

## OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

BACK TO THE OTHER SIDE  
NOVEMBER 13-19, 2016



### MAIN POINT

When we understand who Jesus really is and how big our God is, we follow Him urgently on mission.

### THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Connect the sermon to the study.

**1. What worldviews and passions are most influential in our community? Why are these beliefs so prevalent and popular?**

**2. Why do you think people choose to believe these worldviews instead of believing in Jesus?**

**Leader:** Once we recognize who Jesus is, we step out in obedience and faith. As followers of Jesus, we believe that knowing Him and accepting salvation through Him is the only way to enter into a relationship with God. The apostle Paul, during his missionary career, understood he was introducing the grace and hope of Jesus to people impacted by a wide variety of influences and trying to sort out their beliefs. In Colossians 1, Paul argued that Jesus is the sole source of redemption, and He alone is worthy of worship.

### DIGGING DEEPER

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ COLOSSIANS 1:15-20.

**3. Looking at Colossians 1:15-20, list phrases that clarify Jesus' true identity. Why should we pause regularly to reflect on Jesus' character and identity?**

**4. How do these verses speak to who Jesus is and the power He has in our world?**

**Leader:** Paul noted that Jesus reconciled everything to Himself through His death on the cross (v. 20). Because of Christ, everyone has the opportunity to repent of their sins and enter into a relationship with God. In order to effectively reconcile all of creation back to God, Jesus had to have the authority to do so. Because He is the fullness of God, Jesus has that authority. Christ's death and resurrection created the most pivotal moment in the history of God's creation.

**5. How do the truths about Jesus from Colossians 1:15-20 help us focus our attention on Him?**

### > HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ COLOSSIANS 1:21-23.

**Leader:** Paul went on to encourage believers to remain grounded, remembering what God delivered them from (vv. 21-23). People once hostile to God are now redeemed and in Jesus' family. As if that's not enough, we're also seen as holy, faultless, and blameless before God because of Jesus' righteousness that's attributed to us. Our responsibility is to remain faithful to the gospel.

**6. Why was it important for Paul to remind the Colossian believers of their past? How does reflecting on what Jesus has done in your life impact your relationship with Him today?**

**7. What does it look like for you to remain grounded and steadfast in your faith?**

**8. What are some practical ways you can live in such a way that displays the centrality of Jesus in all things?**

**Leader:** Our lives should be grounded on the supreme foundation of Jesus, and our faith should be fixed on Him, too. When even our small decisions are not based on our personal desire but rather in obedience to Jesus, we show that we truly believe in His supremacy. When we see Jesus like this and lose our lives in His greatness, we finally find out who we truly are.

## DOING LIFE TOGETHER

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**9. Colossians 1 emphasizes the primary place Jesus should have in our lives. What would change if Jesus was supreme in your life?**

**10. What patterns or attitudes need to change for you to experience the full benefits of your relationship with Jesus?**

**11. Think back to the various worldviews and belief systems that came up in your opening discussion. How would you use Colossians 1 to help people better understand who Jesus is and why they need Him? Share some specific examples.**

## PRAYER

As you close in prayer, acknowledge the greatness of Jesus. Tell Him that He is the Author and Sustainer of all life, and ask Him to help you and your group see His greatness in such a way that you commit yourself to Him in mission.

**MEMORIZE**

<sup>19</sup> For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, <sup>20</sup> 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. – Colossians 1:19-20

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

COLOSSIANS 1:15-23

1:15. Paul employed a hymn to emphasize Christ's sovereignty. Heretical teachers in Colossae contended Christ was merely one of many powers between people and God. In 1:15-17, Paul refuted their teaching by presenting Christ as Lord of the universe. Paul asserted that Christ is the image of the invisible God. The Greek term rendered "image" conveys the idea of a perfect representation. Because God is Spirit (see John 4:24), the human eye cannot see Him. He has made Himself known perfectly in Christ. The phrase "the firstborn over all creation" does not indicate that Christ was the first created being. In the Old Testament, the firstborn son occupied a position of honor, privilege, and supremacy; he was first in priority. Here, the term expresses Christ's preexistent Deity.

1:16-17. Christ is Lord over creation, for by Him everything was created. Christ is vastly superior to all created powers. For Him literally is "unto Him." Creation moves toward Him and His purpose for it. The phrase "before all things" emphasizes Christ's preexistence. He was the Agent of creation, and He also maintains it in the sense of giving it stability. Christ sustains creation and gives it harmony.

1:18. In 1:18-20, Paul stressed Christ's lordship over the church, His body—His people who actively extend His ministry in the world. The preexistent Lord over the universe is also the church's head—the Source of the body's life, who governs it and gives it unity. The word "beginning" stresses Christ's priority in time and power. In addition, He is the Originator of life in God's kingdom—new life made possible by grace. The phrase "firstborn from the dead" refers to Christ's resurrection as the revelation of the new quality of life He gives: resurrection life that extends beyond death. Christ's victory over death proved that He has first place in everything.

1:19-20. The term "fullness" could mean "full measure" of Deity, meaning that Christ is fully God. God's purpose is that through Christ He may reconcile everything to Himself. Everything includes humans and the universe (see Rom. 8:19-23). The word "reconcile" has the sense of restoring a relationship, of creating unity. Christ alone (through His sacrificial death) was God's chosen way of bringing about reconciliation. God made peace possible through Christ's blood—His death on the cross. The phrase "things on earth or things in heaven" refers to the whole universe, material and spiritual.

1:21-22. The Colossian believers' salvation demonstrated God's purpose "to reconcile everything to Himself" (1:20). Once, their evil actions—wicked lifestyles—showed they were alienated from God. Their former works issued from the sphere of evil in which they lived. Outside God's rule of grace, they had been hostile to Him in mind. The phrase "but now" stresses the sharp contrast between the believers' former condition and their current relationship with God. In Christ's voluntary suffering and death for others, God made salvation available to all who would place their faith in Christ. God's purpose in offering reconciliation through Christ's death was to make believers holy, faultless, and blameless before God.

1:23. Paul stressed believers' responsibility to remain faithful as people reconciled to God through Jesus' death. Paul fully expected the Colossian Christians to remain in the faith—that is, their commitment to Christ. They were not to move away from the gospel they had heard to embrace the false teachings being presented to them. Paul emphasized the genuineness of the gospel the Colossian believers had heard and accepted. It was the same good news being proclaimed across the Roman Empire. It was the good news the risen Christ had commissioned Paul to preach as His servant.