

The Preeminence of Jesus Christ

Sunday, February 21st, 1988

Colossians 1:16-18

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

I do not know how much attention I will get by announcing my topic today. This topic is an most important subject that I have chosen. The title of the message is “THE PREEMINENCE OF JESUS CHRIST.” I am going to read from Colossians Chapter 1:16 through 18.

Watch what the references it says about Christ and the references it says about the Son of God. Here is what the Scripture says, *“For by Him were all things created that are in heaven, that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things are created by Him and for Him and He is before all things: And by Him all things consist and He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning; He is the firstborn from the dead that in all things, He might have the preeminence.”*

This letter to the church at Colossi was written by the apostle Paul about thirty years after Christ our Lord died on the cross. Paul wrote this letter when he was a prisoner at Rome. As far as we can tell, Paul had not up to this point, ever preached to this church at Colossi. At least he had not up to this point. He mentioned the fact that many of them had never seen him in the flesh and never heard him in the flesh. So when writing this letter, this epistle to the Church at Colossi, Paul begins where everything begins with the preeminence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is something that I said in my message last week and that is that we need to preach the Word of God. I mean that we need to preach each text in the context. We need to preach every verse surrounded by the verses that are before and after.

One of the most dangerous things in the world to do is to go from verse to verse, here, there and yonder in the Bible and pick out verses to prove what you already believe. Take the Word of God, start with verse one in the epistle, or verse one in the chapter, and read the verse that you are studying, preaching, or discussing. What is said before the verse has a lot to do with what the verse says, and what is said after the verse of Scripture.

That is what I am going to do. I am preaching from Colossians 1:16-18 in which Paul said, *“By Him were all things created. He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning and He is the firstborn from the dead that in all things He might have the preeminence.”*

Let's see what verse 1 says and come right down the line. First, Paul identifies himself as an apostle of Christ in verse 1. This is what I am saying; Paul, when he writes to this church begins where everything begins, with Christ and the preeminence of Christ. He identifies himself as an apostle. He identifies himself not just as an apostle, but an apostle of Christ.

He is not just a preacher; he is a preacher of the Gospel of Christ. He is not just a bond-slave; he is a bond-slave of Christ. He's not just a denominationalist; he is a child of God. Do you understand what I am saying?

He writes to those, in verse 2, *“the saints”*; every believer is a saint. You do not make a man a saint after he is dead by canonizing him, or getting a bunch of people together to find out what kind of good works he has done. That is not in the Bible. That is a pack of foolishness!

We are all saints in Christ Jesus. All who are sanctified are saints. Every believer is a saint. He is writing to those who are saints and brethren in Christ. They are saints and brethren in Christ and Christ made them saints. Christ made them brethren and sons of God. Do you see that there?

In verse 3, he calls God *“The Father.”* He is the Father but He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is my Father and your Father as we are one with Christ. Do you see that? He is the Father of Christ. Being the Father of Christ, He is the Father of those who are brothers in Christ.

Then, he gives thanks in verse 4, for their faith. It is just not faith; it is faith in Christ. Oh, I wish I could get people to see that. It is just not faith; it is not “Just keep the faith,” it is faith in Christ. Faith has to have an object. The object of saving faith is Christ. *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. He that believeth not the Son shall never see life.”* Faith is just not an attitude. Faith is just not a positive mental attitude, (PMA). Faith has an object. I believe God.

So he says; *"I've heard about your faith in Christ."* In verse 13, he talks about the Kingdom of God. I hear a lot of people talk about the Kingdom. He says, *"The Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of His dear Son."* This Kingdom is the Kingdom of Christ.

You can't have a Kingdom and not have a King. A King can't be King who doesn't have a Kingdom. Therefore, the Heavenly Father made Him King over the Kingdom. It is His Kingdom, which He purchased with His own blood. He is the King of Peace and the King of Salem. He is *"King of King and Lord of Lords."* It is the Kingdom of His dear Son.

Look at verse 14: He says this, *"We have redemption."* Redemption is when you redeem something, when you buy it back. You have forfeited it and you go pay the price and get it back. It is yours once more. *"We have redemption; we have the forgiveness of sin."*

Wait a minute! We have redemption and forgiveness of sins through our Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is free. It is free to you, but somebody paid for it. There was a price to be paid. *"The wages of sin is death. The soul that sinneth shall die."* There was a price to pay. Salvation is free, but Christ paid for it. He bought it. Salvation is without works to you, but it took somebody's work. Christ had to work it out. He had to obey the perfect Law of God.

Election is unconditional. Why is it unconditional? The reason is because Christ met the conditions. In verse 15 he says; *"Christ is the image of the invisible God"* (and the revelation of God). This Jesus Christ that we are talking about is the exact or the express image of the Heavenly Father. He is the revelation of God. Christ said, *"He that hath seen me has seen God."*

In verse 16, he says; *"All things were created by Christ."* In verse 17, he says; *"Christ is before all things."* If He created all things, of course, He is before all things. Jesus Christ did not begin to exist in Bethlehem's manger.

I hear people talking and saying, "Well, if Christ was alive today, He would do this." Now, wait a minute! *"He ever lives."* He is, was, always has been, and always will be. *"He is the same yesterday, today, and forever."* When the Lord Jesus Christ was born of Mary, *"He came from heaven into the world."* He took up His abode in a body that the Father prepared for Him.

When He died on that cross, He went back to Glory in a Glorified body. He was risen from the tomb. *“He has always been, and He is before all things and all things are held together by Him. By Him all things consist.”*

What holds this world together? What holds the universe together? What keeps every star and every planet, the sun and the moon in its exact orbit? The answer is not what, but whom. He does! *“By Him all things consist.”*

“Christ is the Head.” What is the Head? The Head is the King of the church. He is the beginning of the church. The church began with Him. Some will say, “The church began at Pentecost.” The church began in Christ. He is the Head of the body; He is the Head of the church. He is the beginning of the church.

“We were chosen in Him.” The church didn’t begin at Pentecost; it began in Christ. *“Christ is the firstborn from the dead.”* He is the first to die, to rise, and die no more. *“He is the firstborn from the dead,”* the pledge of our resurrection.

All of these 18 verses are saying this (God says), *“In all things, (among all things, through all things, above all things), that He might have the preeminence.”* That is what this is all about. That is the objective, the aim, and the goal.

The King made a feast to honor His Son. That is what this whole universe is all about. This is what this Book says; *“That in all things, by Him all things consist.”* He is the Head, the King, the body of the church. He is the beginning; He is the firstborn, *“That in all things, (among all things, above all things, and through all things), He might have the preeminence.”*

Now, I ask you two simple questions today. These are easy to be heard and they are easy to be remembered. What is this preeminence that Jesus Christ has? The second question is: Why should He have it?

What is this preeminence that Jesus Christ has? Well, there is no way that a person can give Jesus Christ too much glory. People tell me, “You preach Christ, Christ, Christ.” I’m planning to go on preaching Christ, Christ, Christ. There is no way that we can over preach Christ. There is just one mistake a preacher can make, and that is to under preach Christ. You can’t over preach Him. You can’t preach Him too much.

There is just one thing I fear and that is that I will go off on a tangent, chasing a rabbit somewhere and not preach Christ. You cannot over preach Him. *“To Him give all the prophets witness.”* Almighty God says, *“In all things; He has the preeminence.”*

What is preeminence? Well, He has total preeminence or first place, total preeminence in the Father's love. He said, *"My Father loves you as He loved Me."* In Matthew 3:17 the Father says; *"This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."* In John 3:35, it says; *"The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hands."* In Romans 8:39, He names all of these different things and says, *"Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord."*

He has total preeminence in the Father's love. I don't know how to get that across and I don't know how to emphasize it. I don't know how to make anyone believe me. I am telling you this, if you are not in Christ and do not know Christ and do not come into a saving relationship with Christ, there is no way that you can lay claim to God's favor, or God's love because it is in Christ.

Do what you will with that, but it is so! *"The Father loveth the Son and he that hath not the Son (or believeth not on the Son), the wrath of God abideth on him."* We need to get acquainted with this Book don't we?

Second: Christ has total preeminence in power. This is not only in the Father's love, but is in power. He said in Matthew 28:18, *"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth."* I'm talking about, *"All power."*

There is no power that Christ doesn't have. He has power over the seas and power over the skies. He has power over the land and He has power over the storms. He has power over the snow and He has power over the rain. He has power over the sun and He has power over the moon. He has power over lost men and He has power over saved men.

In John 17:2, the Scripture says; *"Thou hast given Me all power over all flesh that I should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Me."* Did you ever read that before? That is right; Christ prayed in John 17, *"Thou hast given Me all power over all flesh."* He has total power.

He said, *"A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above."* Our Lord told Pilate that; He said, *"You couldn't have any power over Me at all, except it were given you from above, from My Father."*

Don't talk about the weakness of Christ. Don't talk about the inability of Christ. *"He shall not fail nor be discouraged. He will save whom He will."* He said, *"This is the Father's will which sent Me that of all which He hath given Me, I will lose nothing. I came down from heaven to do My Father's will."*

He has total preeminence in power. Hebrews 2:8 says, *“Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet.”* God left nothing that is not put under His feet, nothing! There is nothing that has not been put under His feet.

Christ has preeminence in worship. Hebrews 1:6 says, *“When He brings the first begotten into the world, He saith; let all the angels of God worship Him.”* Revelation 5:13 says, *“Every creature in heaven, every creature on earth, every creature under the earth and in the sea, heard I saying; blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth on the throne unto the Lamb.”* There is just one Lamb. John said, *“There He is, ‘behold the Lamb of God,’ forever and forever.”* He has all preeminence in worship. He has preeminence here and in the hereafter.

He has preeminence in salvation. He says, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”* Peter said, *“God hath made this same Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”* John wrote, *“This is the record; God hath given us eternal life and this life is in His Son.”*

Nothing could be more plain than that. Nothing could be simpler than that. This life is in His Son. *“He that hath the Son hath life.”* If life is in the Son, he that hath the Son hath life. If life is in the Son, he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

He has all preeminence in this matter of salvation. You have to come to Christ or perish. There is one God. We won't argue with that. *“There is one Mediator between God and men.”* You can't argue with that either. He identifies who that Mediator is. It is not a saint. It is not saint Jude or saint Christopher or saint somebody else. It's definitely not saint Mary; it is Christ. *“There is one Mediator between God and men, and that is Christ Jesus.”* He is the only Intercessor and *“He ever lives to make intercession for us.”*

Christ has the preeminence in glory. He said, *“Let this mind be in you which is also in Christ Jesus, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a servant and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus Christ every knee will bow, every tongue will confess in heaven, earth and under the earth, that He is Lord.”* He is Lord!

That is not something people just say with their lips. This is something that they know in their hearts. That is not just a bowing of the knee, my friends; that is the bowing and

breaking of the heart. That is a genuine ownership of Christ over all that we are and have and ever hope to be.

“Christ is all.” That is what Colossians 3:11 says; *“Christ is all.”* This sums it all up. There was a time when this world had no being. There was a time when this world wasn't here. There was a time when the stars weren't there and the sun and moon weren't there. *“Christ is all.”* Where was He then? He said this, *“Father, glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.”* He was with the Father in glory before the world was.

There was a time when this world, the heavens, and all things were created. There was a time when the stars were made, the sun, the moon, and the earth. The waters were separated from the dry land. The trees, mountains and valleys, fish, birds, animals and man were all created. If Christ is all, where was He then? *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God and all things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made.”* Christ is all!

There was a time when man fell. This crowning creature in creation fell. This one that was made in the image of God obeyed the voice of Satan, willfully disobeyed God and took that fruit, (whatever it was), and ate it. He died. Spiritual death came upon him and all men. Because of sin, there is now, darkness, death, disease, and sorrow. If Christ is all, where was He then? I will tell you where He was. When that man fell, the Father spoke and said to the serpent; *“I'm going to put you out of business; I'm going to put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed. You are going to bruise His heel but He is going to bruise your head.”*

Do you know who that He is? That is Christ! In that darkness, He was the Light of Life. In that death, He was the Life of God. In that time of sorrow, God gave a happy announcement. In that time of disease, God said; *“I'm going to make My people well; I'm going to send Christ.”*

What is the seed of woman? That is the virgin born Son of God, the only One who has ever been a seed of woman. For there was a time, when all the prophecies, promises, and patterns were fulfilled. There was a time when all the Old Testament promises were fulfilled. This was concerning the Messiah, the prophecies concerning the Messiah, patterns of the Messiah, the sacrifices, tabernacles, priesthood, prophets and kings was all fulfilled in the coming of a Redeemer.

If Christ is all, where was He then? He was the Redeemer! Simeon summed it up; he held Christ in his arms when He was just an infant and he said, *“Lord; let your servant*

depart in peace; I have seen your salvation.” I have seen all that they have talked about, expected, announced, prophesied, promised, and looked for in this person Jesus Christ.

There will be a time when this world will end. There will be a time *“When the heavens will pass away with a fervent heat.”* Heaven and earth will be no more. The dead are going to be raised. If Christ is all, where will He be then? He said, *“I am the resurrection and I am the life. He that believeth on me shall never die.”*

There is going to be a time of judgment. *“It is appointed unto men once to die and after that the judgment”* and all men are going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. *“The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son.”*

“There is going to be a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.” It is a settled fact that in the new heaven and the new earth, Jesus Christ has the preeminence.

I will tell you this, if you could just get a hold of this, if you could only get a hold of this in your heart to believe it. If only you could believe Him, and to know Him is to have life everlasting. That is what this Book is all about. It is about Jesus Christ our Lord.

Why should He have the preeminence? Just tell me why He should have the preeminence. I will give you five reasons; the first is this: He has all preeminence because it is the will of the Father. *“It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.”*

Why is Joseph the head man in Egypt? Pharaoh said so. Why is Mordecai riding the king’s horse? Why is Haman leading him? The king said so! I’m saying this, *“God hath highly exalted Him and God hath given Him a name above every name.”* Christ has the preeminence because God says so!

Second: He has the preeminence because *“He is the first begotten and He is the heir of all things.”* Christ is the legitimate heir and the rightful heir. Listen to this in Hebrews 1:2: *“God has spoken to us by His Son whom He hath appointed heir of all things.”* He is the heir. *“We are joint-heirs with Christ.”*

Third: Christ has all preeminence because He bought it. When I buy something and pay for it, it is mine. *“Our Lord died that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living.”* He bought this world; it belongs to Him. He purchased the right. *“You are not your own; you are bought with a price.”* You belong to Jesus Christ. Everything belongs to Christ.

Fourth: He has all preeminence because He is the only one who is able to govern God's Kingdom. The angels kept not their first estate. Adam couldn't remain dedicated. Samson, the strongest man, couldn't keep his hair. Solomon, the wise man couldn't keep his word. Peter ran before a little maid, but "*He is able.*" He is the only one that is able to manage the affairs of God. That is why He has the preeminence.

Fifth: He has all preeminence because He deserves it.

"Jesus is the King of Kings and in Him are all things.

Jesus lived and died for me and from bondage sets me free.

Jesus our Lord and God bore sins tremendous load; tell what His arm hath done.

Tell what victories He hath won. Sing His worthy name alone, worthy is the Lamb."