

## OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

JESUS IS GREATER  
COLOSSIANS 1:15-23  
MARCH 15, 2020



### SERMON OUTLINE

JESUS is Greater Than All!  
Revelation 1:9-20

Jesus said that in this world we will have trouble. The question is, how will we respond to trouble when it occurs?

How can we strengthen our faith in the midst of trouble?

1. Stay close to Jesus. (Jn. 16:33)

How do we stay close/connected to Jesus in the midst of trouble? We need to confront 4 specific lies that serve to weaken our connection to Jesus.

- A. Lie one - “No one knows the trouble I’m going through.” (Rev. 1:9)
- B. Lie two says, “If Jesus is with me, troubles will pass quickly.” (Rev. 1:9)
- C. Lie three - “If my troubles persist, Jesus must not be with me.” (Rev. 1:10-13a)
- D. Lie four says, “We know Jesus – He has brown hair and blue eyes – He’s exactly the same as He was in the gospel accounts.” (Rev. 1:13b-20)

*What will I do on Monday, with what I have learned on Sunday?*

### MAIN POINT

We can trust that Jesus is above all things, including our sin, shame, and trouble.

## THINKING THINGS THROUGH

*Connect the sermon to the study.*

**1. Have you ever seen an optical illusion? How do distorted images manipulate our perspective?**

**2. How does having a proper perspective help us view the world around us? How might our view of Jesus dictate our life, purpose, and mission?**

**Leader:** Our view of Jesus determines our belief. Few, if any, of us would have a difficult time verbally affirming the sufficiency of Jesus, but our lives often tell another story. We say we need Jesus, but we often fail to take advantage of the gifts made available to us through prayer and Bible study. We say we trust Jesus, yet we put all our hope in jobs and material gain. What we believe about Jesus matters, and that belief should be evident in our lives. Paul wrote to the church at Colossae to address their improper views of Jesus. Having a proper view of Jesus is essential because the divinity and sufficiency of Jesus are at the very heart of Christian belief. The moment we begin to lose a proper perspective on Jesus' identity, we are in danger of losing our own identity as followers of Christ.

## DIGGING DEEPER

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

> [HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ COLOSSIANS 1:15-20.](#)

**3. What things are made clear about Christ in these verses? What are some ways we tend to forget the truth of Christ's supremacy over all things in the hardship of life? How do these verses speak to Christ's supremacy over our sin, shame, and trouble?**

**4. When Paul claimed that Jesus was the "firstborn of all creation," what did he mean? How does this phrase help us more clearly understand who Jesus is?**

**5. Read Psalm 89:27. How does this help us understand the biblical idea of the "firstborn"?**

**Leader:** In the biblical text, the word "firstborn" is most often used to refer to position. Jesus is not part of the created order, but rather stands above it as God. Just as a Jewish father would provide His firstborn with all the rights and privileges of the house,

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so God the Father has given God the Son everything that is rightfully His. Paul went on to assert that Jesus Himself is the Creator of all things and is preeminent over His creation (vv. 1-18). This view of Jesus stood against the heretical teaching that threatened to lead the church in Colossae into error.

**6. Verse 17 says Jesus is the head of the church. What does the church look like when Jesus is the Head? What does it look like when He is not? What is your part in placing Him as the Head of the church?**

*Leader:* Just as the physical body cannot function without the head, the church cannot function without Christ, its spiritual Head. The church receives its mandate from Christ and Him alone, though this mandate is detailed for us in His Word as revealed to Christ's apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20; 3:5). The fact that Jesus is at the center makes His death for us all the more amazing.

> [HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ COLOSSIANS 1:21-23.](#)

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**7. Do you view reflecting on who you were before Christ (or who you could have been without Him) as a helpful or unhelpful practice? Explain. How can this be a comfort when you feel overwhelmed by the hardships of life?**

**8. Why did Paul see being established and firm as the response to the forgiveness and redemption that Christ accomplished? How have you experienced this?**

*Leader:* We have the freedom to live a life grounded on the supreme foundation of Jesus and fully devoted to God. Our reconciliation is certain, and God's great love means we have no reason to be swayed from the hope of the gospel.

**9. What are the areas you are currently tempted to forget the truth about who Jesus is? How might you line up the specifics of your story with the truth Paul expressed in these verses? When watching today's news, how might this serve to bolster your faith?**

*Leader:* God didn't speak through Jesus just to increase our knowledge of Him. God speaks through Jesus to transform us. God the Father sacrificed His firstborn and only Son Jesus on the cross to make atonement for our sins. Christ's sacrifice transforms us because it allows us to have a whole, reconciled relationship with the Father.

## **DOING LIFE TOGETHER**

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.*

**10. What can you do this week to keep the reality of your reconciliation present in your thoughts? How might your week look differently if you do?**

**11. How does this passage speak into the four lies that were addressed in this week's sermon— that we're alone in our trouble; that our troubles should pass quickly; that Jesus isn't with us in our troubles; and that we know everything there is to know about Jesus?**

## **PRAYER**

Thank God for His message about who He is and who we are that He communicates so clearly through Jesus Christ. Thank Him for wanting you to know Him so much that He sent Jesus to earth. Ask Him to lead you to know Him better as you seek to share His story of reconciliation with others.

## **MEMORIZE**

<sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. – Colossians 1:17

## **SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE**

### COLOSSIANS 1:15-23

1:15. Paul employed a hymn to emphasize Christ's sovereignty. The apostle may have composed it, or he may have quoted a hymn Christians used in worship. Heretical teachers in Colossae contended Christ was merely one of many powers between people and God. In 1:15-17, Paul refuted their teaching by presenting Christ as Lord of the universe. Paul asserted that Christ is the image of the invisible God. The Greek term rendered "image" conveys the idea of a perfect representation (exact likeness). In Matthew 22:20, Jesus used the word of a ruler's image or likeness stamped on a coin. Because God is Spirit (see John 4:24), the human eye cannot see Him. He has made Himself known perfectly in Christ. The phrase "the firstborn over all creation" does not indicate that Christ was the first created being. In the Old Testament, the firstborn son occupied a position of honor, privilege, and supremacy; he was first in priority. Here, the term expresses Christ's preexistent Deity.

1:16-17. Christ is Lord over creation, for by Him everything was created. Christ is vastly superior to all created powers. He was the Agent of creation; all things were created through Him. Creation was God's idea; Christ implemented the process. Christ also is creation's goal. "For

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Him” literally is “unto Him.” Creation moves toward Him and His purpose for it. The phrase “before all things” emphasizes Christ’s preexistence. He was the Agent of creation, and He also maintains it in the sense of giving it stability. Christ sustains creation and gives it harmony.

1:18. In 1:18-20, Paul stressed Christ’s lordship over the church, His body—His people who actively extend His ministry in the world. The preexistent Lord over the universe is also the church’s Head—the Source of the body’s life, who governs it and gives it unity. The word “beginning” stresses Christ’s priority in time and power. In addition, He is the Originator of life in God’s kingdom—new life made possible by grace. The phrase “firstborn from the dead” refers to Christ’s resurrection as the revelation of the new quality of life He gives: resurrection life that extends beyond death. Christ’s victory over death proved that He has first place in everything.

1:19-20. The term “fullness” could mean “full measure” of Deity, meaning that Christ is fully God. God’s purpose is that through Christ He may reconcile everything to Himself. Everything includes humans and the universe (see Rom. 8:19-23). The word “reconcile” has the sense of restoring a relationship, of creating unity. Christ alone (through His sacrificial death) was God’s chosen way of bringing about reconciliation. God made peace possible through Christ’s blood—His death on the cross. The phrase “things on earth or things in heaven” refers to the whole universe, material and spiritual.

1:21-22. The Colossian believers’ salvation demonstrated God’s purpose “to reconcile everything to Himself ” (1:20). Once, their evil actions—wicked lifestyles—showed they were alienated from God. Their former works issued from the sphere of evil in which they lived. Outside God’s rule of grace, they had been hostile to Him in mind. That is, in their mind-set or disposition, they were opposed to God—His enemies. The phrase “but now” stresses the sharp contrast between the believers’ former condition and their current relationship with God. Christ had made possible their being reconciled to God. In Christ’s voluntary suffering and death for others, God made salvation available to all who would place their faith in Christ. God’s purpose in offering reconciliation through Christ’s death was to make believers holy, faultless, and blameless before God.

1:23. Paul stressed believers’ responsibility to remain faithful as people reconciled to God through Jesus’ death. Paul fully expected the Colossian Christians to remain in the faith—that is, their commitment to Christ. They were not to move away from the gospel they had heard to embrace the false teachings being presented to them. Paul emphasized the genuineness of the gospel the Colossian believers had heard and accepted. It was the same good news being proclaimed across the Roman Empire. It was the good news the risen Christ had commissioned Paul to preach as His servant.