

Magnifying Jesus

Paul is in prison and is writing a letter to the church in Colossae. He has heard of their faith and love and is encouraging them and praying for them.

The heart of this letter and message to them is to have a high view of Jesus. It wasn't that they were pursuing evil or wicked things, but are we seeing Jesus as he really is?

Pastor Randy gave an illustration of this as he was visiting his son's church in Nashville. The Pastor at the Nashville Church talked about a trip to the gulf coast with his newborn and toddler as Mom was out of town. At a rest stop, as he was changing his baby, he realized his son was elbow deep in the urinal. The small boy came up out of the urinal in a victory stance with the blue disc or "cake" in hand. After prying the blue object from his hand and cleaning his son up the trip continued. As they continued the trip to the ocean, all his little one could think of was the next urinal and blue prize. The Pastor thought here I am trying to show him the vast ocean and he's focused on the urinal.

Paul is trying to get us to the ocean, (the bigness of God in Christ) and many times we just want to play in the toilet. There is so much more...

Lesson Text

"The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through 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, and do not move 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."

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(Colossians 1:15-23)

Jesus is the Picture of God

“The Son is the image of the invisible God” (:15a)

Jesus is the picture, image of God, (eikōn) all that God is, is found in Jesus. He is the one that the prophets and the scriptures spoke about and pointed to. Our soul needs an image of him, who he really is.

“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him” (:19)

If you want to know how God feels about people caught in sin or grieving, look at Jesus. We see God’s heart by the way Jesus treated the woman caught in adultery. We see God’s feelings when Jesus arrived at Lazarus’s tomb.

Jesus is the Agent of Creation

“..the firstborn over all creation.” (:15b)

The phrase “firstborn” can be misleading; it’s referring to that which is “of first importance” “the upmost importance”.

“And I will appoint him to be my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth.” (Psalm 89:27)

David was the last-born, but God made him “my firstborn”. This is how God works. Much like a wedding, the bride is the focus and center; we stand when she comes into the room.

When Jesus walks on the stage of our lives, do we see him, honor him and make him the “firstborn”?

“Don’t make Jesus out to be smaller than he is”

If we get that greater picture of Jesus it will affect your entire life.

*“For **in** him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created **through** him and **for** him.¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” (:16-17)*

Jesus is the agent of creation; he made all the varied beautiful things in creation. But it was also made for him.

Jesus sits at the center of all of creation and gives it all purpose.

The natural condition of creation and life is voidness. We come up with our own ideas of “self importance” hey I’m someone, I’m important.

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To gain perspective; 95,000 earths can fit into the sun. About 7 million people live on this planet, which exist in a very mediocre sized galaxy in the universe, a universe full of billions of galaxies.

To put it in perspective if we counted the stars in our solar system, (one every second) it would take 2500 years to finish.

We get fixed on our little world and circumstances but we need to look at him who not only created all of this but also holds it all together. When we realize this, we see that God is so big and yet he still cares for us and everything in our lives.

“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.” (Hebrews 1:1-2)

Jesus is the Sustainer of Life

“He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” (:17)

“The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.” (Hebrews 1:1-3)

Jesus is the Conqueror of Death (: 18, 22)

o He is the Head of the Church

“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” (:18)

o He is the Agent of Reconciliation

“...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” (:20-22)

Discussion Questions

- 1) I don't often put illustrations in the lesson notes but I thought this helped me define so much of what we're studying. What does the following statement say to you about our lives and tendencies? “Paul is trying to get us to the ocean, (the bigness of God in Christ) and many times we just want to play in the toilet. There is so much more...”

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- 2) Review the notes above and discuss the significance of “Jesus being the exact picture or image of God”. How does this affect how you look at the Word of God and God himself?
- 3) Please discuss what it means that Jesus is the “Agent of Creation”. Also are you looking at the term “firstborn” differently after this study, if so in what way?
- 4) We know that Jesus is the agent of creation and made all of the beautiful things in our world but it was also made for him. How does it affect your thinking knowing Jesus sits at the center of all of creation and also gives it all purpose?
- 5) We begin to see our smallness in relation to the vastness of the universe, but this should actually show us how big God is. We must ask ourselves, are any of the challenges we face in any area of our lives bigger than God? Does it change your perspective knowing:
 - Jesus is the one who holds all of creation together (V17)
 - Jesus is the sustainer of life (V17)
 - Jesus is the Conqueror of Death (V18, 22)
 - Jesus is not only the head of the church (V18), but he is the Agent of Reconciliation (V20-22)