

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
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Sermon title: Christ, Lord Over All, Colossians 1:15-23

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**INTRODUCTION:** As you know, the books written by the Apostle Paul were letters to churches scattered in different places. Many of his letters are answers to questions, but we don't have the questions. Many of his letters address different things he heard were going on in those churches. Sometimes we know what was going on, and other times, we do not. Sometimes when we research extra Biblical sources, we find out. Such is the case with Colossians. Paul writes in such a way we know that he was dealing with specific issues. One source said there were up to 44 different issues Paul could have been addressing.

This letter was written to the church at Colossae, a small church that Paul probably never visited. It was started when a person heard the Gospel and took it back to his hometown.

The Church was facing doctrinal and practical problems. Their Christianity got confused with other teachings of the day. In Colossians, very early in the book, Paul writes to clarify who Jesus is.

There are five points to my message today:

1. Christ has supremacy over all creation.
2. Christ is the hope of creation.
3. Christ is the head of the Church.
4. Christ is the hope of the Church
5. Christ was Lord over the Colossians.

**First, [Paul told the people] CHRIST HAS SUPREMACY OVER ALL CREATION.**

**SCRIPTURE:** Colossians 1:15-17 <sup>15</sup> *The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.* <sup>16</sup> *For 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.<sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

**EXPLANATION:** In this day, the Greeks believed that all matter was evil and only pure spirit was good. This was called Greek “dualism.” Paul clarified that Christ is over all creation, both natural and supernatural.

**SCRIPTURE:** Colossians 2:8-9 <sup>8</sup>*See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of the world rather than Christ.* <sup>9</sup>*For in Christ all the fullness the Deity lives in bodily form...*

**EXPLANATION:** Paul boldly declares Christ is God in bodily form or matter. This was the complete opposite of Greek philosophy. So, Paul’s declaration is that matter is not evil. It was created by God, for God, and held together by Christ. Christ has supremacy of all creation. When we look at creation, we must admit how incredible it is.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Recent developments in the science of astronomy, with new telescopes and computers, have brought us new knowledge of our own solar system and galaxies far away. We are learning that the universe is far more fascinating and complex than we ever before realized. In 1977, a space probe named Voyager 1 was launched to gather information about our own solar system. Right now, Voyager 1 is still going, traveling at 38,000 miles per hour. It has left our solar system and takes 17 hours for a transmission to reach earth. That signal travels at 186,000 miles per second. [When compared with the rest of the universe, that distance is nothing more than the distance across the head of a pin.]

Such figures are mind blowing for a simple guy like me. And, the Bible tells us Christ holds it all together.

**APPLICATION:** You may ask, “What does this mean to me?” Here's what it means: It means the Lord of the Universe who is omnipresent in all of this vastness space is here with us today. It means the Lord of the Universe cares about the details of your life, yes, the everyday humdrum that no one else cares about. When you're scared, he is with you. When you're sad, he is with you. When you're lonely,

he is with you. He is not on the edge of space, looking at his creation with indifference. You are able to have fellowship with the one that knows what's going on at the far side of the universe. He is not distant. He is close.

Not only is Christ the Lord of all creation—

## **Second, CHRIST IS THE HOPE OF CREATION.**

What a beautiful creation we have all around us. We are blessed to live in a beautiful place and see the changing of the seasons. It doesn't stay the same very long. But, did you know creation is stifled because of the curse? When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God cursed the earth. So, what we see in all its beauty, is actually not as beautiful as it was originally intended.

**SCRIPTURE:** Romans 8:19-22 <sup>19</sup>*For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.* <sup>20</sup>*For the creation, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope* <sup>21</sup>*that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God,* <sup>22</sup>*We know that the whole creation has been in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*

**EXPLANATION:** So, we have a creation that is stifled and awaiting liberation by Christ's return someday. We cannot even imagine what liberating creation would look like.

**APPLICATION:** So, what does this mean to us? That same passage in Romans says our current sufferings are nothing compared to what will be and that our bodies groan in anticipation of a redeemed body.

In this fallen and decaying creation, something interesting happened. God entered his creation through the person of his son. And, when Jesus conquered death, a new order began. Here is the way one writer put it:

"In that Christ's dying and rising are past events, the new creation has erupted in the midst of a fallen creation, and the promised blessings of the new age are now being realized within the history of the church" (Robert W. Wall, *Colossians & Philemon*, pg. 72).

So, in the middle of decay, there is hope.

So my question is to you: Do you have a fallen outlook or a resurrection outlook?

**NEXT, [Paul told the people] CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH.**

**SCRIPTURE:** Colossians 1:18-20 <sup>18</sup> *And 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.* <sup>19</sup> *For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,* <sup>20</sup> *and 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.*

As head of the Church, he is King.

Verse 18: *He is the beginning.* We think of Jesus as having his beginning as a son of Mary, but he was around long before that. He wasn't around just before the beginning. He IS the beginning. We are caught in time. It is a mystery we cannot understand because we are held captive on this side of the beginning. Jesus existed before time.

Verse 18: *"he is the firstborn from among the dead."*

When the first man died, no one beat Jesus to heaven. He was already there. Again, it is a mystery we cannot fully understand. I am OK with the mystery of it all because I know the mystery-solver.

**SCRIPTURE:** Ephesians 1:4 <sup>4</sup> *For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight...*

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 Peter 1:20 <sup>20</sup> *He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.*

**EXPLANATION:** So, the work of Christ was already done before the world was formed. It only happened in human time later on.

Christ's death and resurrection started a whole new order of people to live in Christ, which is the main ingredient to abundant life and eternal life.

Notice the word “firstborn” is used in verses 15 and 18. Verse 15 talks about Christ as the firstborn of creation. Verse 18 talks about Christ as the firstborn from among the dead... Listen to this...These verses bring together God's creation and God's salvation under one Lordship. They are not separate. This will be completely demonstrated at Christ's return some day.

As the head of the Church, the Church exists for no other reason than to honor Christ and spread the news of his salvation. What we've done, though, as I see it, is we've taken the Church and the idea of the Church, and we've turned it into a business model. We see something happening at a church down the road, and we feel like we've just got to have it, or we've got to trump whatever exciting thing is going on at that church. What is my vision for the Church? To love people, to preach the Bible, and to tell people about Jesus.

Businesses created purpose statements and then churches felt like they needed to have purpose statements. Maybe there is merit in a church having a purpose statement to keep things from going in a thousand unrelated directions. But, in another sense, it's possible for a church to become so irrelevant the Church has to adopt a purpose statement so the community will know why it exists.

With Christ as the head of the Church, we learn that the Church is not a business. It has business-like elements, but the goal of a business is to have product and make money. The goal of the Church is to give it all away.

**APPLICATION:** People always want to know where a church is going. If we love people, preach the Bible, and tell people about Jesus, then we will never doubt where the Church is going.

We do not have to have gimmicks. We do not have to copy other churches' successes.

A healthy body naturally grows. To grow, a body must have proper nourishment, rest, and favorable circumstances. If a body becomes sick, it must have medicine or even surgery. The same is true with the Church.

As we grow, our ministries will reflect the needs of our people and community. Those needs may change, or they may stay the same.

**FURTHER EXPLANATION:** Now, in this day, the mission of the Church became confused by other false teachings of the day. There was a group of people who believed salvation came through knowledge and only a special few would have a mystical experience that would provide this knowledge. This evolved into a false teaching called Gnosticism.

They were also dealing with the worship of angels and rituals that had nothing to do with Christ. Paul addresses old Jewish laws, phony humility, and asceticism, which is a way of life where a person does without in order to have physical and spiritual health.

The believers in this young and inexperienced church were dealing with a lot, weren't they?

#### **Fourth, [Christ is not only the head of the Church] HE IS THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH.**

All the things that happened at Colossae were detractions from the mission of the Church. The Church can be the most powerful influence on the earth. At times, it has been. In parts of our world, it is today. The Church can also be a terrible hindrance the furthering of the Gospel. If people argue, backbite, stab, and persecute each other, then what good is the Church?

Christ is the hope of the Church because the Church is the hope of the world. Through the Church, Christ will use the cooperative effort of people devoted to him to share his message of hope with the nations. And, doesn't the world need hope? This week, I met some of our immigrants at the door as they came to citizenship class. Each one of them had a smile and the look of hope on their faces. While the language barrier is evident, the love barrier is not.

**APPLICATION:** If we are a people of hope, in a place of hope, with a Savior who gives hope, shouldn't we have a message of hope to everyone? The word Gospel

means "Good News," the message of the Gospel is joyful, and therefore, we should be joyful as we share this hope with others.

We must avoid false teachings and practices, which detract from the mission of the church.

**Last, [Paul told the people] CHRIST WAS LORD OVER THE COLOSSIANS.**

**SCRIPTURE:** Colossians 1:21-23 <sup>21</sup> *Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.* <sup>22</sup> *But 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—* <sup>23</sup> *if 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.*

**EXPLANATION:** Before they came to Christ, Paul says they were aliens and enemies because of their evil behavior. Well, what behavior made them such bad people? It doesn't matter because their sins were unforgiven. Once a person is forgiven, then that person is forgiven.

Now that they are in Christ, they are citizens and forgiven. Alien to citizen, unforgiven to forgiven. All because of Christ.

The Church was close to being caught in legalism, but Paul took them back to the basics.

**SCRIPTURE:** Colossians 2:13-15 <sup>13</sup> *When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,* <sup>14</sup> *having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us: he took it away, nailing it to the cross.* <sup>15</sup> *And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*

**CONCLUSION:** I hope today's message does not confuse you. I did not intend that, but I can see how it is possible. If you are confused, let me help you

understand: The apostle Paul wrote to a group of people who were confused. He told them Christ is all that matters.

Jesus paid the price for your sin on the cross. He died, was buried, and rose again. The Bible says that one day he'll return. People take this simple message and distort it a thousand ways.

You can receive forgiveness of your sin today.

**SCRIPTURE:** John 3:16 says, <sup>16</sup> *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

**SCRIPTURE:** Romans 3:23-24 says, <sup>23</sup> *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,* <sup>24</sup> *and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

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