

Risen With Christ
The Preeminent Christ
Col 1.17-29

[The Colossian Church was being tried by false teachers who were teaching many strange things about our Lord Jesus Christ. In writing to this congregation Paul sought to deal with these false teachings by providing the truth about who Jesus really was and what He had done for every born again Christian. In our culture today we find many of the same false teachings. In the last couple of weeks we have discovered the,]

- [Source for a Worthy Godly Walk in the New Birth and empowering presence of the Holy Spirit of God.]
- [Our Adoption into the Kingdom of Christ and the inheritance promised to every born again Christian.]
- [Our Sanctification as our Heavenly Father has moved us from Darkness into Light.]
- [Our Redemption and its glorious deliverance from the curse of the law and the guilt of sin.]
- [Our Preexistent Christ existed before the beginning of creation, sits at the right hand of the Father, and will exist into eternity future. The Lord Jesus Christ is Almighty-God, one person in the godhead.]

[Read Text]

[As we discovered the preexistent Christ in our last study, which revealed the sovereign, glorious Christ to us. The study of this text reveals the preeminent Christ to us. Preeminence means of first priority or to hold first place. The preeminence of our Lord Jesus Christ is incredibly important for each and every born again Christian. If Christ takes the ultimate first place in our hearts and lives then everything else in life will find its proper place and eternal hope will be the result. Consider verse twenty-seven (27) in our text, which states,]

*[Colossians 1:27²⁷ To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; **which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**]*

[How important is hope?]

[Illustration - The body of a suicide victim, whose story is infinitely pathetic, was taken out of the North River in New York. The dead man was a graphic artist, musician, and linguist. He was fifty-seven years old at the time of his death. After he had graduated from a German university he went to Puerto Rico to seek wealth. Fortune smiled on him, and he sent home flowing accounts of the great printing business he was conducting. At the height of his prosperity he fell in love with a beautiful woman who soon became his wife. His marriage was a happy one, but only eight years afterward, she died. With her death his power to work and plan seemed to cease. From that moment fortune seemed to desert him. He lost his zest in his work and finally failed in business. Two years later he came to New York and was advised by a friend to teach languages, for he spoke German, English, French, Spanish, and Italian, with great fluency; but he lacked that appetite for life and nerve of purpose that make men succeed. Finally, without money and without heart, he filled his pockets full of stones and leaped overboard into the North River. The thing he lacked above everything else was the great anchor of faith and hope in Christ. His heart was anchored in his love for his wife, and when that cable parted he drifted. If his soul had been buoyed and held steady by a sublime faith in Christ and the immortal life, he could have gone on, with a chastened heart, but with a serene and dauntless spirit.¹[1]]

[This is a grim story indeed. But it seems to fit the culture of our day. Suicide rates have increased over the years. Suicide seems to affect every age group and cultural status. The man in our story committed suicide because he lost his hope in life. All of his purpose for living was bound up in his lovely wife. When she died, his reason for living died.]

[But what if he had a greater hope and outlook on life? Perhaps, if he had known the Lord of all life, the Lord Jesus Christ, he might have known that the mortal death of his beloved wife was not the end of her existence or the end of their time together. If he and his wife had both known the Lord Jesus Christ their hope might have been the eternal hope and purpose that the Lord Jesus Christ gives to His people. Yes, the death of this man's wife would have been painful, but it would not have been terminal.]

[Hence, the question we must answer as we study this text is, What takes first place in your life? Is the Lord Jesus Christ really preeminent in your life? What a

¹[1] Richard A. Steele and Evelyn Stoner, comp., *Bible Illustrations – Practical Bible Illustrations From Yesterday and Today*, (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1998), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 199.

glorious purpose in life and a lively hope for life is granted to those who have truly placed the Lord Jesus Christ upon the throne of their life. Is the Lord Jesus Christ preeminent in your life?]

Our Lord Jesus Christ,

A. Must Be First (vs 17-18) [*– And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* ¹⁸ *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. –* Notice our Lord's preeminence in these verses. In our Lord's preeminence we discover that,]

1. **Jesus is the Head (vs 18;1 Cor 12.18)** [*– And he is the head of the body, the church . . .* – It is wonderful to see how our text connects the Church with the body of Christ and then places our Lord Jesus Christ at the predominant place within the body. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the body. This means that every part of the body of Christ is put in place by our Lord, Paul wrote,]

[1 Corinthians 12:18 ¹⁸ *But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.]*

[Don't wrestle too much with the words here, last week we discovered that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord God Almighty and that Jesus created and sustains all things. You were placed in the body of Christ at the moment of your salvation and when God placed you in his body He gave you your position and function.]

[In this headship of our Lord Jesus Christ you should discover your place and purpose in life. Understand that you have a position and purpose within the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the Church. Fall out of Church and you will lose your purpose and place in life. You will find things you think you ought to do, or you want to do, but they will all ultimately be meaningless to you and will bring emptiness and discontentment in your life.]

**[The Body of Christ is the Church! The Church matters to our Lord!
The Church matters in your life! Don't neglect your Church! Listen carefully here, you cannot function in a television Church. You cannot**

function in an internet Church. You cannot function if you are not at Church.]

[Illustration – If your physical body became ill and your doctor told you your condition and told you that you needed a medication in order to live. Would you just go home and look up the medication on Web MD and look at the medication on your computer screen. Perhaps you could lick the screen when the medication was showing on the screen. That might make you well. Right?]

[Jesus must be first in your life, and our text states that He is the head of the body, which is the Church. This means that every Christian needs the body of which Christ is head. You need to be in and functioning in a good Bible believing Church where Christ is the head!]

2. **Jesus is our Hope (vs 18; Rev 1.5; 1 Cor 15.20-23; 1 Pet 1.3)** [- . . . *who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; . . .* – This is our lively hope, purpose and vision in life. This hope gives us our reason for being and our reason for living. This hope focuses our dreams and desires upon those things that really matter in life. As the first born from the dead we are focused upon the physical resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The New Testament states,]

*[Revelation 1:5⁵ And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and **the first begotten of the dead**, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,]*

*[1 Corinthians 15:20-23²⁰ But now is **Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept**.²¹ For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.²² For as in Adam all die, **even so in Christ shall all be made alive**.²³ But every man in his own order: Christ the **firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.**]*

[In the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ we find an eternal and enduring hope. A lively hope,]

*[1 Peter 1:3³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy **hath begotten us again** unto a **lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ** from the dead,]*

[As we focus upon the resurrection of our Lord our life will take on a new kind of hope. We shouldn't live for the here and now but we should live for eternity to come. Our life's focus should be upon our coming eternal life in our Lord's kingdom and how our mortal life builds toward our Lord's eternal kingdom. Our Lord leaves us here, in this corrupt and perilous world so that we can be used of Him to build His eternal kingdom. How do we build our Lord's eternal kingdom, by bringing others into His kingdom through the gospel and the salvation the gospel presents.]

[**Illustration expanded** - The man in the illustration at the beginning of this message could have found hope in this life, even without his wife, if Jesus had been preeminent in his life. He would have known that his wife was more alive than ever and in that reality he could have continued to serve our Lord diligently as he anticipated seeing his dear wife one day soon again.]

3. **Jesus is our Heart (vs 18; 1 Cor 10.31; Col 3.17,23)** [- . . . **that in all things he** might have the preeminence. – Those who have the Lord Jesus Christ as their head and hope will quickly realize that in all of their life they are nothing without the direction and vision of their Lord. The question here is, **Why are you doing what you are doing?**]

[In everything in your life is the Lord Jesus Christ first? Someone might think, “Well, Jesus doesn't have to be first in everything.” I'm not sure how our Lord Jesus Christ can be anything less than first in everything. If our Lord created all things for His pleasure then how would a born again Christian help but give the Lord Jesus Christ preeminence in their life. The Bible says,]

[1 Corinthians 10:31 ³¹ Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.]

[Colossians 3:17 ¹⁷ And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.]

[Colossians 3:23 ²³ And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;]

[That Jesus is to have the preeminence in our lives is meant to give us purpose and focus in our lives. The whole purpose of our lives as the people of our Lord Jesus Christ is that we might please Him and glorify Him.]

B. Must Be Full (vs 19-22) [*For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;* - Now here is a key phrase for us to remember. The fullness of life is wrapped up in the preeminence of Christ. Those who have made the Lord Jesus Christ first in their life will be those who will find fullness in life. **Everyone wants to have what they would call a full life!** But just what is a fulfilled life. Our text reveals that a fulfilled life consists of,]

1. **Our Restoration (vs 20; 1 Pet 1.18-19; 1 John 1.7; 1 Tim 2.5-6; Eph 2.13-17; Titus 3.5)** [*And, **having made peace through the blood of his cross,** by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven..* – How does the blood of his cross bring peace and reconciliation? The Bible says,]

[1 Peter 1:18-19 ¹⁸ *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; ¹⁹ **But with the precious blood of Christ,** as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:]*

[1 John 1:7 ⁷ *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, **and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.**]*

[The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which represents the full payment for the penalty of our sins, washes our sins away, when we confess them, and reconciles us unto God. This complete cleansing and forgiveness gives us a peace that passes all understanding and that peace will bring fulfillment out of any set of circumstances.]

[Let us be very clear here, our text connects our reconciliation and peace to the blood and cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,]

- [No priest or confessional will bring you this peace and reconciliation.]

[1 Timothy 2:5-6 ⁵ *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; ⁶ Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.]*

- [No baptism or religious practice will bring you peace and reconciliation.]

[Ephesians 2:13-17 ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; ¹⁵ Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; ¹⁶ And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: ¹⁷ And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.]

- [No good deeds or human works will bring you peace and reconciliation.]

[Titus 3:5 ⁵ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;]

[The blood our Lord Jesus Christ shed on Calvary's Cross is the only things that can reconcile you with God and restore your eternal peace with God. That peace will pour fulfillment into your life. Our Lord Jesus Christ will restore our relationship with God. Our restoration is realized in our forgiveness. Forgiveness removes guilt and brings peace. Without peace there will be no fullness in life.]

2. **Our Reconciliation (vs 21-22)** [- *And you, that **were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works**, yet now **hath he reconciled** ²² **In the body of his flesh through death, to present you **holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight****: - In our Lord's restoration we receive forgiveness full and free and what a glory our Lord's complete forgiveness is. Our Lord's glorious forgiveness makes us fit for the reconciliation He provides for us. We are no longer the enemies of God. We are no longer at enmity with God. We are so completely forgiven that we are now presented as holy and unblameable and unreprouable before God.]*

[The world may still look at you and say,]

- [There is a drunk, but God sees his child.]

- [There is a drug addict, but God sees one forgiven]
- [There is a thief, but God sees one unblameable]
- [There is a liar, but God sees one unprovable]

[Now, live your life in holiness. Live as one who is forgiven and reconciled to God.]

[To know that you have been completely forgiven by God and have been reconciled to God will give you fulfillment in life. This is the source of the only true fulfillment and contentment available to mankind.]

C. Must Be Followed (vs 23-29) [- ***If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel,*** which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; ²⁴ Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: ²⁵ Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; - Make no mistake about it, the fulfillment of life is found in the preeminent Lord Jesus Christ. Place Jesus first in your life and you will know the forgiveness and reconciliation that will make your life full and purposeful. However, let anything in this world or life get first place over the Lord Jesus Christ and that fulfillment will quickly fade away. The evidence that Jesus Christ is first in your life is revealed by your life. Christian you can be moved away from the preeminence of Christ.]

[How do you know what has first place in your life? What do you make time for, and what do you do no matter what? Now remember that our text states that Christ is the head of the Church, so let me use the Church as an example.]

- [Will you go to work with a head ache, a light cold, or when the weather is bad outside while staying home from Church for those same reasons?]
- [Will you work your job with difficult people while staying home from Church because some one at Church has offended you?]
- [Will you go out for your favorite recreational activity on a nice sunny spring or summer day while laying out from Church for that activity?]

[When we say the Lord Jesus Christ is first in our lives we must admit our actions reveal far more about our priorities than our words do. Are you being moved away from the hope of the gospel, which is the preeminence of the Lord Jesus Christ? Paul notes two things that manifest the preeminence of Christ in us in our text.]

1. **The Manifestation Of Ministry (vs 26-27; 1 John 5.11-13)** [– *Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: ²⁷ To whom God would make **known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory**: - The glory of our restoration and reconciliation with Christ is Christ in us. Christ in us is the result of the first thing we must have in order to be reconciled and restored through Christ. That is the new birth, one must first be born again if they would know the fullness of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. John wrote,]*

[1 John 5:11-13 ¹¹ And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. ¹³ These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.]

[You will have no hope of glory if you do not have Christ in you and you will not have Christ in you if you have not asked Jesus to save you. There is nothing in this world or life, apart from Christ, that will give you hope and fulfillment in life. All lasting, true hope and fulfillment are wrapped up in the Lord Jesus Christ.]

2. **The Measure of Maturity (vs 28-29)** [– *Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: ²⁹ Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. – Everything Paul did in ministry was focused upon bringing lost people to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the ministry and focus of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are reconciled to God through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ must be preeminent or first in our hearts and lives and when He is we will know the fulfillment and purpose of God in our lives. If Jesus is first in our lives then we must know that He is the head of the Church and our purpose and fulfillment will be found through the body he is the head of, which is the Church. The Church will strive, as Paul, to*

bring all people to know the presence of Christ in them through the new birth.]

[The measure of spiritual maturity within the people of God is revealed when the people of God make Christ first in their life, understand God's work through His body, and find fulfillment by joyfully doing the work of our Lord.]

CrossRoads Baptist Church, February 28, 2010