

Colossians – Week 1 – The Preeminence of Jesus Christ – Bible Study Helps

Sermon Summary: This sermon introduces the book of Colossians, emphasizing the supremacy and preeminence of Jesus Christ. It highlights the importance of understanding and applying the teachings of Colossians to our lives today, particularly in light of current challenges to faith. The sermon stresses the necessity of sharing the Gospel, growing in spiritual understanding, and living lives that glorify God. It also touches on the historical context of Colosse and the relevance of Paul's letter to the modern church.

Key Points:

- Colossians emphasizes the preeminence of Jesus Christ as Creator and Sustainer of all things
- The letter addresses false teachings that are still prevalent today
- Believers should focus on knowing and applying God's Word to their lives
- The Gospel is spreading throughout the world, and Christians have a responsibility to share it
- Spiritual growth involves increasing in knowledge, wisdom, and fruitfulness in good works
- Our lives and church mission should be centered on glorifying God

Scripture Reference:

- Colossians 1:1-17 (primary focus)
- Acts 19:8-10 (for historical context)

Stories:

- An encounter with Mormon missionaries at the fair, using it to illustrate the importance of knowing and sharing the Bible
- A conversation with a young man named Mason, emphasizing the urgency of sharing the Gospel due to life's uncertainties
- Interactions at the fair with people questioning God's goodness in light of suffering, highlighting the need for compassionate evangelism

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Discipleship and Small Group Guide: The Preeminence of Jesus Christ (Colossians Overview)

Opening Prayer

Key Takeaways:

1. Colossians emphasizes the preeminence (superiority) of Jesus Christ in all things.
2. The book was written to address false teachings and affirm Christ's sufficiency.
3. The letter has relevance for our current time in church history.
4. Believers should prioritize knowing and living out God's Word.
5. The gospel is meant to be shared and should transform our lives.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean for Jesus to have "preeminence" in our lives? How can we practically give Him this place?
2. The sermon mentioned that Colossians addresses false teachings still prevalent today. What are some examples of modern beliefs or philosophies that contradict the sufficiency of Christ?
3. How has your understanding of the Bible's relevance and importance changed over time? What challenges do you face in prioritizing Bible study?
4. The sermon emphasized the importance of sharing our faith. What opportunities have you had recently to share the gospel? What holds you back from doing so more often?
5. Reflect on the prayer in Colossians 1:9-12. Which aspect of this prayer do you most need in your own spiritual life right now?
6. How does understanding Jesus as the Creator and sustainer of all things (Col. 1:16-17) impact your daily life and decisions?

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7. The sermon touched on the theme of Christian love. How can we better demonstrate love for "all the saints" in our local church and beyond?

Practical Applications:

1. Commit to reading through the book of Colossians this week, perhaps writing out key verses or insights.
2. Identify one area of your life where you need to give Jesus more "preeminence" and make a specific plan to do so.
3. Practice sharing your testimony with another group member, focusing on how your faith in Christ has changed you.
4. Choose one person in your life who doesn't know Christ and commit to praying for an opportunity to share the gospel with them this week.
5. Reflect on your own spiritual growth. Which aspect of the Colossians 1:9-12 prayer do you most need? Commit to praying this for yourself daily.

Closing Prayer:

Thank God for the truths revealed in Colossians. Ask for His help in applying these truths to your lives and for opportunities to share the gospel with others.

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Discipleship Questions

How does the concept of Jesus Christ's preeminence, as emphasized in Colossians, challenge or affirm your current understanding of His role in creation and in your personal life?

In what ways might modern society's emphasis on human self-sufficiency conflict with the message of Colossians, and how can believers navigate this tension?

How can we cultivate a faith that is 'heard and known' by others, as described in the sermon, without falling into performative religiosity?

What are some practical ways we can demonstrate love for 'all the saints' in our daily lives, especially towards those who may be different from us?

How does the hope 'laid up in heaven' influence your approach to earthly challenges and aspirations?

In what ways can we ensure that our learning and growth as believers comes from 'faithful ministers' like Epaphras, especially in an age of abundant information?

How can we balance the call to be 'fruitful in every good work' with the need for rest and avoiding burnout in our spiritual lives?

What does it mean to you personally to 'walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing,' and how might this look different in various aspects of your life?

How can we cultivate 'patience and longsuffering with joyfulness' in a culture that often values immediate gratification and quick results?

In light of the sermon's emphasis on the gospel 'making its way around the world,' how can we actively participate in this mission in our specific contexts and roles?

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Here's a 5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide

Day 1: The Preeminence of Christ

Reading: Colossians 1:15-20

Devotional: As we begin our journey through Colossians, we're immediately confronted with the magnificent truth of Christ's preeminence. Paul paints a breathtaking picture of Jesus as the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature, and the one in whom all things hold together. Reflect on the vastness of this truth - the Creator of the universe became a man to save us. How does this change your perspective on your daily challenges? Take time to worship Christ for His preeminence and thank Him for His sacrifice. Today, consciously acknowledge Christ's lordship over every aspect of your life.

Day 2: Faith, Love, and Hope

Reading: Colossians 1:3-8

Devotional: Paul commends the Colossians for their faith in Christ, their love for all God's people, and the hope stored up for them in heaven. These three virtues - faith, love, and hope - form the foundation of our Christian walk. Consider how these are manifesting in your own life. Is your faith growing stronger? Is your love for others increasing? Is your hope in Christ secure? Remember, true faith is not blind but has substance and evidence, as seen in changed lives. Today, look for opportunities to express your faith through loving actions, and let your eternal hope influence your earthly perspective.

Day 3: The Power of the Gospel

Reading: Colossians 1:21-23

Devotional: The gospel's transformative power is on full display in this passage. We were once alienated from God, but through Christ's death, we have been reconciled. This is not just theological truth, but a lived reality. Reflect on your own journey - how has the gospel changed you? Remember, this reconciliation is not just about personal salvation, but about being presented holy and blameless before God. Today, live in the light of this reconciliation. Let it shape your interactions with others, especially those who might be considered "alienated" in today's world.

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Day 4: Growing in Spiritual Understanding

Reading: Colossians 1:9-14

Devotional: Paul's prayer for the Colossians is a powerful guide for our own spiritual growth. He prays for them to be filled with the knowledge of God's will through wisdom and spiritual understanding. This isn't just about accumulating biblical knowledge, but about applying it to live a life worthy of the Lord. How are you growing in your understanding of God's will? Are you seeking His wisdom in your daily decisions? Today, make a conscious effort to apply God's wisdom to a specific situation in your life. Ask for His guidance and trust in His direction.

Day 5: Complete in Christ

Reading: Colossians 2:6-15

Devotional: In a world full of competing philosophies and spiritual practices, Paul's message is clear: we are complete in Christ. We don't need to add anything to what Christ has already accomplished. Reflect on areas in your life where you might be tempted to rely on your own efforts or worldly wisdom rather than resting in Christ's sufficiency. Are there any philosophies or vain deception that you've allowed to influence your thinking? Today, consciously reject any notion that Christ is not enough. Rest in the fullness of your identity in Him, and let that fuel your witness to others.