



# VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

## A Letter of Recommendation

**Preeminent. Christ's Place in the World | Part 4**

**Tim Badal | January 4, 2015 | Colossians 1:15-20**



Turn to the book of Colossians as we continue in our series. Before Christmas, we began to dig into Colossians, trying to understand the culture and people to whom Colossians was written. We've learned in the introduction that the church in Colossae was a small, yet growing church. It was a church that was in the midst of a crossroads, like many modern churches, and they were inundated with false teachers. It got so bad that the church's elder, Epaphras, needed to seek advice and wisdom. He sought wisdom from the man who had led him to the Lord, the man who had discipled him: the Apostle Paul. Epaphras didn't bring the Apostle Paul to Colossae. In fact, the Apostle Paul never met the Colossians. Instead he wrote a letter from Rome where he was imprisoned. What we have in our Bibles is the outcome of the meeting of Epaphras and the Apostle Paul.

How is Paul going to address these issues? Right away, starting in Colossians 1:15, Paul discusses the problem. The Colossians had been duped into believing that Jesus wasn't the incarnate God Who put on flesh and made His dwelling among us. The Colossian people had begun to devalue Who Jesus was and what He had done. As a result, other things took precedence. This happens any time you devalue Jesus. Other things take precedence, preeminence and predominance in your thinking. In Colossians, they elevated other things like the worship of angels, wisdom and knowledge. They especially valued Gnosticism—that secret wisdom and knowledge that defined the spiritually elite. They also had fallen prey to the idea that abstaining from certain things produced greater holiness. They weren't merely abstaining from sinful things, but things that were perfectly right for Christians to practice. They did this so that they could promote a super-spiritual elitism.

In light of all of these things, Paul, after his prayer for the Colossian people, starts to tell them they are behaving in an unbiblical way. They need to have a true understanding of Who Jesus Christ is and what He has done. Even though this book was written 2,000 years ago, this same issue is present today. False teachers in our day attack the three major roles of the Person of Jesus:

1. Prophet. They attack His role as Prophet by taking the words of Christ and twisting them to accomplish their evil ways.
2. Priest. They attack the validity of His death, burial and resurrection. They deny His sufficiency. They deny that the resurrection actually took place, giving other reasons for what happened.
3. King. This sin was the most pronounced during the time of Colossian believers. They believed that Jesus Christ was not, in fact, fully God and fully man as the Scriptures declare. They perceived Jesus as insufficient for a restored relationship with God. He was important, but He wasn't all-important. He was not the Preeminent One.

Paul addresses these three issues in our text. These are the words of God and they ought to impact your life. Look at Colossians 1:15-20. I am going to replace the personal pronouns for Jesus with the name "Jesus" because I think it is important to remember Who this passage is talking about. Here is what the Apostle Paul says:

*[Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by [Jesus] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through [Jesus] and for [Jesus]. And [Jesus] is before all things, and in [Jesus] all things hold together. And [Jesus] is the head of the body, the church. [Jesus] is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,*

*that in everything [Jesus] might be preeminent. For in [Jesus] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through [Jesus] to reconcile to [Jesus] all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of [Jesus]' cross.*

Over the years, as both an employer and a pastor, I have been asked numerous times to write letters of recommendation for people. I just wrote one recently for a woman who was heading off to college. These letters have been used for all types of things: students applying to college, people looking for a new job, people who are in the process of adopting a child, people who have moved on from here to a new church body, and also for people receiving awards in their schools and work places and neighborhoods. Yet, while I have written many letters of recommendation, a few weeks ago I received a letter that had tremendous impact on me. It was a packet of well-packaged information that asked for a letter of recommendation for an individual whom I have spent very little time with. However, this individual has had a profound impact upon my life here on earth. I had never really met him, but this letter could result in a significant reward of \$1 million.

A couple months ago, I witnessed an automobile accident that claimed the life of a 52-year-old man, a husband and father of two. He was being a Good Samaritan to an 84-year-old woman who had lost control of her car. I shared only a few moments with him as he died in my arms. I received a letter from the Carnegie Foundation to write a letter of recommendation for this man because he was a finalist for the award for acts of heroism. The prize of \$1 million would be given to his surviving family. It was amazing that they wanted my eyewitness account of the incident that would take his life—the act of heroism.

We know that not all letters of recommendation are this somber. However, when we write letters of recommendation, we are affirming certain things about an individual. There has only been one time when I have been tempted to lie in a letter of recommendation. I told the individual that I didn't think I was qualified to write the letter. I had some concerns about what they wanted me to write. I said, "Here's the thing. I will write what I believe is my best recommendation for you. I'll send it to you before I send it to the people, and you can tell me what you think." After reading my letter, he told me that he would find someone else to write it.

We want to be honest and say things that are actually true about an individual. What we have in our text today is Paul's letter of recommendation about Jesus. Before you think, "Well, that's not important. If Jesus is God, who really cares what a fallible man like the Apostle Paul has to say about Him?" However, these are not merely the words of a human being; they are the words of our Heavenly Father. In Colossians 1:15-20, God the Father establishes why Jesus Christ deserves all the praise and all the glory and why He is to be worshipped as the Second Person of the Trinity—God of god, Light of light.

Paul gives us three reasons in our text which establishes God's letter of recommendation for Jesus Christ by reminding us of His:

## 1. Personal Characteristics

Within our text, Paul writes some of the most concise and comprehensive statements about the deity of Jesus Christ and His total equality with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. As we put the spotlight on Jesus, remember this cardinal truth for orthodox believers: Jesus Christ is not only God, but He is part of the Triune Godhead—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Three Persons, yet one God. It is the great mystery of the Christian faith. When we talk about the unity of the Trinity—that Jesus is the exact representation of the Father—we must recognize that Jesus is not the Father and Jesus is not the Spirit. Nor is the Father the Spirit or the Son. Likewise, the Spirit is not the Son or the Father. They are three distinct People in one Godhead. Don't fall prey to other false doctrines. Hold these things in unity, yet in Trinity.

When Paul wrote about Jesus, did he become enamored so that he made things up about Jesus? When we talk about Jesus' deity, understand that it appears throughout the Scriptures.

- The Apostle John, who walked and talked with Jesus, wrote, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"* (John 1:1).
- *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14).
- The writer of Hebrews talks about it in 1:3, *"He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature."*
- Peter confesses to Jesus, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"* (Matthew 16:16).
- Jesus Himself, to the chagrin of all the Pharisees, affirms over and over again that He is more than just a Prophet, more than a Priest, but the King of kings, the Lord of lords and the Great I Am.

In this text is the core of what theologians call, "Christology" —what we believe about Christ. Before you think this is open to debate because the Mormons, the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Oneness Pentecostals say so, we have the weight of Scripture and church history on our side. We stand with all orthodox Christians. This truth is agreed upon by many different denominations of Christianity, though we differ on many other things. As Christians we worship God as One in unity, but Three in Trinity. Equal in one, yet, three distinct Persons.

Just as in our day, the deity of Christ was attacked within the Colossian church. Paul addresses this issue right away. After his prayer for the Colossian believers, he begins to reiterate the truth that Jesus Christ has been, is and always will be the second Person of the Triune God.

## He is the image of the invisible God

Colossians 1:15 says that Jesus is the Image Bearer of God Himself. To put it in a nutshell, in Christ the invisible God has become visible. The word “image” there comes from the Greek word *eikon*. The word *eikon* was used all the time. In Paul’s day, once a person finished writing a letter, he or she would affix an icon to the end of it. It served as a kind of “caller I.D.” that confirmed who really wrote the letter. An icon took on various forms:

1. A description about the writer so that people could be confident that it came from the person who claimed authorship. My icon would say something like, “This comes from your bald friend who loves cooking pork chops, Tim Badal.” That would be my *icon*. If they were artistic, they would draw a picture. I would draw a muscled, good-looking self-portrait. You would be able to recognize me.
2. A signet ring. The writer would take wax and pour it on the scroll and press his insignia into it. The letter would be sealed with a ring that only the writer possessed. It proved that the person was who he said he was.
3. Coins.
4. An image in a mirror. When you look into a mirror, you see an *icon* of yourself. Some of you looked in the mirror this morning and didn’t like what you saw and spent some time working on your *icon*, prettying it up so that you could come to church.

This is the type of thing that Paul is talking about. Jesus is the *icon* of God. Jesus doesn’t simply look like God. God is invisible. He doesn’t have a face that man can look at. However, it means that Jesus is whatever God is. If God is spiritual, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, holy, just and righteous, then so is Jesus. The writer of Hebrews understood this. Hebrews 1:3, “*He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature.*”

Be careful not to think that Jesus is simply “a chip off the ol’ block” of the Father. Don’t think that He looks a little bit like, or resembles God in some faint way. Each of my children carries some resemblance of me, but they are not an icon of their father. They look, sound and act like me, but they do not carry an image of me. They are not my exact representation. They are not me. They are not their mother. They are their own person. Yet we know that Jesus says to Phillip in John 14:8, “*Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’*”

The word *icon* means a “complete representation, a detailed reproduction, a portrait, or a photograph.” William Barclay put it this way, “Without Christ, you and I cannot get beyond the shadows of God.” To put it in modern day vernacular—without being trite or casual and to help some of our younger people in a way that they may understand—in Christ the invisible God took a selfie. What are the implications of this?

## The Implication of the Incarnation

God became flesh and made His dwelling among us. When people in First Century Israel looked into the eyes and the face of Jesus, they were looking into the eyes and face of God. I think of the song, “Mary Did You Know?” and ask the question, “Did you know that this baby in your hands is the Creator of the universe?” There are implications. This Jesus Who walked for 33 years on this earth is God. The jury is set. The judge has made his rendering: Jesus is God. He’s not a god, as the Jehovah’s Witnesses say. He’s not a half-breed. He’s not a man who became a god, as the Mormon’s say. He is not a phantom. He’s not a spiritual emanation like many heretics today say. The false teachers of Colossae didn’t throw Jesus away. They didn’t hate Jesus. Instead, they made him like some sort of Marvel super-hero or Greek demigod. Not as powerful as God, but more powerful than human beings. Jesus is not somewhere in between the two; He is God.

One of the ways that false teachers belittle Jesus is by twisting Paul’s words at the end of Colossians 1:15. Paul says that Jesus is the firstborn over all creation. Humanly speaking, I wish those words were never penned in our Bibles because of the rank heresy that has been espoused by the Jehovah’s Witnesses and Latter Day Saint Mormons. But I want you to remember that Scripture is not determined by the idiocy of men. Scripture is determined by the mind and mouth of God. Sadly, since the ascension of Christ, there have been some who have tried to make Jesus less than God. They take this verse to mean that Jesus had a beginning, and was the first thing that God created, that He was number one on creation’s list of things to do.

This same false teaching is peddled when people knock on your door today. When those knocks come, I am saddened when I hear of people from this church, like many other evangelicals, who have no idea how to defend the deity of Jesus. What a sad commentary on us. We cannot even defend Who Jesus Christ is and what the Word of God says about His deity against worthless heresies. That is going to change. This battle with this terrible heresy has raged for centuries.

It is in part what made St. Nicholas (now known as Santa Claus) famous. Let me give you a history lesson about Santa Claus. In the fourth century St. Nicholas was a pastor from the Lycos Valley in Turkey. Where is the city of Colossae? The Lycos Valley in Turkey. In the fourth century, 320 years after Christ, Nicholas would be called, with many other prominent leaders, by Constantine to become part of the greatest theological conference since Acts 15 and the Council of Jerusalem. The Arian controversy was being discussed. Arius was one of the "mega-church" pastors in Africa. Everyone knew Arius' name as one of the most famous preachers in his day. But there was a part of Arius' teaching that seemed heretical, so the Council of Nicaea gathered to investigate the validity of Arius' teachings. Arius had written a song that best publicized what he believed about Jesus. He began to sing a song about Jesus, the One Who had been created, the One Who had been made a little lower than God the Father, Jesus the One Who, like us, could one day become God. St. Nicholas, who was known for his fiery temper, got up, quietly walked over to Arius and slapped him. [That's why I like St. Nick.]

Nick understood what many of us don't. When Jesus is defiled by heresy, we need to respond. While we don't need to respond with our fist, we need to be able to stand and tell people Who Jesus is. If we don't truly understand Who Jesus is, we will fall to all types of heresy. It will impact the way we live, just like it did in the Colossians' day.

How do we do this? Examine. You will get a knock at the door someday. I don't know if it will be tomorrow or in the future but two people will knock on your door and say, "We want to talk to you about Jesus and our Jehovah God." They will begin to say things about God and refute doctrines that you believe. Will you be ready? I want you to be ready. I want you to prove yourself faithful because the standard of Christ demands that we can defend Him.

Let's look at their arguments. They will use the phrase, "Firstborn of all creation" and they will say that Jesus Christ was created. That is not the fact. That is not the Biblical truth. Let's examine it and let the Bible speak for itself. First of all, understand that Paul refutes with two powerful descriptions of Who Jesus is. He is the image and the essence of God and the Firstborn of, or the Preeminent One over, all creation. Paul declares that Jesus is not a created being, but that Christ is the essence of God made visible in human flesh. Christ is essentially and absolutely the perfect expression and representation of God the Father.

What do we do with this phrase, "Firstborn of all creation"? The answer is found in the context. Cults like to take verses out of context. Drag them back to Colossians 1:15. When they claim that "firstborn" means that Jesus is a created being, ask them, "What does it say in its context?" In the context of the passage (Colossians 1:15), when it says "*firstborn of all creation*" continue to Colossians 1:16: "*For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.*"

Let's use some logic when deciphering that verse. Seven times in that passage we see the word "all." If everything that has been created was created by Jesus, then Jesus has to be over here in the "uncreated" section, not the created section. Does that make sense? You cannot say, "Jesus is a created being" and then read Colossians 1:16 which says, "all created things were made through Jesus." For that to be true, the Jehovah's Witnesses have to change the Scriptures and have to say, "99.9% of all created things were created through Jesus. Not everything, but a lot was created by Jesus. God created Jesus so that He could create that 99.9% of everything else." It holds no water. It is not a logical conclusion. Paul articulates that there are two realms of existence:

1. Things that are created. All the things that Jesus created.
2. Things that were not created which includes the Triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). If everything that was created was by Jesus, then He has to be in the not created category and equal to the Father.

Let's also examine the word "firstborn." We have to see how it is used in other passages of Scripture. We have to see how Scripture interprets Scripture. At first glance it sounds like Jesus was the first Son of all of creation. Well, this is not how the Bible often uses the term but as we examine the Scriptures, the word "firstborn" is most often used as a title of dignity, prominence or preeminence. Over and over again being the "firstborn" is a title of supremacy. "Noah is my firstborn son." That is true with respect to time. However, that is not how this word is being used here.

- Psalm 89:27 speaks of King David being the firstborn. Let's remember our history. When Samuel anoints the new king of Israel, he goes to the house of Jesse. He starts with the oldest, or the "firstborn." Is David the first one? No.

Is David the second? No. The third? The fourth? No. Samuel goes through all the sons of Jesse to the youngest son, who was tending the flocks on the countryside. The youngest of Jesse's sons becomes the firstborn. Of all of Jesse's sons, David becomes preeminent. David becomes king. A Jehovah's Witness might say that this passage means that David is the first king of Israel. Is that true? No. Who came before David? Saul. You cannot maneuver or fiddle with this term by saying that this word always means "first in time." It doesn't mean that with David. It talks about prominence.

- Let's examine another passage. In Psalm 89:27, the psalmist calls David the highest of the kings of the world; he is the preeminent one.
- Jeremiah 31:9. Ephraim, one of the sons of Joseph, is called the firstborn.
- Genesis 41:51. Even though Manasseh was born first, Ephraim was given the title of firstborn over his brother. It has nothing to do with time. Ephraim was given a double portion of his father Joseph's inheritance.

The term "firstborn" is about blessing. It is about preeminence and predominance. Over and over again, we see that the firstborn was not the person who was born first, but the one who is made greater than the rest through blessing. Esau was born first, but his younger brother Jacob was the firstborn. "*The older shall serve the younger*" (Genesis 25:23). It denotes an inheritance from the father. It involves a special blessing and a special significance.

If that's not enough for your Jehovah's Witness encounters, let me give you another means of defense. Look at the language of this passage. In the Greek of Colossians 1:15, the word "firstborn" is *prototokos* which means "firstborn." If Paul wanted to clearly say that Jesus was the first created being, there was another word he could have used—*protoktisis*, which means "first created." If Paul wanted to clearly communicate that Jesus was the first created being, he would have used a totally different word. It would have made the Jehovah's Witnesses' arguments a slam-dunk. But Paul does not use this word. J.B. Phillips, in his paraphrase, sums it up well: "Jesus existed before all creation began and it was through him that everything was made." So when heretics come knocking at your door, don't stand there dumbfounded by their smooth talk and fancy words. Know your Bible. Defend the deity of Christ without fear or compromise. Remember: Jesus is the Preeminent One and He deserves first place in all things no matter what anyone else says.

## 2. Powerful Capabilities

Once we understand that Jesus is the image of the invisible God and the implications of what that means—Jesus Christ is equal with the Father—now Paul gives reasons why he believes this (Colossians 1:16-17). "*For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*" What is Paul saying here?

### Jesus created everything: seen and unseen

Jesus is God because He has power at His disposal. He has created everything that is visible and invisible. In this phrase, Paul uses an argument called *ad nauseum ad infinitum*. Meaning, he uses infinite words to the point of nausea. It means, "I am going to prove to you over and over again that Jesus is God." Paul says, "Hey, I don't care what you call it, whether they are things created in heaven or on earth, He created all of that. Visible and invisible, He created all of that. Whether thrones or dominions, rulers or authorities, anything you can come up with that is seen or unseen in this universe has been created by Jesus Christ." In one fell swoop Paul declares that Jesus Christ created every bit of it. From the largest of the celestial stars in the galaxies to the smallest molecule, Jesus created all of them.

Gnosticism taught that everything material or physical was sinful; spirit alone was good. Paul combats this concept by saying that all created things—the material world, our physical bodies—are good because Jesus Christ made them and rules over them. Then Paul gets even more specific and says that Jesus rules over the thrones and dominions, rulers and authorities. This encompasses both earthly and heavenly realms. Jesus created the kings and rulers in this world. We do not need to fear despots or presidents or prime ministers or monarchies or dictators of this world. We have a relationship with the One Who created those thrones. We have a relationship with the One Who placed those people on their thrones and Who has authority and power to take them from those thrones. We don't have to worry about what man can do to us (Psalm 118:6; Hebrews 13:6).

This power is also seen in the spiritual or heavenly realm. Jesus created and is in charge of all the angels, from the highest archangel like Gabriel and Michael, down to every single cherub and seraph, and the demons and the devil, too. Jesus created and is in charge of them. Paul reminds the Colossian believers that Jesus is not some spiritual Being Who is a little less than God

but a little more than angels (Colossians 2:18). Jesus isn't in the same league as the angels. The angels are not in the same league as Jesus—He created them. They will always listen and always worship Him as their God.

What does Jesus do with the universe that He created?

### **Jesus claims the universe as his possession**

Not only did Jesus create these things in the beginning, but according to Colossians 1:16, "*...all things were created through him (the past) and for him (the present).*" This slams the door in the face of anyone who thinks that Christ left the world on its own after He created everything.

One pastor put it this way, "Stop thinking that Jesus in creation took the universe like a top and spun it and left it spinning on its own and went on a break. He created it so He might relate to His creation, that He might have fellowship with it."

Shirley Guthrie put it this way, "Jesus is not a King who preserves His majesty and honor by shutting Himself up in the splendor of His palace. No. Jesus' majesty is one of love so great that Jesus left the palace to live among His subjects as one of them, sharing their condition even at the risk of vulnerability to the attack of His Own enemies."

That is the Incarnation. Jesus left heaven and became one of us. He did so despite vulnerability to the attack of the devil. Jesus did it so that He could take ownership over all of our lives. He did it so He could be our great High Priest Who could sympathize with us in every way. He did it because He is uniquely concerned with all aspects of world affairs, even including the mundane events of your Monday morning.

Abraham Kuyper put it this way, "There is not a square inch of all of creation that Jesus doesn't cry out, 'This is Mine. It belongs to Me.'" It all belongs to Him.

### **Jesus controls the universe as Sovereign King and Lord**

In Colossians 1:17, He created it, He claimed it and now He is before it. When it says "He is before all things," literally Paul means, "He's at the helm. He's at the steering wheel. He's set the vision of where this universe is going." Unlike all created things, Jesus is completely autonomous and no one tells Him what to do. He doesn't require anything from anyone. The idea of control is more than Jesus simply being in charge, but that He is what keeps the universe from falling into chaos. Nothing will happen in this universe without the express consent of Jesus Christ Himself. No black hole, no nebulae, no solar system will ever move a nano-inch without Jesus seeing to it.

How does that impact you? You never have to worry that the universe that God created will collapse upon you. Annie was right. "The sun will come out tomorrow." Why? Jesus is King. If Jesus sees fit for the sun to rise, it will. You don't have to wonder about it. It rises and it does so in perfect timing, just as it has 100,000 times before. If celestial bodies, if galaxies, are at Christ's bidding, then so is your life. Your life is in His hands. Not a single thing will ever happen to you without Jesus allowing it. That's what you need to remember when you're in the doctor's office. That's what you need to remember when the bank account says zero. That's what you need to remember in a world of terrorism and personal tragedy. You have a God Who is completely and utterly and always in control. You do not need to fear. You do not need to give way because you have a God in Jesus Christ Whom you can trust. He is in control of all things. Remember this. We do not grieve as the world grieves (1 Thessalonians 4:13). We do not fear as the world fears. We do not lose our cool because Christ is in control.

## **3. Plan and Commission**

Paul finishes by pointing out the implications of Jesus' deity. Because Jesus is God, He has power. Because Jesus is God, He holds positions. Because Jesus is God, He has plans that He will see come to fruition. Because Jesus is God, there is no equal to Him. He can expect respect. This is how Paul finishes his treatise on Jesus' divinity. Paul reminds us of Jesus':

### **Payment on the cross**

Because Jesus is God, He is the One Who was able to make the payment on the cross. "*For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross*" (Colossians 1:19-20). Because Jesus is God, because the fullness of God dwells in Him, Jesus Christ is the perfect God-Man. Jesus Christ alone is the One Who can pay our penalty on the cross. He is the only One Who can make peace between man and God. He's the only One Who can reconcile sinners to a holy God. He's the only One Who could have died on the cross on Golgotha's hill for our sins. He's the only one. He did it. He did it because He loves us. The God of this universe Who holds

everything together loves you and desires to have a relationship with you. That is why He put on flesh and died a sinner's death on that cross. He was the only One Who could.

## Place in the church

Because He died a sinner's death on the cross, because He took our place, He now presides over a certain place in the church. Colossians 1:18, "*And he is the head of the body, the church...*" If Jesus claims the church as His body, because He is the firstborn from the dead, because He was the One Who bought the church by the price of His blood, then He is the One in control of the church. I need to remind myself of this. This is not my church. This is not my pulpit. This church was bought with a price I could not pay. This church was given gifts by a Savior; gifts I cannot give. Therefore, if all of this is true, shouldn't the church crave for Jesus to lead it as our Head? The church isn't about a man. It isn't about the ministries it does. It isn't about the money it raises. Village Bible Church will cease to be part of the church unless it continues to be all about Jesus. A church is not a church if it doesn't do what the Head tells it to do.

## Preeminence and coronation as King

Jesus must be preeminent. He must be crowned King. This passage can be summed up in one verse, "*...that in everything he might be preeminent*" (Colossians 1:18). This is the theme of this book. This is the theme of our series. This should be the goal of our lives. Every thought and decision we make must come from the knowledge that Jesus is Preeminent. Every dollar we spend should be spent in light of Jesus' prominence. Every relationship we have, may Christ be first. May every second of your life center on the glory and worship of Jesus Christ because He is your Preeminent One, your King of kings. He deserves that and so much more.

Therefore we must engage in some:

## Personal and practical considerations

You have heard this message on the supremacy of Christ in all things. There are some questions that you need to ask yourself in light of this message:

1. Do you believe that Jesus is God? Don't assume that just because you go to a church you believe this and affirm it as one of the greatest doctrines the Scriptures declare.
2. If you believe it, do you live in light of it? Do you live in such a way that people see Christ's preeminence in you? Are you displaying it to others?

What things need to change in your life today? What areas of your life have you tried to keep as your own to make yourself preeminent and not Christ? No Christian can claim that Christ is preeminent and then choose to live for himself or herself. If that's what you're doing in your Christian life, you are an oxymoron, a paradox.

Let me close with a quote from Richard Sibbes. He says, "The whole of a Christian should be nothing more than the praises and thanks to God. We should never eat nor sleep nor do anything, but to eat and sleep to God's glory, to work for God's glory, to talk to the glory of God and to do all things to the glory and praise of His Name." That's our job this week. That's our goal, to make Christ preeminent in our lives and in everything we do. When Christ becomes preeminent in our world, our world will never be the same. That's our job. That's our work.