

The Uniqueness of Christ

Text: Colossians 1:15-23

Series Overview: Philippians, Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians are collectively referred to as the "Prison Letters." The Apostle Paul wrote them while he was imprisoned in Rome. The prison was probably a house where Paul was kept under close guard at all times (probably chained to a soldier). But he was given a number of freedoms not offered to most prisoners. Among them was the freedom to write letters and receive visitors.

The letters Paul wrote were addressed to churches he had started. And even though they dealt with the kind of practical issues you might expect new churches to be dealing with, they are also bold declarations of theological truth. They are messages to the faithful about what God intended the church to be and to do. It is a clarification of the church's mission and identity. Paul is basically saying to the church, "THIS IS US. This is who we are." The church is not a perfect place and it's not always easy living out our faith. But it is possible. And when we do it, it changes the world.

Overview: Paul's basic message in this passage is that Christ is unique. 1) Christ is unique in his relationship to God. As the "image of the invisible God," Christ reveals the very nature and character of God. He is God. God's spirit, God's word, God's wisdom and God's glory are perfectly displayed in Christ. 2) Christ is unique in his relationship to creation. All things have been created in Christ and all creation is subject to Christ. Which means that Christ is Lord over all of creation and without his sustaining activity everything would fall apart. 3) Christ is unique in his relationship with the church. It is the risen Christ who is the head of the Body. Which means that we are totally dependent on him for life and power. For Paul, everything was rooted in Christ. He was the source of everything and the Lord of everything. And he calls all who follow Christ to make him their *source* and their *Lord* as well.

Resources: Check out <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/colossians/> for more information on the book of Philemon.

WELCOME

DISCUSSION

Getting Warmed Up

- If someone came up to you and genuinely said, “Who is Jesus?,” how would you answer in a way that the person might understand?

B. Digging In

- Read aloud Colossians 1:15-23
- Why did Paul feel the need to write this letter to the church in Colossae? Rod used the term mystical polytheism to describe the culture. What were some of the beliefs people held?

C. Bringing It Home

- Paul truly felt burdened to pray for the Colossians. What does it mean to have knowledge, spiritual wisdom, and understanding? Think about the way in which you pray for someone who asks for prayer. Does Paul’s prayer differ from how you pray for others? In what ways? What does this teach us?
- Three points were made about Jesus’ uniqueness:

1. Jesus is unique in his relationship to God.

The concept of the Trinity is often complex. Beth gave a new metaphor for the Trinity. What was it? Talk about how this helped your understanding of the Trinity. What questions might you still have about this? (Remember, you don’t need to have all the answers.)

2. Jesus is unique in his relationship to creation.

If Jesus was the firstborn of all creation, he reigns OVER all creation. Beth said that “Jesus is Lord over all of creation and without his sustaining activity everything would fall apart. He is not only the one who holds all of creation together and keeps it from falling apart. He is the one who holds us together and keeps us from falling apart.”

Paul would allow for Jesus to be relegated to simply being a good teacher, good man or prophet of God. In light of this, how should the answer to the question, “Who is Jesus?” impact your life, behavior and attitudes?

3. Christ is unique with his relationship to the church.

Colossians 1:21 tells us that Jesus has saved us from alienation and restored us to right-standing with him. How are some ways we continue to live like we are still alienated from God?

- For Paul, everything was rooted in Christ. Jesus was the Lord of everything. Which means that everything in our life must be

re-examined and transformed. How is that accomplished without trying to “do” more?

CLOSING PRAYER: Ask God to make us a people, a church that points to him in all things, just as Paul did for the church in Colossae.

Talk about this...

-Challenge your folks to finish reading the book of Colossians this week.

-We are counting down the weeks until the pause for summer. Has your group talked about what that looks like from now until June? Start making a planning now so everyone knows when you will stop for this season and how you will celebrate your time together. It could be dessert, BBQ, dinner out...