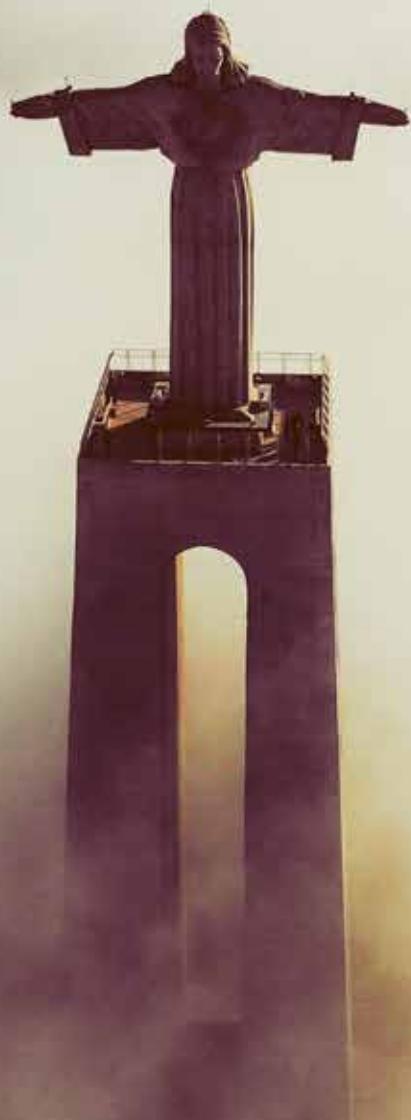


Session 2



Jesus Matters

THE POINT

*Jesus is God, and no one has done
what Jesus has done.*

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

I love to watch sports—mainly college football. I especially love watching the players grow and compete, leave it all on the field, and win or lose in front of thousands of their fans. One of the trends in recent years that I have watched with fascination is the use of John 3:16 on everything from players' eye black to shirts, shoes, socks, and signs held high in the end zone. Tim Tebow received a lot of attention when he started playing with John 3:16 prominently displayed on his eye black. He later shared, "It's pretty easy for me to say that the most important thing in my life is my relationship with Jesus Christ . . ."

In the last study, we learned that even though the world denies the existence of objective, absolute truth, God's Word is the truth that matters. In this lesson, we'll discover that Christ is the ultimate expression of God's Word to us, and that the truth found in Jesus matters because Jesus Himself matters.

QUESTION 1:

How can you tell what's most important to someone?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

COLOSSIANS 1:15–17

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through him and for him.

¹⁷ He is before all things, and by him all things hold together.

Have you ever asked, “What is truth?” (John 18:38) It’s the question Pilate asked Jesus two thousand years ago—a question people still ask today. Many who ask this question will acknowledge that truth resides in God, but many religions and philosophies have skewed precisely what that means. God’s Word is clear on this issue. “Long ago God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son. God has appointed him heir of all things and made the universe, through him.” (Hebrews 1:1–2) Jesus is both the representation and the manifestation of God, and He is also the perfect revelation of the truth of God to humanity.

God’s Word doesn’t give us a myth or tell us a fairytale about how the world came into being. It doesn’t tell us how some ancient gods created the world by killing other gods or created mountains, seas, and sky from parts of their bodies, like the ancient Scandinavians. It doesn’t try to have us believe that man was formed from a ball of maize—after failing to be able to do so with wood and mud—like the ancient Mayans. No, the Bible tells us the truth about how the world was created and who made it.

Paul said in Colossians 1:16 that Jesus created everything. John echoed Paul and put it this way in his Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created.” (John 1:1–3)

Did you grow up as I did in a house where your phone hung on the wall, and the receiver was connected to the phone on the wall by a long cord? Today, we don’t have phones on the wall; they’re now in our pockets and even on our wrists. Suppose you were walking down the street and found the first cell phone you’d ever seen, and it was on a park bench or just on the ground. At first, you might not have known what it was. You would’ve picked it up and figured out how to turn it on. Maybe it would’ve rung while in your hand, and you might have realized this was a phone—even though it wasn’t connected to the wall by a cord.

How did that phone get there? I’m not asking how it ended up on the bench or ground, but how did the cell phone come about? Did it just pop into existence one day? Was there an

explosion in a nearby factory that caused a bunch of electronic components to be thrown together, and suddenly, instantaneously, the cell phone came into being? Or you might think the opposite. Perhaps that cell phone began as a clump of iron ore that evolved over many thousands of years into the phone you found on that bench or ground. Sounds far-fetched, right?

If I came across a cell phone for the first time, I would conclude that somebody, somewhere, somehow, had created it. Its existence points to the fact that some thinking, creative, rational, powerful being had made it. It wouldn't just pop into being or evolve from a pile of minerals into a complex machine.

The same is true about the world and universe we live in. It exists. We see and experience it every day. We're part of it. And the very fact

that we're here in the world—with much more complexity than the latest smartphone—points to the reality that a thinking, creative, rational, powerful being caused it to come about. That's what we can see from observation. The revelation of God's Word tells us who that Creator is, of course, and His name is Jesus. Jesus is the Creator of all things.

QUESTION 2:

What captures your attention in this description of Jesus?

COLOSSIANS 1:18–20

¹⁸ He is also the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile everything to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Jesus isn't just the Creator of all things; as this early church hymn declares; He is the Ruler of all things. If you create something, it belongs to you, and you can do with it what you want. I had a friend when I was a boy who loved to build model cars. He would spend hours gluing, assembling, and painting model Mustangs, Corvettes, and so forth. Then, he would do the strangest thing. He would glue a giant bottle rocket to the car, light the fuse, and watch the car fly down his driveway before the firework exploded, sending hundreds of

painted plastic parts flying everywhere. He created it and could do what he wanted even if it didn't make sense to my young mind.

Through His creation, His life, death, and resurrection from the dead, Jesus is revealed to be the Ruler over everything. He's in charge of creation, and He's in charge of the Church. That's what Paul meant when he wrote that Jesus is the head of the Church and He has first place in everything. Some translations use the word "preeminence" here. That's a good way

of understanding what Paul is communicating because Jesus isn't just first in time ("beginning"); He's first in authority. He's in charge.

Have you ever been put in charge? Maybe you were in charge of the class while your teacher went to the office in elementary school. Perhaps you were the captain of your ball team or headed up a group at work. As humans, we can be put in charge, but we're still not in complete control as Jesus is. Jesus is the Ruler, Boss, and King of everything because He's God.

There have been different earthly kings throughout history who took on the title of "king of kings" to declare they were the most powerful and influential people anywhere. The ancient Persian king, Darius I, used that title, among others, to describe himself. He declared that he was the "great king, king of kings, king in Persia, king of the countries, Hystaspes's son, Arsames's grandson, an Achaemenid." His son, Xerxes I, liked the title so much that he used it too. Rulers in ancient India, Mesopotamia, and Greece, among others, claimed this title to declare to all that they were in charge of everybody and everything. However, this list reveals that they were only in charge of relatively small geographic areas during relatively short periods throughout history. Jesus, in contrast, is the true "King of kings," the Ruler over all creation and heaven too.

What does it mean for Jesus to be the Ruler of all things? I have a pastor friend named Nicholas in South Africa. He says that Jesus is "the Boss." What does that look like in the life of a Christian? It means that Jesus has the authority over every part of our lives, guiding our decisions and actions to align with His will. It also means that He is the central focus of our worship and devotion. By His resurrection, He gives us hope and purpose, shaping our life and future. And, as we follow Him, our choices and relationships are transformed to reflect His love, integrity, and character.

What does Jesus's preeminence mean for a world that rejects Him and refuses to accept His rule? It means that despite this rejection and refusal, Jesus still holds the ultimate authority over all creation, directs the course of history, and stands as the final judge of every person and nation. His continuous offering of grace through the unchanging truth of God's Word brings hope to a world in desperate need of redemption and reconciliation.

QUESTION 3:

What does it look like when Jesus has first place in someone's life?

COLOSSIANS 1:21–22

²¹ Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds as expressed in your evil actions.

²² But now he has reconciled you by his physical body through his death, to present you holy, faultless, and blameless before him—

Engage

FIRST PLACE IN EVERYTHING?

Colossians 1 calls us toward the truth that Jesus is to have “first place in everything,” which gives us the opportunity for self-evaluation.

Consider the following questions in light of your real life.

DOES JESUS TRULY HAVE FIRST PLACE IN...

... what I do with my time?

NO ————— RARELY ————— SOMETIMES ————— OFTEN ————— YES

... what I do in my relationships?

NO ————— RARELY ————— SOMETIMES ————— OFTEN ————— YES

... what I do with my body?

NO ————— RARELY ————— SOMETIMES ————— OFTEN ————— YES

... how I spend my money?

NO ————— RARELY ————— SOMETIMES ————— OFTEN ————— YES

... whether or not I speak up for Him to lost people around me?

NO ————— RARELY ————— SOMETIMES ————— OFTEN ————— YES

... how I conduct myself in my daily work?

NO ————— RARELY ————— SOMETIMES ————— OFTEN ————— YES

... how I deal with my fears and anxieties?

NO ————— RARELY ————— SOMETIMES ————— OFTEN ————— YES

... the way I relate to the authorities in my life?

NO ————— RARELY ————— SOMETIMES ————— OFTEN ————— YES

The Bible says that before someone comes to faith in Christ, they are at war with God. It's a hard truth for some to accept because they don't feel they're at war with Him. But Scripture says that before we become Christians, we are separated—in conflict, at war—with God. Paul told the Romans, "For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life."

Paul uses the same imagery of reconciliation in his letter to the Christians in Colossae and reminds them that Jesus isn't just the Creator and Ruler of all things; He is the Reconciler of all things. The image of reconciliation is a powerful picture. In the world where Paul wrote his letters, reconciliation had a legal and relational aspect, and we see both of these in the reconciliation Paul speaks of here in Colossians 1. Legally, through our sin, we have broken God's law. Relationally, we have broken God's heart with our rebellion and are alienated from Him. The only way to achieve reconciliation is for someone to pay the price for breaking God's law and serve as the mediator between those who are at war. Jesus did all of that through His death on the cross. Paul says Jesus endured all He endured for us so that He might present us "holy, faultless, and blameless before him."

- **Holy.** Normally, we think of holiness as being pious or religious, but today, people often use it in a more pejorative sense: "He's holier than thou." However, the word actually means to be set apart or dedicated to God's service.
- **Faultless.** Holiness is what Jesus has called us to be—set aside for God's service. Faultless has to do with our standing when we're

reconciled. One of my favorite hymns is "The Solid Rock." The writer had experienced the reality of Christ's reconciliation. The last verse of that hymn speaks of the day when Jesus will return and how He will find those whom He has reconciled: "When He shall come with trumpet sound, O may I then in Him be found, Dressed in His righteousness alone, Faultless to stand before the throne."¹

- **Blameless.** Jesus reconciled you to God so that you might be dedicated to His service, faultless and blameless, before Him and others. I remember my pastor, Adrian Rogers, saying that as Christians, we will not be sinless on this side of heaven, but we can and should be blameless. In other words, if somebody accuses you of sin, your life and testimony can be such that the accusation won't stick. Jude 24 says this is the work of Christ in your life. "Now to him who is able to protect you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of his glory, without blemish and with great joy."

QUESTION 4:

How does our culture reflect alienation and hostility toward God?

QUESTION 5:

How can you tell you have been reconciled to God?

LIVE IT OUT

In this study, we've seen that Jesus is the Creator, Ruler, and Reconciler of everything. Jesus is God, and no one has done what Jesus has done. Choose one of the following applications:

- **Observe.** What do you notice about how Jesus made the stars, the trees, the flowers, and people? Take time to look around at all Jesus has created and be thankful. Be specific. What are you grateful for, and why? Thank God specifically.
- **List.** Make a list of any areas of your life that you have not surrendered to Jesus. We often become so used to being the boss of our lives that we forget He is to be the Ruler over everything in them.
- **Share.** If you've experienced the reconciliation and salvation Jesus provided through His death, you know how life-changing that has been. Make it a priority this week to help someone else reconcile with God.



1. "The Story Behind: The Solid Rock," [HymnCharts](https://www.hymncharts.com/2024/04/08/the-story-behind-the-solid-rock/), accessed January 27, 2025, <https://www.hymncharts.com/2024/04/08/the-story-behind-the-solid-rock/>.