

Colossians 1:15-20 (NIV)

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

¹⁶For 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. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And 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. ¹⁹For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰and 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.

51-01-02-Christ Central and Supreme

Christ preeminent, the Incarnation, Epiphany, the Cross, believers

Col 1:15-20

God's supreme investment in Christ calls us to the same investment.

INTRODUCTION: (Text for the Scripture Reading)

–[Wheels weren't *invented* by us, but *copied* from God, Who created solar systems and rotating spiral galaxies. Each *astronomical wheel* has a *center* from which its outside extremities move in a *circle*. Earth owes its existence and health to the *gravitational pull* of the Sun, just as *we* and this *entire universe* owe our existence and well-being to Jesus, Who is *God's Center* for all of creation.]

– Jesus can't just be a *part of our lives*. He's the ***all supreme Center*** from which all else is ordered and arranged. Some may try to invent a "*convenient Christ*" who says nothing about how they think or how they choose to live. This is *not the real Son of God!* **HOM.idea.**

–In this message, we'll be looking at the centrality and supremacy of Christ in 3 areas: *Scripture, salvation, and the life of the saints*. First...

I. Christ Is Central and Supreme in the Scriptures

- A. The resurrected Christ gave a Bible study on the road to Emmaus—**Luke 24:25-27**. He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. (*Jesus invites us each day to a Bible study with Himself!*)
- B. The *key question* to ask when reading Scripture: "*What does this passage have to do with Christ, His character, His mind, the reason for His coming to earth?*" [**Early Church fathers** used to raise such questions in all their commentaries! Nowadays, *modern skeptic scholars* raise questions about God's answers!]
- C. The Bible is a book of *divine wisdom* or *God's logic*.
 1. Jesus is the eternal Logos [*reasoning* or *logic*] of God— **John 1:1**. In the beginning was the Word [the *logos*], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (*Jesus is God and expresses God's thoughts.*)
 2. *Jesus* is also our Wisdom— **1 Cor 1:30**. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us **wisdom** from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. (These 3 ["righteousness, holiness and redemption"] are spiritual aspects of God's wisdom in Christ—the areas God wants us to be wise about!)

TRANS: God has *revealed* Himself in Scripture, and the *summation of His Self-disclosure is Christ. But the universal theme running like a thread through the Bible is salvation history, where...*

II. Christ Is Central and Supreme in God's Salvation Plan

- A. *Universality is part of centrality* [Shakespeare is still popular, because his plays *universally* portray the *human condition*.] (*Christ's Gospel is not fiction but a real-life drama—current in all times, to all cultures, for all ages—universally confronting all human needs.*)
- B. We understand this more *deeply* by *tracing the universal in each aspect of His Incarnation*: in OT *prophecy*, in His *annunciation* to Mary, in His *birth*, in His *presentation* in the temple, in His *baptism*, in His *temptation*, in His *miracles*, in His *teachings*, His *transfiguration*, His *crucifixion & resurrection*, His *sending of the Holy Spirit*, His *building the Church*, and in His *2nd Coming!*)
- C. [Why is the **Jesus Film** (based on the Gospels) such an internationally *effective* tool for evangelism? Because it *meets the universal needs* of the *human condition*, which *all other religions and human philosophies fail to meet!*]

TRANS: God's supreme investment in Christ calls us to the same investment. *Saying that Christ is central and supreme doesn't make Jesus bigger than He really is. It describes His true dimensions!* We, as God's people, *must have the proper evaluation and estimation* of the *centrality and supremacy* of God's Son, our Savior, *because...*

III. Christ Is Central and Supreme in the Life of the Saints

- A. *Christ living inside our hearts is the secret "mystery"* Paul tells of in **Col 1:25-27**, "I have become [the Church's] servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—the **mystery** that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this **mystery**, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.**"
- B. *Why is Christ's indwelling presence so supremely important?*
1. It's God's secret, planned *before creation* [We prepare **birthday presents** before the party, *not* as afterthoughts.] (But for us, *we obtain a spiritual birthday*, when we *unwrap the gift* of God's Son.)
 2. Although "for ages" this Gift was *concealed in* the activities of salvation history, it has been *disclosed to us in the NT Gospel*.

3. In the *Old Covenant*, God was *external* to believers; but in the *New Covenant*, we participate in this "mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (It's not *worldly* glory, but *God's own glory!*)
4. **God's supreme investment in Christ calls us to the same investment. Why is must this be the case?**
 - a. In Christ, the Father *fully invested Himself* for this world's sake— **v.19**, *For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.*
 - b. Jesus *must become* our own *supreme investment*, capturing *our focus, our concentration, our full attention.*

CONCLUSION:

—So, we must ask ourselves, "*Is Jesus central and supreme in my life?*" **We can't share Him** with those who have no "hope of glory," unless we ourselves *enthroned Him* in our hearts and *crown Him King... daily!*

—A feverish *preoccupation with worldly cares and concerns* can spoil that *investment*. But, *our time is limited*. At the end of our earthly lives, the *quality of our relationship* with Jesus will depend on *how seriously* we took His *centrality and supremacy*. *Inviting Him* into our hearts makes *His indwelling presence certain*, but *yielding to His life within is a moment by moment choice*. That yielding can be helped by praying what **Frances R. Havergal** expressed in *her poem: Live out Thy Life Within me*

Live out Thy life within me, O Jesus, King of kings! / Be Thou Thyself the answer to all my questionings; / Live out Thy life within me, in all things have Thy way! / I, the transparent medium, Thy glory to display.

The temple has been yielded, and purified of sin, / Let Thy Shekinah glory now shine forth from within, / And all the earth keep silence, the body henceforth be / Thy silent, gentle servant, moved only as by Thee.

Its members every moment held subject to Thy call, / Ready to have Thee use them, or not be used at all, / Held without restless longing, or strain, or stress, or fret, / Or chafings at Thy dealings, or thoughts of vain regret.

But restful, calm and pliant, from bend and bias free, / Awaiting Thy decision, when Thou hast need of me. / Live out Thy life within me, O Jesus, King of kings! / Be Thou the glorious answer to all my questionings.