Christ Alone: **Colossians** – **wk 2 – Who is Jesus?**

**Roots = where trees get nourishment, strength, stability. Storms tear trees out by the roots - even large trees. Pic Why? The roots are weak, soft, frail. It can look good above ground - but roots are shallow / weak.**

**When you are hit by storms, and the very core of who you are is hit - will you stand? Will your roots keep you grounded?**

**Colossae was a church being blown around by diff beliefs and ideas. There was confusion. Would they survive this storm?**

**Colossians 2:6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, (salvation) so walk in him, (salvation is just the start – now, we walk it out) 7 rooted (growing going deep – not seen) and built up (growing up – what is seen) in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.**

**God's agenda is that you grow deep and tall**

**\* Colossians 1st half is about the root system = what we believe**

**\* Colossians 2nd half is about the fruit system = how it affects our life**

**pic Background Check: Written by the Apostle Paul (in prison) to – Colossae. Their pastor (Epaphras) had come seeking instruction.**

**Last wk Paul’s Love sandwich - Thankful & Prayerful for you**

**Today is one of my favorite sections in all Paul’s Letters. Possibly the clearest and most powerful 9 verses about Jesus in the NT**

**We like to keep different versions of Jesus - we often make Jesus into our mascot - to meet our agenda - a few examples:**

* **Prosperity Jesus – a Jesus to affirm our greed**
* **Diversity Jesus – a Jesus to affirm our pride**
* **Conservative Jesus – a Jesus that will affirm your legalism**
* **Revolution Jesus – a Jesus to affirm our politics**
* **Justice Jesus - a Jesus to champion our social work**
* **Tolerant Jesus – a Jesus that will affirm a lifestyle**
* **Buddy Jesus – a Jesus to affirm our fluffy faith**
* **Hyper Manly Jesus – a Jesus to affirm our insecurity and rage**
* **Orthodox Jesus – a Jesus to affirm our traditions**
* **Hip Jesus – a Jesus to affirm our rebellion to tradition**

**And if changing Him doesn't work - some abandon him all together**

**Paul shouts loud & clear who Jesus is. Let's read it then break it down.**

**Colossians 1:15 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.**

**I can see Paul all riled up – gets up paces floor - Wow!**

**BTW – v.15-19 was an early church hymn and confession to declare the greatness of Jesus. It dates from before Paul.**

**21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. (These 3 verses make up the theses of the entire letter)**

**I’ll tell a story about myself (or them) to my kids - they're like, “wow!” Their whole lives and still don’t know everything about me or themselves. Allow yourself to discover Jesus fresh.**

**Let’s break it down! Powerful statements about Jesus.**

**This sets Christians apart from every other belief system on the planet. If you do not believe these things to be true - you are not in Christ.**

**JESUS IS... (Jesus is the Livingway – how we end service)**

**Colossians 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God...**

**1. JESUS IS GOD (He’s not cubits zirconia God – but 24kt God)**

**He is the eternal creator revealed - the unseen, now seen**

**For some - Jesus is only God's “son” - powerful but not God**

**He is the Image (eikon) = icon – to make evident. The very reflection of God – The very stamp of - the image of – Like a PC Icon, one click, and you’re there. Want to see God - know God - click Jesus. \*\*Like in a mirror you can’t see the Father, but you see his reflection.**

**Invisible Father, God = no one has or can see God... but Christ who is**

**Exodus 33:20 - "no one can see me and live" / 1 Timothy 1:17 "the king who is eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God" / 1 Timothy 6:16 - God - "whom no one has seen or can see" / 1 John 4:12 - "no one has ever seen God"**

**Invisible God = the unknowable becomes knowable in Christ.**

**John 1:18 - No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.**

**In the OT God occasionally appeared in temporary form (Theophany) but never in his full glory (or we would die). Jesus the image of God, every OT appearance a Christophany.**

**Colossians 1:19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell… Colossians 2:9 - For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily…**

**He is the fullness of God revealed = complete not lacking in anything about God – invisible made visible – and there is no other - ever**

**He is not a rep – or a way – one of many God avatars – or one of many appearances, Darshana, Sanskrit, or sightings.**

**He did not become God (Mormonism) – He is eternal God!**

**We should challenge and ask questions... Where does Paul get that from? Who says Paul had it right? How can we trust this?**

**Because Jesus said so… He declared he is God. His miracles testified he is God. His resurrection proved he is God.**

**Just a few verses where Jesus says and proves he is God**

**John 1:1-12, 3:14-19, 5:2-27, 6:40-63, 8:12, 51-59, 10:7-21, 30-38, 11-22, 12:45, 14:6-10, 23-24, 16:15, 17:4-5, Matthew 5:17-44, 8:27, 28:18, 7:21-23, Mark 13:31, 1:27, 2:5-7, Luke 12:8-9, 5:20-24, Revelation 22:13.**

**Jesus claimed he was equal with and is the one and only God, the flesh of God, voice of God, authority of God, power of God, creator, forgiver and fully God = reason he was arrested.**

**What if you or high claimed that?**

**He did not forsake his divine nature. but he took on human nature.**

**We can’t neglect either – they both express Jesus powerfully. Often time movies about Jesus – downplay one or the other. He is either, overly feminine – a mystical magician – a a crazy radical.**

**Hebrews 1:3The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.**

**Anthropomorphic descrip. - to sit = finished work of salvation / Right hand = might & power / of majesty = all greatness**

**This quotes Jesus fav verse – Quoted 20X in the NT - Psalm 11:1 The LORD (Yahweh) says to my Lord (Adoni): “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.” (lit. while I bring all those hostile to you at your feet.)**

**This Psalm is a royal Psalm. Jesus says – that’s me. They all knew this, this was not an invention of 2nd century Christianity**

**He is the fullness – the totality of the divine in physical form - Not a church / denomination / a priest / a building / a ritual / person or saint / a method / or a program – But Jesus Christ alone!**

**Guess what - After the resurrection Jesus remained in that physical body... so we can see God with our eyes!**

**2. JESUS IS CREATOR - If it exists or ever existed – Jesus did it.**

**Colossians 1:16 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. (He is not a created being – he was not the first creation – he created all things!)**

**Jesus is the author of all creation – he himself not being created**

**All 16 million miles of Saturn’s rings / every 700 quintillion planet / every star / every sun / every 400,000 species of plant / every 8.7 mil animal species / every est 5.5 mil species of insects / and every wonderful human created in unique beauty and diversity - in every glorious detail / creating all the sciences of life / the human genome (4000 volumes to hold the 20 bill bits of information in one gene) Jesus designed everyone of them.**

**He Rules Over Everything!**

**- The Visible (nature, water, animals, humans)**

**- The Invisible (angels, demons, the spiritual world)**

**- Thrones and dominions (world leaders and global kingdoms)**

**- Rulers and all authorities (local leaders, agencies, teachers, bosses)**

**"...all things were created through him and for him."**

**He did not check out - he did not wind the watch and leave it. That includes you! You were created by and for HIM! (Not you)**

**Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.**

**Before anything existed, there was nothing - except God. Before creation, before time, before matter, before any hydrogen, helium and lithium. He was and is. He was not created. Jesus is truly God.**

**In Jesus all things exist and consist! He is creator, sustainer, preserver, the unifying principle. We are here because He says so. He holds the power that keeps every atom together.**

**3. JESUS IS PREEMINENT**

**Has supreme in rank, dignity, or importance. Surpassing all others.**

**Col 1:15 ...the firstborn of all creation.**

**Firstborn of creation – JW’s misinterpret this – based on false teaching**

**Means 1st in rank of creation. 1st in line. Superior to all seen. Ancient rabbis refer to God as the “firstborn of the world” - same sense here.**

**Jesus is first in rank to all things - He created (started) all things – he is not created (or started – beginning).**

**18 And he is the head of the body, the church.**

**Head of the Church = He is our source of power, direction, motivation, with all authority and leadership. He is preeminent!**

**He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,**

**Th first resurrected from the dead taken into glory**

**BTW – this also tells us no one entered the Kingdome of heaven until his resurrection. He is preeminent in all things!**

**John 3:13 - No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.**

**Col 1:18 …that in everything he might be preeminent. (Supreme, superlative, paramount, dominant, unbeatable, untouchable, unmatched, unconquerable, utmost, invincible, insurmountable, undefeatable, unbeatable, without peer – the most absolute & excellent) 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell...**

**\*\*Paul clearly is saying Jesus is God Eternal Almighty.**

**What many like to do - Jesus the ibuprofen. (in the headaches of life) or - Jesus the supplement (Pill). Great guy, very helpful. In my top five. Like Yoda, but better. Jesus is not an add on to your life – his words are not a suggestion - He is preeminent!**

**\*\*He is the center, sovereign head of state, with all supremacy!**

**Next Paul says - 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, (since he is the creator of all things – he is reconciling creation to himself)**

**Does not mean everyone will enter the Kingdom and there is no hell. Some suggest the devil himself will be reconciled.**

**This is universalism. In other places Jesus refers to eternal judgment (Matt 25:46) and eternal destruction (2 Thes 1:9).**

**Simple meaning – Jesus will make all things right. (Phil 2:10)**

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

**How did he do it, the cross - our salvation – enough to save us. Sin separated us – Jesus reconciled us**

**4. JESUS IS ENOUGH**

**Jesus + anything = nothing / Jesus + nothing = everything**

**He alone – Through his death – blood refers to his death**

**Enough to cover all our sin! No matter who you are or what you might have done - That is message of the gospel / that's the good news!**

**21 And you, who once were alienated (far away - estranged) and hostile in mind, (enemies, want nothing to do) doing evil deeds, (reckless self-destructive lives – but…) 22 he has now reconciled you in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him... (picked you up - turned you around – gave a new direction. As a gift to himself!!)**

**Powerful part of this verse - And you, who once were…but now…**

**Some of you know this – it was you!!! If it was not, know this.**

**5. JESUS IS INVITING YOU**

**you were estranged enemies of God – then you were invited and received the invitation – and now you are His and you are holy.**

**God is either our enemy or our friend. Jesus is invites us into a friendship. Jesus says come – respond – follow me – know me – walk with me... come unto to me.**

**23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven and of which I, Paul, became a minister.**

**We continue in this! Perseverance of the saints = you will continue if you are really his – you might stumble but you don’t quit! Illus. - Follow vs. going for a walk.**

**6. JESUS IS SENDING YOU**

**23 ...which I, Paul, became a minister. (Jesus invaded Paul's Life)**

**Paul had a special calling as an apostle - but you are called also - every follower of Christ is a minister - sent to the world.**

**Every follower of Jesus is a missionary - we carry the message and hope of Jesus. Filled w/ the HS God uses us in amazing ways.**

**Jesus is sending us to tell the world - Matthew 28:19-20**

**When we neglect the understanding of who Jesus is and what he has called us to - Christians fall into one of three areas:**

**Jesus the mascot - to meet our agenda and issues – hoot and holler for**

**Jesus the snuggler – here to make us feel good when we need it**

**Jesus the supplement - to improve selective areas/ add-on or the techs**

**But - Jesus is preeminent to rule our life – not an add-on.**

**Paul was telling the church in Colossae**

* **He is resident, not president**
* **He is the steering wheel, not the spare wheel**
* **He is the hub of life, not a hobby in life**

**Jesus is…**

**You’re here today – and as we talk about Jesus – something is happening inside - the HS working in us – in you.**