**LifeGroup Study**

**YOU’RE RICHER THAN YOU THINK**

**Jesus is Perfect Theology**

**2022-05-01**

**Leader Notes**

**OVERVIEW:**

Welcome back to our series, You’re Richer Than You Think. This series is a walk through the book of Colossians. This week will look at Colossians 1:15-23, where we’ll learn that Jesus is the image of the invisible God and that through Jesus, God has reconciled all things to himself. As His followers, we can trust that peace has been made and continue in the faith. Our hope is that this week we would experience the awe of Jesus, who He is and what He has done for us.

**ICEBREAKER:** I Was in Awe

Two summers ago my family travelled to the Rocky mountains in Alberta. One morning we climbed above Lake Louise to look out over the lake and Bow Valley. The sights took our breath away! What experience have you had that left you in awe? Maybe for you it was a time in nature, a beautiful work or art, or an exquisite meal. **Share your experience with the group!**

**STUDY:**

1. On Sunday, Pete shared several theological ideas about Jesus that we find in Colossians 1:15 - 23. Did you learn anything new from this? **What was a highlight for you from this teaching?**

LEADER NOTE: Theology is the study of God. It is our attempt to understand God based on what He has revealed about himself in the Bible. This idea of “Jesus is Perfect Theology” means that to understand God, we look to Jesus. He shows us perfectly! This is what Paul highlights for us in this week’s verses in Colossians 1.

READ: Colossians 1:15-23

This text is one of the clearest of Paul’s doctrine of Jesus in the Bible.

Paul was responding to reports that the church was mixed up with teachings that Jesus was not God. Through this text, Paul asserts that Jesus is fully Divine, and that He was not only involved in Creation, but also sustaining all things. And as if that were not powerful enough, Paul states that these things are not only BY Christ, but FOR Him. He is not only a tool of Creation, but the reason for it. Paul then gives a meditation on the hope of the Gospel for reconciling us to God, through our faith. It is for this hope that Paul declares himself a “servant” (or minister in some translations).

1. In vs. 15-23, Paul builds his case for who Jesus is. In vs. 15 we read, “He is the image of the invisible God …”. **Why is this truth about Jesus so important for us to know?**

LEADER NOTE:

This truth about Jesus is important for us to know because it affirms Jesus’ deity. Jesus is more than a famous prophet or a good teacher. He is God in the flesh. (See also Hebrews 1:3, John 1:14, 14:9.) We cannot see God the Father on this earth. Naturally that results in many questions. What is God like? What would He do? How would He respond to various situations? Jesus coming to earth and revealing Himself to us solved those problems. He showed us exactly what God is like. He showed us exactly what God would do. What does it mean that Jesus is the image of God? In Genesis we learn that man is made in the image of God. This means that we have many similarities to God such as morals, emotions, will, intellect, etc. When we read that Jesus is the image of God it means He is not just similar to God, but He is in fact God. They are of the same essence. He is the manifestation of God. Jesus reflects all that God is. He is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, immutable, just, loving, compassionate, holy, etc. God the Father does not have any qualities or abilities that Jesus the Son does not have. Those who saw Jesus, saw the Father (John 14:9). He is Emmanuel, God with us.

1. Read back through verses 15-17. **What do you notice here about Jesus’ supremacy over creation?**

LEADER NOTE: Jesus is the *firstborn* over all creation (15). The key to understanding this passage here in Colossians is understanding what “firstborn” means. In our culture, this means the one who is born first. But in Middle Eastern culture, the firstborn does not always refer to the one born first, but is used as a title for the person who has priority or rank over the others. For example when Jacob bought Esau’s birthright the rank of the firstborn was transferred to him even though he was younger. Calling Jesus the firstborn of creation is emphasizing his sovereignty over creation. It shows his rank as being that over any of creation. In the ancient world, the first born son often had special rights and privileges. Jesus has certain rights in relation to creation. He has priority, pre-eminence and sovereignty. “For by him all things were *created*.” (16) “ … and in him all things *hold together*”. (17) Jesus is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and the invisible, spiritual realm. He is supreme, which means He is in control of it all.

1. Jesus is supreme over creation. This means He is in control. What is feeling out of control in your life right now? **How does this truth of Jesus being in control encourage you?**

LEADER NOTE: Remember, Jesus is in control. Our God is “large and in charge”. He is in control of everything which mean He is in control of you. Nothing happens without His permission and knowledge. This truth should encourage us that our God is in control of our lives and this world. We can know that He is working all things together for our good and our destiny is secure in Him.

1. “ … all things were created by him *and for him*.” All things are created for Jesus. **How should this shape the way we see the world?**

LEADER NOTE: “ … and for him …”. These three little words are a very important addendum to this treatise on creation and Christ. From these words we know the reason the world was created. Jesus is not only the tool for creation but the reason for it. It was not created primarily for your enjoyment, although God does want us to enjoy it. It was not created primarily for your consumption, although you can consume some parts of it. It was not created primarily for people, although people are the highest of all God’s creation. It was created for Himself.

1. Read back through verses 18-20. **What do these verses teach us about Jesus’ supremacy over redemption?**

LEADER NOTE: *Redemption* is the saving work God has done when He paid the price for our sin. When Jesus died on the cross, He became supreme over redemption. It is His blood that saves us and has bought us back. “And he is the head of the body, the church …” (18) Jesus is supreme in the church, His redemptive body here on earth. Through the church, God is redeeming lives, drawing people into faith in Him. “ … he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead.” (18) Jesus was the first to rise from the dead and be given a new, eternal body. He has gone first, guaranteeing His people will also rise to be with Him.

1. Jesus has redeemed your life. **What does this mean for you?**

LEADER NOTE: The fact that Jesus has redeemed me means I can have confidence. I can be fully confident I have been made right with God. I can be confident my destiny with Him is secure. I don’t have to fear that I might lose my salvation. Jesus has bought me with a price and sealed my life in Him (see Ephesians 1:13-14). Jesus controls my destiny. I have been reconciled to Him and have peace with Him (vs. 20)

1. Read back through verses 21-23. **What does it mean to “continue in your faith …”?**

LEADER NOTE: To continue in your faith is to live out the reality that Jesus is supreme in your life. Jesus is your Life Leader. This means your life belongs to Him. “*What parts of my life have I submitted to His authority? What do I need to submit to Him? How would others know by looking at me that Jesus is Lord of my life?”* These are important questions for your LifeGroup members to ask.

1. “ … not moved from the hope held out in the gospel …”. **What is the *hope* Paul is talking about here?**

LEADER NOTE: The hope we have is not wishful thinking. It is the confident assurance that through Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection He has saved us. Our hope is based on the character of God, that His promises will be fulfilled in our lives (see Hebrews 6:19).

1. At the end of today’s reading, Paul declares himself to be a *servant* (or minister) of the Gospel. We should have this same attitude. God has raised you up to a be servant of the Gospel. **What does this mean for you?**

LEADER NOTE: As a servant of the Gospel, Paul committed his life to be on mission for Jesus (see Acts 9:15, Galatians 1:15-16). This impacted everything for Paul – his priorities, schedule and even personal safety were all upended by this call. As followers of Jesus, we are on mission for Him. Jesus has commissioned us to go and make other followers of Jesus (see Matthew 28:18-20). At Creekside we encourage our church family to do this through our strategy INVOLVE and INVITE. Be involved in the lives of people who are not yet followers of Jesus. As God provides opportunities, invite them to check out the claims of Jesus. Being on mission for Jesus is not about us earning favour with God, but our response to what Jesus has done for us.

**EXPERIENCE GOD**

Listen:

Play the song “Living Hope” by (Phil Wickham). As the song plays, think about what it means to you that Jesus is your Living Hope.

 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9f2FXxDVO6w

Write it Down:

Col. 1:21-22 frames our stories in terms of who we “once were” apart from Christ and who we “now” are in Christ. Write down 4-5 things that described you spiritually, before Christ. Then draw a line through those words and write down what is true of you, in Christ, now. Here’s are some examples: Unloved - Beloved, Addict - Set free, Ruled by my flesh - Empowered by God’s Spirit, Empty - Made whole

Pray:

• Give praise to Jesus for the glorious actions and attributes mentioned.
• Pray that Jesus would be big in your mind so that you think of Him rightly and intimately.

• Ask Jesus to be at the center of everything in your life, including things that seem out of control.

• Thank God for provision so that you can be holy, reconciled to Him, and at peace with Him.

• Ask God to keep you rooted and walking in the gospel daily.

**COLOSSIANS DEVOS:**

Each week of this series we’ll have 5 devotionals for you to read on your own.

Read the devos this week and notice how this habit enriches your walk with Jesus!

<https://www.creeksidechurch.ca/richer-than-you-think/>

**PRAY**

This week let’s pray for our local outreach initiative, The Big Serve. <https://www.creeksidechurch.ca/thebigserve/>

* Pray that our community would feel the impact of the hands and feet of Jesus as they serve in our community.
* Please pray that God would help us to acquire needed resources to allow for projects to take place
* Please pray for God to provide point-people for our Big Serve projects, and for volunteers to sign up! If you're interested in being a point person yourself, please get in touch with Sarah at sarah.geiger@creeksidechurch.ca :)