

# The Hope of Glory:

An Exposition of Colossians

June 28, 2020

## Sermon 5: The Preeminence of Christ & the Hope of Glory

Colossians 1:15-20

**Opening Illustration:** O how I love thee, let me count the ways! —Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Imagine telling your wife that she is the greatest wife in the world. There is not one wife that is better than her out of all the wives in the world. She turns to you and asks, “What is that you love so much about me?” And you have NO answer for her. She may be touched and gracious to you about your inability to formulate your thoughts into words. On the other hand, she could be really hurt and think that you are just blowing smoke.

In fairness to our less than lyrical friends, sometimes we struggle to find the right way to express our delight in greatness. Sometimes we just look at something and marvel. In Colossians 1:15-20, this is not one of those times. Paul does not simply shout that Jesus is great, as awesome as that would be. Now, he seems to interrupt himself to simply sing the praises of this Jesus! In discussing the hope of glory, everything has led Paul to Jesus. Now, it seems as though he can hold it back no longer. He **MUST** **exclaim** and **explain** why Jesus is so great!

### I. Introduction

#### A. What are Christians about?

1. It is reasonable to assume that Christians are focused on Christ, hence the title, “Christians.”
2. The phrase, “You are too focused on Jesus” should be understood to be an utter impossibility for a Christian. There is no such thing as being too focused on Jesus.

### II. What is the main point of this message? Colossians 1:18c

#### A. Jesus is preeminent—*What does this mean?*

1. This means that Jesus is to be consistently first.
2. This means that Jesus is to be our constant focus.
3. In ALL things...all things.

**ILL:** It could be very dangerous to say what I just said. It may open me up to criticism or the vitriol of those who are distracted. Yet, the text says what it says so I must teach what the text says. As important as whatever other issue you can think about is, and it IS important, the gospel is more important. The truth of Jesus Christ is more important than anything else with which we may occupy our time and thought.

4. It is very important to point out at this point, that every point in the rest of this sermon simply says that Jesus is preeminent. Each point will express it in a slightly different way and with a slightly different flavor, but if you get this point, all you need to do is sit back and let the glory of this passage sweep over you.

### III. What makes Him so special? Colossians 1:15-20

#### A. He is the image of the invisible God v. 15a

1. What does this mean?
  - a. This means that everything Jesus is encapsulates and explains God for our weak and sinful minds.
    - 1) **John 14:8-9**
    - 2) **Hebrews 1:3** And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
    - 3) **John 1:18** No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.
  - b. This means that if you want to know anything about God...study Jesus!
2. What does this call us to?

- a. What do you do with an image? You look at it.

**ILL:** WWJD? Be very careful that it is actually Jesus you are looking at. So often we hear about what Jesus would do and it is really nothing more than the imagination of the one saying it. What would Jesus do? How would you know? How about focusing on what did Jesus do?

**B. He is the firstborn of all creation v. 15b**

1. What does this mean?
  - a. This does not mean that He was the first created being [Arianism, Gnosticism, etc]
  - b. This means that He is the most important, the foremost, the one who is the heir of the Father's blessing.

**ILL:** I am a middle child. Let me tell you, it's not easy being the middle child. There can be a lot of pent up frustrations growing up the middle child. It seems like the oldest gets all the credit and the responsibility and the youngest gets all the accolades and affection. Being the middle child can result in being overlooked. I even tried to bring it up once, but I couldn't get anyone to listen to me.

2. What does this call us to?
  - a. Celebrate your secondary standing!
    - 1) It is NOT all about me!

**C. He is the creator of and the reason for all things v. 16**

1. What does this mean?
  - a. This means that all things (yes, everything) is created by Him.
    - 1) **John 1:3** All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.
    - 2) **Hebrews 1:2** in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.
2. What does this call us to?
  - a. This calls us to marvel at Him.
  - b. This calls us to bow the knee to Him. Since He created us, He rules over us.

**D. He is the sustainer of all things v. 17**

1. What does this mean?
  - a. This means that the only reason why the tiny particles that form to create matter stick together is that Jesus is holding them together.
  - b. This means that the only reason why we can continue in this life and faith is that Jesus sustains us.
    - 1) **Psalm 54:4** Behold, God is my helper; The Lord is the sustainer of my soul.
2. What does this call us to?
  - a. This calls us to depend upon Him.
    - 1) **Psalm 55:22** Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.
  - b. This calls us to submit to Him.

**E. He is the head of the church v. 18a**

1. What does this mean?
  - a. This means that all other authorities in the church bow to Christ as the ultimate authority.
  - b. This means that the church is metaphorically called His body.
  - c. It's all about Jesus.

**Point:** Let me ask you a question, and please don't shout out your answer. Why do you come to church? What is the draw? Now, there may be many reasons to come to church that are good, but one reason should outshine them all. Jesus. One reason must outshine them all or else everything else falters. You must understand and celebrate the fact that the church is supposed to be all about Jesus.

2. What does this call us to?

- a. I want to call you...to challenge you, Calvary Bible Church to be (to continue to be or to become) a church that is all about Jesus.

**F. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead v. 18b**

1. What does this mean?
  - a. Again, firstborn doesn't mean that He was the first person to ever rise from the grave.
    - 1) Example: Lazarus (John 11)
  - b. This means that Jesus is the preeminent one among all those who will rise from the dead.
2. What does this call us to?
  - a. Put your hope completely on His wonderful, sacrificial death.

**G. He is the embodiment of the divine fullness v. 19**

1. What does this mean?
  - a. This means that if you want to know anything about God...study Jesus!
    - 1) Compare **Colossians 2:9** For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,
    - 2) Others?
2. What does this call us to?
  - a. This calls us to worship Jesus.
    - 1) He is not simply a teacher to learn from.
    - 2) He is not simply a revolutionary to stir us to action.
    - 3) He is God.
      - i. **John 20:28-29** Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."

**H. He is the reconciler of all things v. 20**

1. What does this mean?
  - a. This means that Jesus is the means of reconciliation for all things.
    - 1) In other words, if anything is to be reconciled to God and returned to its original purpose, that must be accomplished through Jesus.
  - b. This means that the work of Christ not also saves sinners, but reverses the effects of the Fall and will return the universe to its original intent and purpose.
    - 1) **Romans 8:19-22**

**IV. Conclusion**

**A. There is only one reasonable response to this message.**

1. I cannot make you love Jesus. I can't. I wish that I could, but I can't.
  - a. All I can do is:
    - 1) Tell you that you should love Jesus.
    - 2) Tell you why you should love Jesus.
    - 3) Leave it up to you.

**ILL:** Yesterday I went to a restaurant I had never been to before. Looking at the menu, I saw lots of things that I knew I would like, and I am not normally a big risk taker. However, on the recommendation of a friend (on Facebook) I tried something that I have never tried and it was DELICIOUS! My point here is simple. The only way to know the great glories of Jesus is to come to Him as He is and experience the greatness of His glory for yourself.

2. The only reasonable response to this message is to marvel at the absolute wonder of Jesus.
  - a. That's what Paul is doing here.

