

SUNDAY, MARCH 29, 2020

THE **LIFE**
HE LIVED

THE **DEATH**
HE DIED

THE **GIFT**
HE GIVES

THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST | COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

We all have our vision of the good life. For most of us it involves meeting the right person, a storybook wedding, landing our dream job, a lovely house in the suburbs, a few overachieving kids, a lot of really cool toys, epic adventures on the weekend and maybe a vibrant church family to drop in on from time to time.

It appears the Colossians had their own vision of the good life. For them, the good life evidently involved placating the spiritual powers that controlled their destinies. If the gods were smiling on you, or at least ignoring you, everything would fall into place. Some of them had come to know Jesus, but they tended to view him as one spiritual power among many. It was great to be devoted to Christ, but not to the exclusion of all the other spiritual forces that were at work in the world.

Weird. But we have more in common than you might think. We both tend to see Jesus as one among many. For them, he was one force among many. For us, he is one component of our vision of the good life.

We all need a fresh vision of the supremacy of Christ.

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THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST IN CREATION (vv. 15-17)

VERSES 15-17 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

1. In the ancient world, every god had its image, and every image had its temple. The God of the Hebrews was the rare exception. His image would be most clearly seen in the crown of his creation—humanity. As it turns out, we were poor image-bearers. There is one, however, who is a perfect reflection of the Father—His Son.
 - a. Why are we poor image-bearers?
 - b. What makes Christ, the ideal image bearer?
 - c. What do we observe in Christ that enables us to see the Father far more clearly?
2. In Colossians 3, Paul tells us, “you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator (vv. 9-10).”
 - a. What has Christ done (and what is he continuing to do) to restore the image of God in us?
 - b. What will we look like when the image is fully restored?
 - c. What is our role in the process?
3. How does Paul describe the Son’s relationship to creation?
4. Why is it essential for us to remember that the Son created all things, that everything was created for him, and that he holds everything together?

THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST IN THE NEW CREATION (vv. 18-21)

VERSES 18-21 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.

¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ 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.

1. One of Paul’s favorite metaphors for the church is the “body.” What makes it such a vibrant image of the church?
2. How does Paul describe Christ’s role in the church?
3. What do you think of when you think of “the head?”
4. How does Christ fill this role?
5. Firstborn can describe birth order—the first child (or son) born into a family, but it came to mean so much more. The firstborn was the one who would inherit all of his father’s wealth and rule over his household. A wealthy landowner could confer the status of firstborn on whomever he pleased—the third kid from the left or even a daughter. When Paul describes Christ as “the firstborn from among the dead,” he is saying far more than Christ was the first one to experience the final resurrection, which of course, he was. He is telling us that Christ is preeminent in life and death. Paul seems to imply that the resurrection is a defining characteristic of both Christ and his church. Why do you think this is true?
6. In verse 19, Paul tells us, “God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in [Christ]. In Colossians 2, he takes things a step further. He tells us, “in Christ, you have been brought to fullness.”
 - a. What does Paul have in mind when he tells us, “God was pleased to have all of his fullness dwell in him?”
 - b. What does it mean for us to be brought to fullness in Christ?
 - c. Is that something that happens when we come to Christ, or sometime in the distant future or gradually along the way? This is a trick question, so take your time and think it through. Be prepared to share your answer.
 - d. How does God accomplish this?
7. What happens when we look for fullness apart from Christ?