

The Head of the Church
Colossians 1:15-23

Often when we talk about Jesus we are led to the topic of endurance. Have you noticed that?

Jesus is not just another religious figure. When we preach Christ and the truth about who He is and what He's done, we inevitably turn to how that affects us — because He bids us to take up His cross and follow Him.

1. Our Beliefs About Christ (vv. 15-20)

Christ is the answer to the great questions about God, the world, and the church. Four matters that Paul tells us about Him.

- Christ shows us God (v. 15)

This God wants to be known. It is in the very nature of God to communicate and establish relationship. Christ shows us what the content of our faith is.

- Christ is the author of creation (v. 16). Paul makes five claims about Christ over creation:
 - ✓ *Creation is limited.* He is before all things.
 - ✓ *The creation is by Christ.* He is the agent of creation. There is only one God who is meant to be sovereign over our lives. In Him all things hold together. He is temporally before ($\pi\rho\omicron$) all things. But He is also before ($\pi\rho\omicron$) all things in terms of status. The one who creates is the one who rules (cf. Heb. 7). So why would you worship something that is created rather than the Creator Himself.
 - ✓ *The creation is ruler over creation.* **First born** means status and authority. Christ was not a creature. Christ exercises authority over creation because He created it all.
 - ✓ *Creation is sustained by Christ* (v. 17). In Christ all things hold together. God's sovereign sustaining is the reason the universe doesn't blow apart at this moment. Everything is utterly dependent on Him every second. Sometimes we speak as if we do God a favor by believing in Him. God is not dependent on us, but we are dependent on Him every second of every day of our lives.
 - ✓ *Creation is not just by Christ but that creation is for Christ* (v. 16). Everything that has been made has been for Him. He is the purpose that everything has been made! Not only was the universe created by Christ but it owes its allegiance to Him and everything about it is to declare His glory and for His glory. "All the world's a stage..." And that's a great image for what God is doing in this world. Is it prideful for God to do everything for His glory? No. If Mercury or Venus or Mars wanted to be the center of the solar system, it would be pride because they literally don't have the weight to pull it off. But it's not pride for the sun to be the center of our universe, because it was made to have that

place. And only Christ is to have the central place in our lives. He is the final audience to which we and all creation play. We should study to find what pleases Him.

- Christ is the author of the new creation (vv. 18-20)

He is the Head of the body, the church. All these pronouns refer not just to God, but to God the Son. God has revealed Himself specially to us in Christ. The church is God's special focus of revealing Himself in creation.

Through Christ God has created the church from among the dead. Born once died twice; born twice died once.

He is so concerned about the church that He calls it His body!

- Christ is the answer of the really big problem (v. 20)

Christ is the peacemaker and reconciler. The sovereign God became a man; He was *pleased* to have all His fullness to dwell in Christ. God didn't become a man like a Greek mythological god. Not at all. The eternal Son of God dwelt in the man Jesus Christ. This God came into the teeth of His opposition — who were at war with Him. He made peace! And He did it through His blood shed on the cross.

He is a sovereign God, but He is also a loving and reconciling God. Paul is assuming a problem, which is assumed in his language of reconciliation.

God is not morally indifferent. He is not overlooking the actions of His mischievous creatures. God has a keener sense of justice than our clearest thoughts can imagine. It is the death of Christ that is the clearest picture of His hatred of sin.

Don't assume that the people who come to your church understand the gospel. It's not just the unbelievers who need to hear the gospel; we also need to hear the good news of the gospel because it is what sustains us day by day.

2. Our Believing in Christ (vv. 21-23)

Our faith focuses on Christ. Paul wanted them to personally know Him.

In these verses Paul changed to the second person pronoun — “you.” This is Paul's concern for them and it should be our concern for our church body as well. Paul was concerned that they would not continue.

Your only hope is God in Christ — *you* were alienated and far off! Paul says that they were enemies in their minds. It's not just what they did but *why* they did it. Sin is not merely law

breaking but a condition of the heart and the estrangement from the Creator.

The Colossians represent the past of every one of us. All of us have struggled with sin and needed reconciliation. The atonement is our only hope! The gospel focused on the cross — this is our way to God.

The Christian life begins with grace and ends with grace — MLJ, *Spiritual Depression*. Lean on Christ until the day breaks...