Paul to write to the church at Colossae. Paul's letter is the basis for Pastor Henry's new series entitled **Jesus: He is Lord**.

Paul's approach regarding the divinity of Jesus is neither defensive nor argumentative: Paul simply lifts Jesus up and describes who Jesus is. Paul states that because Jesus is Lord, He is more than enough. All you need is rooted and found in Christ and He is worthy of our worship and allegiance. God is invisible and without a material body, but out of love for us, God became visible: God became a man named Jesus. Jesus is the image of the invisible God (Col v.15). Let's understand 'image'. God created mankind 'in his own image' (Gen 1:27). While we are like God in ways such as personality so that we can think and reason, feel and make decisions, we are not like God in our essential nature. We only reflect a part of God's image. We are not all knowing, all powerful, or everywhere present. Christ, however, does possess these attributes. Christ is the true, perfect, absolute accurate image of invisible God because He is God in His essential nature (Phil 2:6). God did not create Jesus. He IS God made flesh – 100% God, 100% human. Jesus – God the Son and on His own initiative – chose not to hold onto equality with God for his own advantage (Phil 2:7) and while on this planet chose not to exercise His divine power and privileges. Instead He lived in humble dependence on His heavenly Father, and He calls us to do the same. Though Jesus lived fully as a man, He was then and continues to be fully God. If you want to see who God is - His forgiveness, patience, grace, truth, and way - you only need look at Jesus (Col 2:9).

Paul writes 'The Son is...the firstborn over all creation' (Col 1:15). This does not mean that God created Jesus first and then everything else. In OT culture, firstborn does not only refer to birth-order. It refers to status within the family – to the one who would inherit not only the father's wealth and authority and honour, but also his responsibility. This special status could be conferred to any child, i.e. David selects Solomon to succeed him. God appointed Jesus to the exalted position of Master of all (Psalm 89:27). Secondly, Christ is not a created being because Jesus is the creator of all (Col 1:16). Thirdly, numerous Scriptures teach HE IS GOD AND LORD. Although the word 'Trinity' is never used in the Bible, the Trinity is taught in the Scriptures. For example, (Gen 1:26) 'Then God said, "let us make mankind in our image." There is a Father, called God; a Son, called God, and a Spirit, called God in Scriptures. Jesus also referred to Himself as God or equal to God. Because the religious leaders clearly understood the meaning of Jesus' words, they considered this a blasphemy worthy of the death penalty (John 5:18). **If despite this evidence we continue to reject Jesus as Lord and God because Jesus is just a created being like us, and that He does not have the power to save us, to be the way to eternal life, to heal the planet; then the most heart-breaking thing is that whole story and message of the Bible and the reason Christ came, died and rose again make no sense at all if this is true.**

Paul says, "He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." (Col 1:17) Scientists today are looking for the power or force holding this universe together. Paul says that Jesus is this power. And He holds not just the physical universe, but also our relationships, marriages, families, and the church (v.18). Jesus is Lord of the universe and Lord of the Church – the people who know and trust Him. We are reconciled to God by Jesus' death and shed blood, and He rose to make that same power available to us to live in freedom and victory, today and eternally. He rose again to prove that He is God, that He is who He said, and that He is worthy of our worship and obedience. He is the first to rise permanently; this is why He has supremacy in all things. He is alive! He is the head of the Church, we are body of the Church, and we belong to Him. Given that Jesus is God, the Creator of the universe and the One Who holds it all together, that He is a good God and has our best interests at heart, surely we can **trust** Him with our life, **love** Him with all our heart, and **follow** Him without compromise.