

## Week of February 5, 2012

### *Christ – the Center of Everything*

#### Passage Outline

1. Why Beliefs Matter (Col. 1:9-12)
2. Who Christ Is (Col. 1:15-20)
3. What Christ Has Done (Col. 1:13-14,21-23)

#### What This Lesson Is About?

Seeing Christ for who He really is and then seeing everything else in light of that reality.

#### How This Lesson Can Impact Your Life?

We need to better understand who Christ is and what He has done so that we can stand in awe of Him, and bow in submission to His authority.

1. Why Beliefs Matter - Col. 1:9-12

#### Colossians 1:9-12

<sup>9</sup>For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. <sup>10</sup>And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, <sup>11</sup>being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully <sup>12</sup>giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

#### A. Background on the Book of Colossians:

- i. Colossae was a declining textile center in the Roman province of Asia (Today Asia Minor).
- ii. Epaphras, Paul's coworker, probably first preached the gospel in Colossae and established the church.
- iii. Paul did not know the Colossian believers personally (see 2:1), but he was concerned about them.
- iv. Paul wrote to the church to try to correct false teachings that denied Christ's centrality and sufficiency.
- v. False teachers reduced Christ to a partial revelation of God. Paul countered that all God's "fullness" resided in Christ (1:19).

#### B. Paul's prayers for the Colossians contained two major requests:

- i. Paul prayed that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will. To ***be filled*** means "be under the control of." ***Knowledge*** has the sense of personal acquaintance.
- ii. Paul then prayed that believers ***walk worthy of the Lord***. The term ***walk*** means "live" with the idea that Christians' lifestyles should reflect Christ's character and honor Him. We are to behave worthily or appropriately, pleasing Christ constantly as our goal. ***Pleasing*** implies being compliant or obedient. In the process, believers will produce good works. ***Every good work*** encompasses all facets and relationships of believers' lives.

## Growing in Faithfulness to Christ

God's strength produces three qualities necessary for Christian faithfulness to Christ. They are:

- Endurance which means "to remain under" in the sense of bearing up under a load, of persevering in the face of difficulty.
- Patience literally is "long-suffering." It has the sense of bearing with others, of not allowing their hurtful acts and words to produce bitterness.
- Joy basically is confident assurance of being held in God's grace no matter what transpires.

Each quality flows from a close relationship with God in which He brings His power into play.

Review the three qualities above and circle the one quality that most needs strengthening in your life. Ask God to help you draw closer to Him that He might cause your endurance, patience, or joy to be made stronger.

## 2. Who Christ Is - Col. 1:15-20

### Colossians 1:15-20

<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <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.

- A. To counter the false teaching in Colossae that Christ was merely one of many angelic powers, Paul asserted Christ's absolute supremacy.
- B. Far from being a partial revelation of God, Christ is Deity—Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer.
- C. False teachers maintained Christ alone could not save people; Paul countered that Christ is the sovereign, all-sufficient Lord.
- D. As God made visible in human flesh, Christ was the firstborn over all creation. *Firstborn* conveys the idea of a position of honor; it indicates preexistence and sovereignty.
- E. Contrary to being part of creation, Christ was separate from it and supreme over it. Paul uses three descriptors:
  - i. God the Father was creation's architect. God the Son designed **by Him** and brought everything into being.
  - ii. **Before Him** Christ was preexistence. At no point did He come into being; He was present before time began.
  - iii. **In Him** the whole created order is held together. Christ maintains the universe and gives it stability, harmony, and meaning.

- F. Christ is *Head of His body, the church*. Christ gives life to the church and directs it toward realizing His purpose.
- G. Christ is the *firstborn from the dead*. His resurrection from the dead demonstrated His preeminence— His having first place in everything.
- H. Christ’s death brings Peace, no more hostility between God and people, through the blood of His cross.
- I. Christ’s death on the cross was the pivotal point in both human and cosmic history.

### How is Christ the Center of Your Universe?

The Bible is very clear that Christ is supreme and the center of everything. How is Christ the center of your life? How and where is the supremacy of Christ in your life being played out in your day-to-day living?

This week write out, in 25 words or less, how important Jesus Christ is in your life. List also where Christ being the center of your life is making a real difference?

### 3. What Christ Has Done - Col. 1:13-14,21-23

#### Colossians 1:13-14, 21-23

<sup>13</sup> For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.... <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, not moved 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.

- A. God rescued believers from the *domain of darkness* and transferred them into the *kingdom of His Son*. Through Christ, believers were pulled out of the rule of darkness and death and were placed in the light of God’s love.
- B. In whom we have redemption meaning to liberate at a cost. Through Christ’s death on the cross, we, who were enslaved to sin, are set free.
- C. Christ makes possible the forgiveness of people’s sins. Sin literally means to “miss the mark.” Therefore, forgiveness “does away with all those bad marks.”
- D. Paul reminds the Colossians and us that we began our lives shut out of fellowship with God, *alienated* and *God’s enemies* by our own determined purpose.
- E. But now we are reconciled to (brought into relationship with) God because of Christ’s atoning death on the cross, not merely by His teaching or good example.
- F. Christ’s purpose was to present believers to God being:
  - i. Holy - separated or set aside for Christ’s service;
  - ii. Faultless - giving no basis for accusation;

iii. Blameless - morally pure, unblemished;

G. Christians not only are saved *from* something but also are saved *for* something, namely Christlike living. Christ saved us to live a different quality of life. He saved us to make us holy, so we are to live as the people He saved us to be.

H. The phrase, *if you continue in the faith*, recognizes the fact that we can deny our faith and reject Christ.

I. God is working on behalf of believers to persevere them in their faith of the Gospel. God wants believers to remain:

i. Grounded - resting on a firm foundation or stable;

ii. Steadfast - firm, or fixed;

iii. Unmoved - not shifted or swerved;

### Which Best Describes Your Faith? Why?



**The Costa Concordia**



**The Rock of Gibraltar**

### Biblical Truths in Focus

1. To understand and apply God's will serious Bible study is imperative.
2. Our conviction that Christ is Lord of the universe motivates us to trust Him with every aspect of our lives.
3. Because Christ gave His life to reconcile us to God, we can continue to grow and mature in our relationship with God.
4. Through faith in Christ, we are saved *from* enslavement to sin *for* living in ways that reflect His character.