

**Colossians 1:15-20 (New International Version 1984)****The Supremacy of Christ**

<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.

Good Morning My Sisters and Brothers in Christ! I greet you this morning in the name of God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit. I am grateful to be able to stand in this place and at this time. Grateful because I know it is not because of anything I have done, but rather ***it is and will always be*** His grace and mercy that has brought me through.

The past couple of weeks have been filled with news of the death of loved ones – a niece on Jesse’s side of the family lost her husband to cancer leaving her a two year old daughter to raise alone – two members of Friendship died; one the mother of a high school friend and another a high school friend. Death whether expected or unexpected; death after a long life or a short life; death leaves us thinking about our own death and our own life. I don’t know about you but it causes me to think about whether the life I am living in going to provide the life I wish to live with Christ. It is at those moments that I feel like praising God.

I want to praise Him for all He has done for me.

I want to praise Him for allowing me to serve you.

I want to praise Him for giving me a family that taught me about Him.

I want to praise Him for allowing me to be born in a country and at a time where I can praise Him whenever and wherever I wish to praise Him.

Sometimes I just need to stop and praise Him.

In January we studied Paul’s letter to the church at Philippi. This letter, which is called Paul’s joy letter was written not because there was anything wrong in the church. Rather it was written to remind the church of all they were doing right and to encourage them to continue on that path.

In January I challenged you with these themes: (if my note takers have their notes please feel free to join me)

**HOW CAN I HAVE JOY IN THE MIDST OF \_\_\_\_\_?**  
**HOW IS MY ATTITUDE IMPACTING MY ALTITUDE?**  
**WILL YOUR/MY LIFE MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR ANYONE ELSE?**  
**PERFECTION, PRESS, PAST, PURSUIT, PRIZE**

It was my hope that the themes would cause you to pause and reexamine the life you are living.

Everything needs to be reexamined at least once a year. You call in the appliance repair team to check the washer, the dryer, the stove and the refrigerator to make sure they are up to code; properly installed and doing what you bought them to do. You take the car in and ask them to do the 17-point diagnostic check; rotate the tires and change the oil and windshield wipers. You take in the computer for a cleaning, a hard drive check and make sure the warranty is still in effect. You even take your physical body for its annual check-up. (I pray that you do – my high school friend died because she had not been to a doctor, probably since high school – my niece's husband died because he had self diagnosis and self medicated his stomach ache which was actually cancer in the bile duct and he died shortly after the first doctor's visit.) But what about your spiritual body, when was the last time you stopped and gave it a check.

Is your spiritual body doing what you said it was going to do? Is your spiritual body running like you thought it was run? Is your spiritual body still under warranty with the One who issued? Is your spiritual body ready for recall? Ready to return to the original manufacture?

This morning we continue to study Paul's letters but this one is written to the church at Colosse. The scholars debate if Paul ever visited Colosse or preached at the church yet even without first hand knowledge Paul was concerned about them and the troubles he had been told they were having. The leader of the church had come to Paul while Paul was in prison in Rome and brought him good and bad news about the status of the church. The good news was the gospel had born fruit among the Colossians and they were continuing in the faith. The bad news was the Colossians were being troubled and possibly confused by a new teaching that was different from the gospel taught to them by their leader.

We are not told directly what this teaching entailed, but we can make some fairly good assumptions based on how Paul addressed this

misinformation:

1. The new teaching claimed a profound knowledge apart from Christ (Colossians 2:8),
2. an emphasis on following prescribed rituals (Colossians 2:16),
3. the worship of angels (Colossians 2:18),
4. and ascetic self-abasement (Colossians 2:18 & 20-23).

In other words, this new teaching said that knowing Christ, confessing Christ and serving Christ was not enough. Well, all of us in this room know that is not true. And perhaps we cannot even imagine how someone could be lead to believe it is true. Yet even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century there are those that will corrupt the gospel for their own benefit.

Goggle *Prosperity Gospel* and read some of the allegations against these mega churches. Allegations of misuse of church funds, allegations of sexual misconduct by the employees and the leaders and; allegations of cover-ups of abuse of children. One of the reasons that these things have happened and will continue to happen is because many of these leaders have attempted to make themselves the reason for the season. They have become so caught up in their own press that they use scripture to teach their congregations not to question them; not to bring in outside sources to monitor them and not even to take their concerns to the courts. Assuming absolute power means that these men and women have taught **those who will listen** that Christ is not enough. Instead you need to "pick-up your cross", so to speak and follow them.

The problem with is not with Prosperity Gospel, Jehovah Witnesses, Mormons or any other religion that starts with the Bible and moves to another place, the problem is really with people who called themselves Christians, declared that have been saved, sanctified and set aside not knowing what they say they believe and not even knowing how to look it up.

It is to people just like us that Paul writes his letter from a Roman prison. Beginning with verse 14 and concluding with verse 20 Paul provides 15 reasons for following Jesus and Jesus alone.

Stay with me for just a few more minutes as I present this theme:

**15 FACTS THAT WILL NOT CHANGE**  
**COLOSSIANS 1: 14-20**

1. Verse 14: In him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
2. Verse 15a: He is the image of the invisible God.
3. Verse 15b: He is the firstborn of all creation—that is, the specially honored, first and only Son over all creation.
4. Verse 16a: By him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities.
5. Verse 16b: All things were created *through* him.
6. Verse 16c: All things were created *for* him.
7. Verse 17a: He is before all things.
8. Verse 17b: In him all things hold together.
9. Verse 18a: He is the head of the body, the church.
10. Verse 18b: He is the beginning.
11. Verse 18c: He is the firstborn from the dead.
12. Verse 18d: In everything he is supreme.
13. Verse 19: In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.
14. Verse 20a: He reconciles all things to himself, whether on earth or in heaven.
15. Verse 20b: He makes peace by the blood of his cross.

If we were able to hold on to these 15 things we would not be able to moved from following Jesus the Christ. For these 15 things are only true of God as manifested in His Son.

It is because these things are true only of the Son of the Living God do we have a reason to praise Him.

