

51-01-07.wpd --The Supremacy of Christ

Christ, firstborn, creation, Cross, Resurrection, reconciliation, faith
Col 1:15-23

When we know why '*Jesus is Lord*,' we cannot help but proclaim it.

INTRODUCTION:

--In Rom 10:8-10, Paul describes "the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, '**Jesus is Lord**,' and believe in your heart that **God raised him from the dead**, you will be saved. for it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." Many today insist that faith is a personal and private matter, a belief held in the heart, and supposed to be kept there. That idea is foreign to Christianity. Believers with faith in the resurrected Son of God, make that faith known by the spoken declaration: "*Jesus is Lord!*"

--Our **text** in Colossians for today explains the reasons that declaration is not just *understandable* to our minds but *imperative* for our lips, because...**HOM.idea**. *Why do we lift up Jesus as Lord?*

I. *Jesus is Lord of Creation, v.15-17*

A. Jesus Christ is INCARNATE DEITY, v.15, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. (His Incarnation had a very specific purpose....)

1. By Incarnation, God took on His very own, hand-made, human image of Himself, in which He had created Adam and Eve.
2. His ultimate purpose was not to be Leader of the fallen creation, but to become the eternal human Leader of a new creation.
3. His physical birth made Him the firstborn human Child of God, so that by spiritual birth in Him, the fullness of God's image could be restored in us, making us also into human children of God. (He is "*firstborn over all creation*" [not "*of*"], because *His personal divine existence* is not part *of* creation. *His unique human participation in creation gave Him supreme leadership over it.*)

B. Jesus Christ is CREATOR, v.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.* (This verse opposes two early heresies that the early church fought against: *Arianism* and *Gnosticism*. [The wording of the Apostle's Creed was formulated to keep those who held these heresies out of the church].)

1. This verse contradicts *Gnosticism* [the doctrine that *matter* is evil and that *spirit* alone is good]: it says that both physical and spiritual reality is the work of the one Almighty Creator.
 2. This verse also contradicts *Arianism* [the doctrine that Jesus is not God, but a created being]: it says that Jesus made all that exists in creation. Logically that means He Himself is uncreated.
- C. Jesus Christ is the FOUNDATION OF ALL EXISTENCE, v.17, *He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.* [The foundation of a house is laid before the house is built. The whole superstructure of the house itself will not *hold together* and last without that foundation.] (The power within the very Person of Jesus Christ is the foundation upon which the physical and spiritual universe is able to "*hold together*."

TRANS: When we know WHO Jesus is, that He is *Incarnate Deity*, the *Creator of everything*, the *Foundation for the entire physical and spiritual universe*, **we cannot help but bow before His supremacy and proclaim, "*Jesus is Lord!*"** *Why do we lift up Jesus as Lord?*

II. *Jesus is Lord of Resurrection, v.18*

- A. *Christmas* proclaims the promise of human hope; *Easter* proclaims the 1st demonstration of that hope (Jesus not only entered creation to become a true member of the human race, but He entered the realm of human death, to deliver us from it.)
- B. For those reasons, v.18a, "*he is the head* [or Leader] *of the body, the church*" [Eisenhower was elected president of the U.S. for 2 reasons: #1) he qualified as a citizen, and #2) his victorious leadership in WWII won the hearts of the American people.] (Christ became a legitimate candidate for leading humanity by becoming one of us, **but He won the right to be that Supreme Human Leader by defeating our worst enemy, death**, which He did by His own death and physical resurrection.)
- C. Jesus is the "*World Champion*" over death. His Resurrection is "*the beginning*" of our own. And just as He is called, v.18b, "*firstborn over all creation*," He is called "*firstborn from among the dead*," because both of those titles indicate His plan for reproducing His victory in us!

TRANS: Jesus humbly became human and died for our sins, but His Father raised Him from the dead, v.18c, "*so that in everything he might have the supremacy*." This is explained more fully in Phil 2:9-11, Therefore God

exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father. God wants us to exalt His Son Jesus as Lord. And when we know exactly why 'Jesus is Lord,' we cannot help but proclaim it. He is *Lord of Creation, Lord of Resurrection*, and finally....

III. *Jesus is Lord of Reconciliation, (v.19-23)*

- A. We can't grasp the full meaning of our salvation if we don't start where God started, right in the very beginning in Genesis. (Much doctrinal controversy could be eliminated if Bible teachers had a creational understanding of God's redemption plan.)
- B. The Fall recorded in Genesis mysteriously effected the whole physical and spiritual creation, evidently because humans were destined to be an integral part in God's plan for both realms.
- C. Christ told us in Luke 19:10 (NKJV) that He came "to seek and to save that which was lost." What was "lost"? Everything! **SO, Christ's saving work encompassed the needed reconciliation required for the restoration of the entire fallen creation.** This is exactly what these last verses of our **text** describes (**re-read v.19-22**).
- D. The full impact of Jesus Christ's reconciling work is too immense to discuss in this short sermon. I will try to explain it briefly in a few words: "*When, at Christ's Cross, the fullness of God in a human body met the fullness of sin's alienating power, the blood that dripped to the earth from His body marked the beginning of a new humanity and a new heaven and earth, in which God's holiness and peace will reign supreme for eternity.*" AMEN?!

CONCLUSION:

-- There's a little "if" addendum, at the end of this **text** in **v.23**, that speaks of our responsibility in all of this: "*if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.*" I want to suggest a way of making sure that "*your faith*" in Jesus *continues*, that it remains "*firm*," and that you do not budge from "*the hope held out in the gospel.*" **Remember** Who Jesus is. **Remember** each of these reasons behind the supremacy of Christ. **Remember** why "*Jesus is Lord.*" And then, believing "in your heart that **God raised him from the dead**," say it out loud, "*Jesus is Lord!*" And don't hesitate to tell others, "*Jesus is Lord!*"

Col 1:15-23 (NIV) 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.

{18} And 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.

{19} For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, {20} and 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. {21} Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. {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.