

The Real Truth About Jesus

by Harrison Conley

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If you got your Bible, Colossians 1. Colossians 1. In the world that we are currently living in, what we're going to talk about and discuss today is probably the most important truth that our hearts can grab ahold of. That truth is this, that in all things, Jesus is supreme, and He is sufficient.

Like I said, we're going to pick up right where Pastor Kenneth left off. We got through verse 14 last week. We're going to start Colossians 1:15 today. And if all goes according to plan, we're going to make it all the way through verse number 20. But before we read, let me just sort of set the scene. If you were here last week, this will be a bit of a review, but Colossians is actually a letter, and it was written by the apostle Paul.

He was imprisoned in Rome, and he writes to this group of believers that are living in a city called Colossi. And the reason that Paul is writing is because word has come to him that false doctrines had begun to seep their way into the Church. Specifically, this false idea of religious pluralism. Meaning that instead of there being one truth or one foundation that's definitive for everybody, everybody just got to bring their own truth to the table.

Reminds me of the world we live in today. Where everybody's got their own truth, here's the problem with that, and it's a really big problem, especially in the church because when everybody has got their own truth, what it does is it dilutes, it diminishes, and it corrupts the actual truth. Specifically, the truth about who Jesus is and what He does. Now, diluting the truth is one of the greatest ploys of the enemy.

You see the devil, he deceives people into believing that they have to have their own truth. That their own truth really matters instead of actually embracing the real truth. Because the devil knows that if he can deceive you into having your own truth, you won't have the real truth. Because the real truth actually brings you freedom. Do you remember what Jesus said? He said, "You'll know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

Paul writes this letter to the Colossians in order to establish once and for all the real truth. To establish for them the definitive truth that each of us needs to build our lives upon. And that truth is this, that Jesus is supreme overall, and that He's sufficient for all. Now again, keep in mind Paul wrote this letter some 2,000 years ago, yet it's so relevant in our world today. The truth about who Jesus is, it's still under attack. You don't need me to tell you, you know. Culture is working overtime to corrupt the truth about who Jesus is.

Look at the educational system, look at the government, the entertainment sphere, cults, and other world religions. They're all at work undermining, degrading, and diminishing the supremacy and the sufficiency of Jesus. Well, don't get me wrong, they're fine with Jesus as long as He's just a man. As long as He's just a good teacher, as long as He's just a spiritual guru or advisor. But the moment He becomes more than that, the moment Jesus becomes the Son of God, the moment He becomes the divine authority that we are to build our lives upon,

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that's when all hell begins to break loose. But this shouldn't take us by surprise, right? It's nothing new.

Go back to the beginning. Go back to the garden. Go back to creation, Adam and Eve. The devil has always, and will always, call into question and try to bring deception and confusion to the truth of who God is, what God has said, and what God has done. This is why it's essential for us, as the Church, that we are rooted and grounded in the truth of who Jesus is. Can I just say this? Jesus is not who you think He is. Jesus is who He says that He is.

The reason we're diving into these verses today is because we need to be rooted and grounded in the truth of who Jesus says that He is. The verses, we're going to read, 15 through 20, they are perhaps, and arguably, the most important doctrinal verses in all of Scripture. When it comes to Christology or Christology, the study of Christ, there are no greater passages. It's a bit like drinking from a fire hose. It's just so rich, and it's so deep. I know some people are like, "Well, it's the second weekend of a new year; I want my three points to be better by Wednesday. I want my life to be better this year." Yes, that's great. There are times and places for that. This is not that message.

This message is about the supremacy and the sufficiency of Christ. This message is about growing in our understanding and our knowledge of who He is and what He does. Hear me; what you think and believe about Jesus is the most important thing in your life. It's foundational. If you get this wrong, everything is wrong. Because what you believe about Jesus becomes the greatest filter through which you perceive and process your life.

The most important question that each and every one of us must answer is this, who is Jesus, and what does that mean for me? My prayer is that by the end of today, each of us will be able to answer that question once and for all. If you got your Bible, let's read Colossians 1, beginning in verse number 15. Again, the apostle Paul's writing, inspired by the Spirit of God. This is what he says, "He—" Now who is He? Who is he talking about? Well, we got to back up a couple of verses to find out. Verses 13-14 ESV,

¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He's talking about His Son. He's talking about Jesus. Verses 15-20 ESV,

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

These verses are so important. What we see is that Paul actually lays out six truths about Jesus. Six truths in six verses, and these truths they reveal to us who Jesus is and what He does. Here's the first truth that Paul says, "Jesus is God." This is foundational. We have to understand Jesus is God. Notice verse 15; at the very beginning, this is what he says. He says, "He, Jesus, is the image of the invisible God."

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Now that word image in the Greek is where we get our English word icon. Meaning “the exact likeness, the exact imprint, the exact representation of something.” Paul says that, “Jesus is the image, the icon of the invisible God.” Now there’s this sense that all of humanity is in the image of God. We are told in the Book of Genesis that we were created in God’s image.

What that means is that we represent Him. We are His ambassadors here on the earth. In the midst of darkness, we reflect His light. So in that sense, yes, we reflect God’s image, but Jesus, He’s different. You see, Jesus, He’s the exact reflection. He’s the exact representation of the invisible God. Now that’s a really important statement. “The invisible God.” And I want to just jump into that for a moment because Scripture tells us in 1 Timothy 1:17 that God the Father, He’s eternal, He’s immortal, and He’s invisible.

In John 4, Jesus would say of the Father that the Father, God, He is Spirit. Meaning you can’t see Him with your naked eyes. He’s Spirit, and those that would worship Him must worship Him also in spirit, and in truth. But here in Colossians, Paul says this about Jesus that, “Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God.” That, “He is the exact representation of who God is and what God is like.” Now this term invisible, it doesn’t only mean you can’t see it with your physical eyes. It also encapsulates the concept that God is unknowable, which makes this statement about Jesus so important. Because you see in Jesus, the unknowable God becomes known.

Now how is that possible? It’s only possible because Jesus is God. Jesus reveals God because He is God. He’s the second person of the Trinity. Remember, we serve a triune God, one God, three distinct persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And Jesus the Son, the second person of the Godhead, He put on flesh and blood, and He dwelt among us. We’ve just come out of the Christmas season. That’s what we were celebrating. The fact that the Creator stepped into His creation. That God, the Son, became a man in order to rescue men from their sins. And Jesus the Son, He’s the exact and perfect likeness and representation of the Father.

I really want you to capture this. This is really important. So let me maybe try and paint a picture for you. There’s this thing that’s been going on in my life. Call it a phenomenon. I don’t know how it happened. I don’t know when it happened. All I know is that it has happened. I have become my father.

When I consider that, it is scary for those around me. For example, I was filling out a Christmas card for one of our staff members. He’s a really good friend of mine. I love him dearly, and sort of to poke fun at him—it’s just one of the ways I show affection—I decided that instead of writing his Christmas card in English, I would write his Christmas card in Chinese. Just so he would have to get out Google Translate and translate it all.

But I don’t speak Chinese. So I had to text everything into Google Translate and then painstakingly copy all of the characters in the Chinese language. I hand it to my assistant, and she sees what I’ve done, and she laughs. I go, “Yes, it’s pretty funny.” She goes, “No, no, that’s not why I’m laughing.” I go, “Why are you laughing?” She goes, “Because your dad texts me in Chinese all the time.” I’m like, “You’ve got to be kidding me.”

A few months ago, I was fishing with my dad and with some of the guys on our staff and staying there on the river bank. I got my fly rod in the water, and out of the corner of my eye, I see this frog, pretty good-sized frog, come hopping by. I go, “I’m going to catch this thing.” I catch it and got it in my hand. And then, out of the corner of my other eye, I see Pastor Chris Fernandez, our children’s pastor. And he’s got his back to me, and I go, “Oh, this is perfect.”

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I walk over to him, and I pull his shirt back, and I drop that frog down the back of his neck, down his shirt. And he squirms, and he's upset. And he goes, "Man, your dad did the same thing to me five minutes ago."

You can't make this stuff up. I'm becoming my father. Obviously, we share genetics and traits, but we all know I'm not actually my father. It's just a portion, just a partial picture, but Jesus, He's different. He's not just like the Father. In John 10:30, Jesus actually said this, "That He and the Father, They're one." In other words, you want to know what God is like? You want to know what God thinks about humanity? You want to know how God treats humanity? Well, then, look no further than Jesus because He and the Father They're one.

This is the main truth that Paul wants to communicate as we jump into this section of verses. Number one, that Jesus is God. I'm reminded of John 1:18, where it says that "No one has ever seen God at any time but the only begotten Son. He has declared Him." Do you remember in John 14? The disciples come to Jesus, they make Philip the spokesperson, and they go, "Hey, Jesus, show us the Father."

Do you remember what Jesus said to them? "If you've seen the Father, you've seen Me. If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father." The writer of the Book of Hebrews, he would say it like this, "That Jesus is the express image and imprint of the Father. He is the exact likeness of His person and His nature." Again, the first truth that Paul says we have to acknowledge about Jesus is this, that Jesus can reveal God because He is God. He's the visible image of the invisible God.

Then Paul makes this really interesting statement. He says, "He's the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." Now, this is where things get a little bit wonky. This is where it could get a little bit confusing because we hear that term firstborn, and immediately, we think chronological order, right? We read it. We go, "Oh, Jesus, He must be the oldest born." We put ourselves in that place like, I've got two other siblings, and I am the firstborn. I'm the oldest of three.

Some religious cults will take this verse, and they'll twist it. And they'll say, "Well, see, He's the firstborn. That means Jesus is important, but He's the first creation of God. He had to be born. He had to be created. If that means He was created, He couldn't have had a beginning. If He had no beginning, then He certainly can't be God." That's not what this verse is saying. Paul is actually using a common expression of the day to convey this idea of rank or importance.

He's not talking about birth order. He's talking about Jesus' rank when it comes to supremacy. Let me give you a modern expression that we use all the time that maybe helps convey this message that Paul is saying. Let's say hypothetically, you own a clothing company, and you come to me, and you're telling me about it. I go, "Hey, that's awesome, that's great. What's your role within the company? What do you do?" You might say to me, "Well, I'm the quarterback of my company."

You say that, I'm not going to go to your office and look for footballs, and football pads, and a helmet, right? I know you're not actually a quarterback. You're actually talking about your rank and your role within the company. Or if I were to come to you and I was talking to you about a particular project we were working on, I say, "Hey, in this project, I'm going to run point." You're not going to go look for basketball shoes, a basketball court, and a basketball because, you know, I'm not saying I'm a point guard on a basketball team. But I'm revealing to you my rank and my role within that particular project.

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When Paul says of Jesus, “He’s the first point of creation,” it’s an expression of His rank and of His leadership. This is what Paul is communicating to the Church. Not that Jesus was the first created thing, but rather Jesus ranks first and foremost. That He’s supreme over all things. Listen to verse 15 out of the New Living Translation. It says this,

¹⁵ Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation.

That’s the second truth that we need to grab ahold of this morning. That Jesus, He is supreme. That He’s the highest, that there is nothing in all of creation that is near Him, beside Him, or above Him. In all things, He is the highest. He is supreme. Think about a supreme pizza. What makes it better than everything else? It’s because it’s got everything else and more. This is what Paul is conveying. That Jesus, number one, He’s God. And number two, He’s supreme in rank and authority.

He’s the firstborn of all creation. That’s not the first time we actually see this expression “firstborn” throughout the Scriptures. And it’s used in the same way; Exodus 4, we see God tell Moses, “Hey, go to Pharaoh and tell him that Israel is My firstborn.” Now, Israel, in this case, is not a person; it’s a nation. It wasn’t the first nation, and it certainly was not born. God’s not talking about chronological order. He’s talking about rank. He’s saying, “Hey, look, Israel is My special people. They’re My chosen people. Among the nations, Israel is preeminent.”

Psalms 89, we see the same thing. God says this, “I will make Him the Messiah, the Firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.” If you look at the lineage of Israel and their nation, there were multiple kings. Think about Saul, David, and Solomon. This is talking prophetically about Jesus the Messiah and that He’s highest. That He ranks first, He’s the firstborn. Again, let’s capture what Paul’s communicating. Number one, Jesus is God. Number two, He’s supreme. He’s preeminent in all things.

And just a sneak peek. If you jump into verse 17, you’ll see Paul write this, “That Jesus is before all things.” Again, just highlighting that His rank is number one. I think if we’re all honest, we get that. We understand that. I would even say that most of us believe that. Yet, in many cases, we don’t behave like He’s supreme. He might be supreme in our belief, but He’s not supreme in our behavior. He’s not supreme in our daily decisions. He’s not supreme when it comes to our highest form of obedience.

What does that mean for us? It means we need to give heed to what Paul’s writing here. That Jesus is not just supposed to be number one in the program, He’s supposed to be number one in our hearts as well. Because how often am I quick to say, “Yes, Jesus is Lord,” but then live with myself on the throne. Where I make decisions about relationships, and about actions, and finances based on what I want or what seems right to me. For some of us, if we’re honest, it’s not even ourselves that are on the throne of our lives. It’s our spouse, or it’s our kids or, it’s our career, and those are all good things. But we tend to give them more weight and give heed to what they have to say and what they want, rather than what Jesus says and what He wants.

As we step into a new year, may we be reminded that when it comes to our lives, when it comes to all things, Jesus’ place, His rank is first and foremost. He is supreme. Now, why is He supreme? Verse 16 ESV tells us, says, “For by all things, by Him all things,” and just pause it for a second. I would encourage you to take a pen and just underline how many times you see the

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word “all” throughout these six verses or “everything.” Paul is trying to communicate this very important message that Jesus is above all things. That there is not one thing that’s left out that Jesus is not above or in control of. All things.

¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

Here’s the third truth that we need to grab today, that Jesus is supreme because He’s Creator. He’s Creator. Genesis 1:1 ESV, we’re told,

¹ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Let’s put that up against Colossians 1:16. What we see here is that revealed to us, that the agent through which God created, was through the second person of the Trinity, the second person of the triune God, the Son, Jesus. He’s the agent, and He’s the source for all of creation. When God said, “Let there be light,” and the lights came on, that was Jesus. When God flung the stars into outer space, and bedecked the heavens, and then called them all by name, that was Jesus.

When the mountains and the seas were put in their place, and the firmament of the sky was established, that was Jesus. He’s eternally existent forever one with the Father and eternally supreme. That is who Jesus is. John 1:3 NKJV.

³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

Hear me. All of creation stands subordinate to its Creator. Jesus spoke, and creation came into being. Paul wants us to capture the power, and the majesty, the supremacy, and the grandeur of Jesus. He says, “For by Him, all things were created, in heaven, on earth, visible and invisible.” The things we can see and the things that we can’t see. Specifically, he’s talking about the spiritual realm be that thrones, dominions, rulers, or authorities.

Now, all of these are different titles that refer to the spiritual realm, a hierarchy of angelic, and demonic realms. Make no mistake, just because you can’t see these spiritual realms doesn’t mean that they don’t exist. They do exist. Hear me, Jesus is supreme Creator over them as well. Be it angels, be it demons, be it spirit beings of different types and different powers. They were all created by Christ. Now, some have rebelled against Him, but they all kneel in submission to Him. He created it all. Therefore, He is above it all.

The reason that Paul includes this spiritual realm, this angelic realm, within the text is for a couple of reasons. Twofold. Number one, he wants us to know that this is true. To understand that there is really a spiritual world taking place all around us. That there is this hierarchy of demons and angels that exist beyond what our natural eyes can perceive. He wants us to know with full assurance that Jesus, He’s supreme over it all. That’s reason number one. Reason number two, he’s taken direct aim at one of the false doctrines that had seeped into the church there in Colossae.

Remember I talked about how everyone was able to bring their “own truth” to the table? One of those “own truths” was this idea that angels are the mediators between God and man. That humanity should actually be worshipping angels. Paul writes this to go, “Hey. Hey, look, guys.

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You got this all wrong. Angels are not the main way or the means we can have communion with God.” He’s saying, “Look, worshiping angels, what you’re doing, you’re degrading Christ who is over them all. Christ is the only mediator between God and men.”

Again, all of creation, including the spirit realm, stands in submission to the supremacy and the authority of Jesus. He’s Creator. He’s the source. He’s above it all. Let’s keep reading. It says, “All things were created through Him and for Him.” Verse 17 ESV.

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

Now, that expression “before all things,” the picture that’s created in the original language, is that Jesus was there before there was ever a beginning. That Jesus, the Creator, He was there before there was anything. That all things have actually been created for His glory. That everyone and everything actually exists for Him.

Now, let’s apply that truth to our life for a moment. We can answer the age-old question, why am I here? Why do I exist? Paul says, “You’re here, and you exist for Jesus.” Someone goes, “What’s the point of life?” Jesus. Hear me, Church; you don’t exist for a job; you don’t exist for a spouse. Those things are great, they’re important, but ultimately, each, and every one of us, we exist for Jesus.

We’re here for Him, to worship Him, and to bring glory to Him. In everything we do, be it a job, be it a career, be it raising kids, the purpose of all of those things is to bring glory, and recognition, and worship to our Creator, King Jesus. He’s before all things. He created all things, and all things, ultimately, our heading back to Him.

Do you remember that time in the New Testament when the Pharisees are upset about Jesus’s teaching, and they’re questioning Him about how He said certain things? They say, “Hey, look, are You greater than our father Abraham, who’s dead? Are You greater than the prophets and what they taught, and now they’re dead?” Basically, they’re saying, “Jesus, who do You think You are”? Do you remember what He said to them? John 8:58 ESV, He said,

⁵⁸ “Before Abraham was, I am.”

Meaning, “I created him. I am Creator God. I caused the beginning to come into being. I am before all things. Guess what? I’ll be there at the end of all things.” If He’s there in the beginning, and if He’s there at the end, guess who’s in the middle? Jesus, He’s in the middle holding everything together.

One scholar said it like this, “Jesus is the one keeping the cosmos from being a chaos.” This is the fourth truth that Paul wants us to latch onto. That Jesus, He’s holding the universe together. I love that phrase, “In Him, all things hold together.” I don’t know about you. I read that. I hear that; it gets my imagination going. “In Him, all things hold together.” If, logically, Jesus were to cease, then everything would immediately cease.

All life, and all matter, it would cease to exist because He’s the one that’s there holding it all together. Can I take you down the rabbit hole for just a moment? Science and technology have progressed to this point, where we know that the building blocks of all matter, all existent matter are these things called atoms. We learn about this in elementary school. Atoms are made up of this nucleus, and there are protons and neutrons within the nucleus. There are these electrons

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that spin or orbit around the nucleus. Science doesn't know exactly why these electrons move around the nucleus. They just say it's caused by energy.

Forever, we thought atoms were the smallest thing in the universe. Now, we know there are actually subatomic parts that make up atoms. I wonder, does your brain hurt yet? Just wait. With this in mind, one of the more recent theories that's being put forth by physicists is this idea that they call string theory. Here's the dummy version because I need the dummies' dummy version of it. I took the same science class three times in high school. String theory says that the smallest part of everything is made up of vibrating waves of energy.

That if you could somehow magnify and be able to see with the naked eye these waves of energy, they would look like vibrating strings. Depending on the piece of matter, these strings, or these waves of energy, they vibrate at different speeds and in different shapes. Now, here's the thing that intrigues me, is that science doesn't know what gives these waves or these strings their energy. In other words, they don't know why they move or why they never slow down in speed.

Now, I'm no scientist, and certainly, I don't pretend to be. And the truth is I probably botched and made too simple the definition of string theory. But where science has yet to provide an answer as to what's powering these waves of energy, as to why they continue to move, and why they never slow down, where they failed to provide a reason, I might have a suggestion. Psalm 33:6,9 NKJV says this,

⁶ By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

⁹ For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.

Hebrews 1:3 ESV says this,

³ And he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

I would like to suggest that if, in fact, there are vibrating waves of energy at a subatomic level, the reason that they are there and the reason that they continue to move is because when God spoke creation into existence, the very sound waves of His breath caused those little things, those little waves of energy to move. And they continue to move because God's Word is eternal. Heaven and earth are going to pass away, but God's Word is going to stand the test of time. God's Word is supernatural. It's living. It's breathing, it's active and is never void of power. That little wave of energy's going to keep moving until Jesus says, "Stop moving."

I'm telling you, Jesus, the supreme Creator, He's holding the universe together by the Word of His power. Here's something for each of us to consider, if Jesus is truly holding the universe together at a subatomic level, then that same truth is true of you, of your life, of your family, of your business, of our nation, and of the world.

Hear me. He's holding it all together. He knows what He's doing. His hands are sure. His Word is eternal. Nothing is too difficult for Him. He is our refuge. He is our strength. He is our very near help in present times of trouble. Even if the earth were to give way and the mountains were to crumble into the sea, we have no reason to panic or be afraid. Why? Because the one who holds it all together has us in the palm of His hand.

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Paul is letting us know, number one, Jesus is God. Number two, He's supreme. Number three, He's Creator. Number four, He's holding the universe together. Then in verse 18 ESV, he says this,

¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

As we begin to wrap up this section of verses, here's the fifth truth that Paul says about Jesus is that Jesus has authority over His Church. Notice he calls Him "The head of the body, the Church." Now, throughout the New Testament, you read the other Pauline Epistles, Paul will refer to the Church in different ways, in different manners. He uses different pictures.

He refers to the Church as the bride of Christ. He talks about the Church as being the family of God. But here, he uses the analogy of a body to describe how the Church is supposed to operate and function, where believers come together. The Ekklesia, the Church, the called-out ones, we come together, and we all play different roles within the body. We function as different parts of the body.

Where you need me and what I bring to the table. And I need you and what you bring to the table. And if we were operating together and functioning properly, what happens is the body begins to grow. It's a beautiful, diverse body called the Church. But make no mistake, there's only one head to this body, and that's Jesus. He's the sustainer, and He's the bringer of life to His Church.

Even more than that, that term, that expression "head," it denotes His position of authority. He's got all authority when it comes to His Church. Why? Verse 18 tells us. Because He's the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. Now there's that expression "firstborn" again. In here, just like before, it's referring to rank and authority. It's not talking about chronological order.

Jesus was raised from the dead, but when you think about chronological order, He wasn't the first person raised from the dead. You go back in the Old Testament, Elijah raised people from the dead. Elisha raised people from the dead. Go into the New Testament, Jesus himself raised multiple people from the dead. You see the Apostle Paul raising someone from the dead as well. So this is not talking about chronological order.

Here's the thing, all those people that got raised back to life, they all eventually died again. Jesus, He's the firstborn from the dead because He will never die again. He was raised, and He lives forever more. Do you remember what He says in Revelation 1:17? Jesus says, "Look, don't be afraid. I'm the first and the last. I am He who lives and was dead." I love that expression. "I was dead, but I'm alive forevermore. I have the keys of Hades and death."

Jesus is saying, "Look, I got the keys to get you out of hell and Hades." Why? How? "Well, because I've got authority over death because I am alive forevermore." And now Jesus says, "I give that same eternal life to you, My Church." Listen, this is one of the key elements that separates the Church of Jesus apart from any other religion, it's because, through Jesus, we actually have an answer to humanity's greatest fear and question when it comes to what do we do with sin? What do we do with evil? What do we do with death?

Where the Church can go, "When it comes to sin, we look to Christ who took the sin of the world upon His own shoulders. He became our sin so we could become the righteousness of God. He took the punishment for our sins. He became our death." And when it comes to the question of

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death, and we go, “Hey, well, what happens after we die?” Well, we look to Christ, who was resurrected and now gives that eternal life to all that will call upon Him. He gives this life to His Church, and that’s why He has authority over the Church.

Listen, make no mistake, if you call Cottonwood home, this is not my church. It’s not Pastor Bayless’ church, not Pastor Kenneth’s, not Pastor Joel’s. No, no, no. We’re just stewards. There’s only one head.

There’s only one supreme authority, and that’s Jesus. And it’s His Church. He’s the only superstar. More than that, He’s the only star. If He’s head, and if He’s the authority, what that means is what He says goes. What His Word says, that’s the final authority. If we’re His body, if we’re His Church, if He’s the head, if He’s the one that’s in authority, then it’s His Word that is truth. And it’s His truth that sets the standard.

Hear me; we don’t get our own truths. Truth is not defined by what I feel. Truth is not defined by what I think. Truth is not defined by what doesn’t offend other people. As followers of Jesus, we don’t get the luxury of having our own truth. Because calling Jesus, Lord, means that I give up my right to independent living. We are no longer our own. Do you not know that you have been purchased not with the blood of bulls or goats but by the precious blood of Jesus?

It means He’s boss, and it means His Word is the final authority. So when it comes to truth, it’s His definition that matters. When it comes to truth, He’s the one that gets to set the parameters for what’s right and what’s wrong, what’s good and what’s evil. It’s no longer my truth, it’s His truth, and His truth shapes my world. Now, why else does Jesus have all authority in His Church? Verse 19 ESV tells us,

¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

Now that word fullness, it means “to lack nothing.” It actually means “to overflow.” In other words, there is nothing of God that’s not in Jesus, fully God, fully man. You’ll know this verse, John 1:14 NKJV,

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

So, Jesus, He’s fully God. Jesus, He’s supreme. He’s Creator. He’s holding the universe together. He’s the authority over His Church. Then lastly, Jesus, He’s Savior. This is where we close. Look at verse 20 ESV,

²⁰ And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

The keyword there is peace. You see, before the Son, before Jesus put on flesh, what had existed between God and man was not peace, but rather separation and enmity. In the Book of Ephesians, another letter written by the Apostle Paul, he would express very clearly humanity’s plight prior to Jesus. Let me read this to you, Ephesians 2; you’ll be familiar with these verses. Verses 1-3 ESV, he’s talking about us,

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¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

This was the state of humanity, dead in sins and in trespasses. We were following the course of the world, following the devil, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience. The Scripture says, “We were by nature children of wrath, rebelling against God and His Word.” Then verses 4-5 ESV,

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved.

When Paul writes Colossians 1, and he says, “That Christ has reconciled us to Himself and that He’s made peace through the blood of His cross,” this is what he’s talking about. Because of our sins, because of our trespasses, we had no claim to God, and there was no manmade agent that could procure peace between God and man.

There was no way to bridge the difference. There was no way to have reconciliation on our own. So God, in His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins and trespasses, He sent His Son Jesus. Jesus became a man in order to reconcile men unto Himself. This is why He’s called the prince of peace, because where there was separation, where there was enmity between God and man, Jesus comes. He’s the bridge, and He brings peace through His sacrificial death on a cross.

The innocent dying for the guilty, taking our punishment upon Himself and in so doing, settling once and for all God’s claims of eternal justice. He made peace through the blood of His cross. This morning, please understand, here is the real truth about Jesus. Not only is He God, not only is He supreme, not only is He a creator, not only is He holding the universe together, not only is He the head and the authority over His Church, but He’s also Savior. He’s the reconciler.

This morning, I started with a statement. More of a question, and it is one I said that all of us are going to have to answer. I want to pose that question to you once more. Who is Jesus to you? Who is Jesus to you? Is He Savior? Is He Lord? Who’s sitting on the throne of your life? Listen, a lot of us, we grew up in church. We’ve got a head full of ideas, a head full of knowledge about who Jesus is, but hear me. At some point that knowledge, that knowing needs to move from our head to our heart. Knowing a lot about Jesus is not going to save you from hell. Knowing a lot about Jesus is not going to rescue you from your sin. No. No, it’s experiencing Him. It’s putting Him on the throne of your life and allowing His grace and His mercy to change and transform you from the inside out.

Listen, He’s not King if He’s not on the throne. And you hear me say it all the time but we don’t get to pick and choose the things that He’s king over. The different areas of our lives where, “Yes, Jesus, I believe You’re King when it comes to how I should treat other people. And I believe You’re King when it comes to going to church. And I believe You’re King when it comes to this. But when it comes to the area of my sexuality, and when it comes to the area of my finances, and when it comes to the area of how I treat others, I’m going to do to what I—” That’s not salvation. That’s not the lordship of Jesus Christ. Again, He’s King of all or He is not King at all.

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But again, who is He to you? Is He Savior? Is He Lord? Is He boss? Is He the one that has plucked you from hell and given you a fresh start, set your feet on a solid rock? As the psalmist said, “He took me out of a miry clay. He drew me from deep waters, and He set my feet on a rock.” Is He your firm foundation? Is your life built upon Jesus? Jesus told that parable in the New Testament about those that build their house on the sand and then those that build their house on the rock. It’s a picture of our life.

If you build your house on the sand, when the wind, and the waves come, that life begins to crumble. But when your house is built upon the rock—which by the way, Jesus is the Rock of ages. When your life is built upon the Rock, when He is on the throne, when He’s Savior and boss, your life stands. That’s that eternal life that He’s come to give you. And if you don’t know Him in the way that the Apostle Paul would write and declare, “That I may know Him and be found in Him.” If you don’t know Him like that, if that knowledge hasn’t moved from your head to your heart, don’t leave today without settling that ever-important question. Who is Jesus to me?

Maybe just for a moment, if you wouldn’t mind just bowing your heads and closing your eyes. I want to give you just a moment of privacy, a moment to reflect, a moment to attune your heart and your ears to what the Holy Spirit might be saying to you right now. In just a moment, I want to pray over some people.

I want to pray for those that are making Jesus Lord of their life for the first time. Maybe you are in church today or you’re watching online and you’re under the sound of my voice and you’ve heard the Scriptures taught. And the Holy Spirit has taken my human words and divided them and made them real and relevant to your heart. And you know deep down on the inside that Jesus is not the one on the throne, but rather you’re on the throne of your own life.

Today you’re saying, “Hey, Harrison, I want to get up off that throne and I want to make Jesus Lord. I want to give Him His proper place. I want to make Him supreme in my life. I need Him to save me. I need Him to rescue me. If that’s you, I want to pray for you, but I want to know who I’m praying for. I’m going to just simply, with everybody’s heads bowed, and eyes closed, count to three. And when I get to three if you’d be so bold to lift a hand and maybe even look my way so I know who I’m praying for this morning.

Again, this is for those that have never called Jesus Lord. Those that are taking an introspective look at their life and they’re going, “Hey, I need to put Him on the throne. He’s going to become Savior today.” When I get to three, if that’s you, I want to know who I’m praying for. Would you lift a hand? 1, 2, 3 from the front to the back in every section. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I see those hands. Even all the way to the back, I see you. Go ahead and put them down. Again, I see them, but more importantly, God sees them.

Right now, from where you sit, from the privacy of your own heart, you need to start forming some words on your lips. The Bible says, “That if you will believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord. You’ll be saved. That’s how we come into this amazing relationship with God. It’s by believing in our heart and confessing with our mouth, Jesus’ lordship over our life. This morning I’m not going to give you words because the truth is you just need to form your own words. Words of dependence, words of sincerity, words that say,

“Jesus come be Lord of my life. I surrender to You. Forgive me for trying to do things on my own. Forgive me for sitting on the throne of my own life. Today I look to You. I look to Your Word. I believe that You died in my place. I believe that You were raised

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back from the dead and that You're alive forevermore. I believe that You can save me. Would You rescue me?"

If you'll pray a prayer like that, God will meet you where you sit. He'll cleanse you of your sin. He'll fill you with His Holy Spirit. He'll bring peace. Some of you, I know are troubled about the state of your soul. There's only one peace, and that's found in the person of Jesus. Even now, while I'm still talking, if you lifted a hand, why don't you begin to form words on your lips and begin to pray a prayer calling Jesus Lord of your life? As you do, I'm going to pray over you.

"Father, thank You for every life. Every person that's here represented today, You know their stories. You know their struggles. Nothing's hidden from Your eyes, and I thank You for Your amazing love with which You've loved us. Thank You that we don't have to wear spiritual cosmetics to make ourselves presentable before You. But we come as we are, and You embrace us. But You don't leave us as we are. You change us from the inside out. You conform us into the image of Your Son, Jesus. I thank You for the supernatural work You're doing right now. Applying salvation to people's lives by Your Holy Spirit. Jesus, today we declared that You are supreme, that You're God, that You're Lord, that You're above all things, that You're before all things. God, we ask that You would help us not to just say that we believe that but to live that thing out. That You would not just be supreme in our belief, but that You would be supreme when it comes to our behavior. So that we can go into our families, and we can go into our jobs, and we can go into the world around us, and we can reflect You, Jesus. So that others would come to know You. So that You would be glorified, that You would be worshiped in and through our lives, in Jesus' name."

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