



WEEK TWO

COLOSSIANS:



JESUS at the
CENTRE

..... of Our “Lives”

Whitehill Church of Christ

July - Sept 2016

JESUS- The Centre of our Lives

Whitehill Church of Christ

Pastor Darryl Seip

Sunday 7th August 2016

Sermon Notes



[21] Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. [22] 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--

[23] 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.

[24] Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

Colossians 1:21-24 (New International Version)

A “MAP” of HOW THINGS WERE at Colossae.

1. WHERE THEY WERE: Alienation

28 Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done.

Romans 1:19-20 (New Living Translation)

Be assured that from the first day we heard of you, we haven't stopped praying for you, asking God to give you wise minds and spirits attuned to his will, and so acquire a thorough understanding of the ways in which God works. [10] We pray that you'll live well for the Master,

Colossians 1:9-10 (The Message)

2. WHERE THEY ARE: Reconciliation

24 “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

1 Peter 2:24 (New International Version)

Satan Knows your name but he calls you by your sin.

GOD knows your sin but he calls you by your name.

3. WHERE THEY ARE AIMING : Continuation

Becoming a Christian can't be a one-off experience which then remains just as a memory of a wonderful moment. It must be something which continues day by day. Without that “keeping firmly on,” even the original experience may seem remote and strange. You may start to question whether it was “real” or not in the first place. But if you “continue” you will know it is, because as the building grows and takes shape it will show by its stability that the foundations are indeed there, and are solid.

N.T Wright

Where are you on the map?

Where do you need to be?

How can you get there?



BIBLE STUDY NOTES

(Home or Personal)

Discussion Starter:

Have you ever been lost following directions or a map or even a GPS?

What happened? Where did you end up? How did you get back to where you needed to go?

Bible Study.

Read Colossians 1:21-24

Go through the Sermon Notes once again.

Which parts stood out for you the most?

BIBLE

Read EPHESIANS 4:17–19 and ROMANS 1:21–24 and compare them with what Paul writes about in Colossians 1:21.

How are those verses similar?

What is the difference between giving up on people and God giving them over to their ideas and behaviours? What does giving over mean? Why does God give people over ?

What are some examples of the ideas, beliefs or doctrines that people come up with when they leave God out of the equation?

There was a group called the Gnostics in New Testament times that believed that while there was a “person” called Jesus he was actually only a spirit. They believed that he didn’t suffer pain, he didn’t cast a shadow or leave footprints when he was on Earth.

Why is it important that people like Peter in 1 Peter 2:24 and Paul in Colossians 1:22 address this idea and make sure that we all know that Jesus actually suffered in His physical body?



Read verse 22 again.

It is a wonderful promise that one of the effects of Jesus death is to reconcile us to God and enable us to come before Him free of any accusations from the evil one. How does this make you feel?

Read Revelation 12:9-10. Without getting too distracted on times and dates of Endtimes, take note of this scene that John describes. What does he say is the role that Satan has. What does he do all day and night?

What has happened to him (or will happen to him) ?

If this is true why do so many people not feel free of accusations? Why do they feel guilty and not embrace this wonderful truth? Why do some people not seem to care about this?

Read verse 23 again. Why is continuation so hard? What sort of things distract people from continuing in their faith and building on the foundation?

How does the truth about Jesus that is outlined earlier in the letter address this issue of continuing in faith?

PERSONAL:

Describe your journey or faith story. What path have you taken to get where you are today? Describe ups and downs and maybe some significant moments along the way in your faith map.

What are things that have distracted you along the way?

What have been some foundational moments or what have been your greatest spiritual growth events?

Why is it so difficult for some people to be able to understand that God has “A Better Story” for their lives than the path that they may be currently on?

PRAY

Continue to pray for each other the way Paul prayed for the Colossian Christians.

Jesus at the Centre ... of Our Lives

Day 1

Colossians 1:11-13 (NIV)

...being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully [12] giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. [13] For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.

QUALIFIED

A few years ago we took our family to Melbourne and we had a day at Luna Park. The kids didn't seem to mind that the temperature only got to 9 degrees. Not being a big fan of roller coasters, I had a fun day observing the kids and others on the rides.

On many rides there was a minimum height restriction. All ride operators had a metal pole with a cross piece like an upside down "L" shape. When a shorter child approached the ride, the attendants would place this rod on the ground and see if the child's head was over or under the cross piece.

It was an amusing sight to see kids who were just on the limit, trying to look taller. They stuck their heads back, stood up straight, spiked their hair – anything they could do to pull themselves up reach the standard height. For a bit of fun, sometimes the operators, would ask the kids to blow themselves up with their thumb to see if they could get taller.

When Paul writes to the Colossian Christian he says that they had been qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints. What does that mean?

All the conditions necessary to be included in God's family had been met. Every restriction that stops us being an heir of God's and joint heir with Christ has been overcome. But it wasn't by us blowing ourselves up by our thumbs or somehow trying to live better lives. This has been achieved by what Jesus did on the cross. We didn't reach qualification standard - He has qualified us.....(vs12) Our sins are forgiven.

We have been rescued. (vs 13) Being saved and becoming a part of the family of God is a liberation mission. We don't climb out of the darkness, we are delivered from it. Jesus made the qualifications necessary for us to be rescued, received and restored. We didn't have it within our capacity to do it ourselves. Jesus did it for us and by placing our faith in who He is and what He did, nothing stands in our way.

Jesus gets (or should get) all the thanks and glory. What He did, qualifies and rescues us. From this time on our past is forgiven and forgotten and we only have the future ahead of us yet to be written.



What did you hear?

What did you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God

Jesus at the Centre ... of Our Lives

Day 2

Colossians 1:15-17 (NIV)

[15] He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. [16] 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. [17] He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

SUPREME

We don't know exactly what the wrong belief was that the Colossian Christian had been exposed to. Bible commentators put forward various theories. What Paul does to address it, is not concentrate on it directly but to simply reinforce the sufficiency and supremacy of Jesus Christ. Once they (and we) grasp the implications on this it will protect them from any error.

Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God. Other faiths that claim to speak for God actually misrepresent Him. Only Jesus represents God.

We can't see God because He is Spirit. We need some sort of physical manifestation of God to help us to relate and get our minds around Him.

What a statement when Paul says that everything was created for Him and by Him. Just reflect on these words. What does that mean? If that is true then everything is meant to work His way. When it does, it works effectively. When it doesn't it is ultimately destructive.

The ways of Jesus Christ are written into the very fabric of Creation itself. We are created for Christ and by Christ. His mark is in everything and on everything. Right down to the basic building blocks of our cells.

Louis Giglio in a DVD presentation talks about a molecule called laminin. A Laminin is defined by the Webster Medical Dictionary as a "glycoprotein that is a component of connective tissue basement membrane and that promotes cell adhesion." In other words, a laminin is a kind of glue for the cells of the body.

In their book *The Laminins* authors Peter Eltblom and Rupert Timpl go into more detail about both the importance of laminins and their structure. They describe laminins that, together with other proteins, "hold cells and tissues together." They also say, "Electron microscopy reveals a cross-like shape for all laminins investigated so far." (Ask for the DVD if you are interested in finding out more.)

This doesn't prove the existence of God. But I wonder if this is no accident that down to the very core of our being physically as well as spiritually, Christ (symbolized by the cross) holds all things together (vs17).



What did you hear?

What did you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God

Jesus at the Centre ... of Our Lives

Day 3

Colossians 1:15-16 (NLT)

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before God made anything at all and is supreme over all creation. [16] Christ is the one through whom God created everything in heaven and earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—kings, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities. Everything has been created through him and for him.

SEEING THE FATHER IN THE SON

A few weeks ago I met a guy I had grown up with in Toowoomba. We had both changed a bit in 30+ years. Both of us had put on a bit of weight, lost a bit of hair and gone a bit greyer. He said that when he looked at me he could see my father. I thought the same of him and his father.

In this passage Paul says the same about Jesus and His Heavenly Father.

No one has ever seen God. But God actually isn't just shy. Let's not get the idea that he just hasn't been seen because He's hiding. He is not able to be seen. He is invisible. Here in Colossians 1:15 He is called the invisible God.

The Bible says that to a certain extent, the qualities of God can be seen in Creation. Read Romans 1:20. The visible creation reveals an invisible Creator. But looking at a wonderful sunset, mountain scene or beach setting as great as that may be, is not the same as looking at God Himself.

In Jesus lies the only hope for us to see God. When Philip wanted to see God, Jesus said looking at Him was enough. Read John 14:8-9. This is Paul's point here. Jesus is the spitting image of His Father.

Jesus is everything His Father is except for being the Father. Every virtue, every characteristic, every power all glory and fullness of God is in Him. He is a perfect and exact representation visually of a God who cannot be seen.

This stamps the uniqueness of Jesus. No one else can have those claims made about them. Or if they do they are made to look ridiculous. Jesus backed it up with the things he said and did.

Jesus is supreme. He is utterly unique and distinguished from the rest of creation by the way He was before it all, and the way He was instrumental in it coming into being.

This is our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He is the Centrepiece of Creation. Is He at the centre of your life?



What did you hear?

What did you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God

Jesus at the Centre ... of Our Lives

Day 4

Colossians 1:16-18 (NASB)

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him. [17] And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. [18] He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

HEAD OF THE CHURCH

Colossians and Ephesians have similar themes running through the letters to the churches. Ephesians is strongly about the importance of the church. Colossians is one of the clearest statements about the importance of Christ. Ephesians is about the Body of Christ - the Church. Colossians is about the Head of the Church – Christ.

Paul shows us here that Christ is not only the Head of Creation but Head of the Church. The Church, worldwide and spanning 2000 years must be one of the greatest accomplishments that God made.

God shows its importance by putting Christ at the head. Big organizations often have prominent people at the head, running it and making decisions for the whole company. Christ is the Head of the Church.

Sometimes there are sad stories in businesses where a Head or CEO has been involved in illegal activities that cause the company to go bankrupt. Usually the shareholders and workers have no idea what is going on. It is all the fault of the CEO's and they don't usually come out financially worse off!

In the church the opposite is usually true. The Head is trying to get the body to do what He wants but the Body has no idea what the Head is wanting. It is all the fault of the Body. Too often the Church has lost the close connection and coordination that is meant to come from the Head.

Unfortunately, sometimes in the church we operate in a way that makes Jesus head of the church like the Queen is Head of State in Australia. Even though she is, it is only in name, and in daily operations of the country, the Queen has very little say or knowledge.

May that not be the case with us and Christ in the Church. Christ is the Head of THE Church. Lets allow Him to be THE head of our Whitehill church. Let it be about Him and for Him.

May our life and priorities leave no room for doubt that we want Jesus to be first in all things (vs 18) May our lives be governed in such a way that everyone knows that Jesus is Lord.



What did you hear?

What did you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God

Jesus at the Centre ... of Our Lives

Day 5

Colossians 1:19-23 (CEV)

[19] God himself was pleased to live fully in his Son. [20] And God was pleased for him to make peace by sacrificing his blood on the cross, so that all beings in heaven and on earth would be brought back to God. [21] You used to be far from God. Your thoughts made you his enemies, and you did evil things. [22] But his Son became a human and died. So God made peace with you, and now he lets you stand in his presence as people who are holy and faultless and innocent.

GOD WAS PLEASED

Where do you feel fully at home? In your own house? At a friend's place? There are some places where we go regularly that make us feel like we belong there. Even if friends don't see each other on a regular basis, sometimes a friendship can be so natural that it is easy to relax, there is no conflict and everyone can be themselves.

Note verse 19 here where Paul says that God was pleased to dwell in Christ. God dwells in every Christian. That is one of the great promises of the Bible. But as Earl Stanley Jones says, Sometimes He must dwell sufferingly. We give Him a great deal of pain.

The things we get up to, the priorities we accept must cause God grief sometimes. There must be internal conflict in Him when He sees some of our bad choices. Sure we give Him pleasure at times too. But it must be a mixed experience for God to live in us.

But in Jesus, God dwells without any pain. God is most at home in Jesus. He is pleased, thrilled even to have all His fullness in Him. Sometimes we may act as if we are God. We tend to think life revolves around us.

But in Jesus, Divinity is part of his essence. In Him, the supernatural is natural. When we think of the perfectly sinless life of Jesus, no wonder the heavens opened at His Baptism and God declared "This is my Son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased" (See Matthew 3:17)

Paul also reminds us here that it is Jesus who took on the task of reconciling people to Himself. When Christ died on the cross He took on the curse of sin. The cross makes peace possible in every corner of the universe and in every dark corner of our hearts. Christ makes it possible for harmony to be introduced back into our lives and our world. Sin took it away. Christ has brought it back.



What did you hear?

What did you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God



Changing



with Jesus



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