

A Résumé Like No Other

(Colossians 1:15-20)

(preached 3/20/16; Sunday AM)

Introduction

In the 5th grade spelling bee, it was down to 3 of us.

The teacher looked at me and called out the word
RENDEZVOUS.

I had never heard that word before, so I asked her
for a definition.

She gave me one..

Rendezvous is “a meeting planned for a certain time
and a certain place.”

It didn’t help.

I asked her to repeat the word.

Rendezvous.

My palms began to sweat, my heart began to race.

I had no idea beyond the first letter which I thought
was an R.

So, I simply began...

RENDEZVOUS....R O N D A Y V O O
....RENDEZVOUS

The teacher frowned, told me I was wrong and asked me to sit down.

I got back to my seat, and my friend was sitting beside me..

He had a copy of the word list...

The teacher would give you one when you missed a word...

And he looked at me, and started grinning...

“You really butchered that word...”

“You didn’t even do it justice...”

And he was right.

Boy, was I way off.

Today, we come to a passage of Scripture, and I assure you before I start that I won’t be able to do it justice as well..

It is one of passages of Scripture that causes you to take a deep breath after your read each phrase...

Because what we are going to look at today is the resume of the Lord Jesus Christ..

How do you sum up the Lord Jesus Christ in mere words?

Well, Paul is going to do that for us this morning under the inspiration of God...

God Himself provided Paul with the words to describe Jesus Christ...

In these verses this morning, we will have a description of Someone who is indescribable...

Yet God in his mercy will describe Him to us in words we can understand.....

So, let's get started this morning and let's tackle this incredible section verse by verse as we come to see the superiority of Jesus Christ....

I have divided this passage into 3 sections...

I. Jesus Christ and Creation (15-16)

II. Jesus Christ and Position (17-18)

III. Jesus Christ and Reconciliation (19-20)

Let's simply begin in verse 15 with....

I. Jesus Christ and Creation (15-16)

Let's read verses 15-16....

15 [w]He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For [x]by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Now, let's set our selves in this book.

We have established that the book of Colossians was written by Paul to a church at Colossae...

The church was founded shortly after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus...

A man named Epaphrus had come to here Paul preach in Ephesus, and he had taken the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ back to Colossae...

And a church had been started by people who believed in the gospel there..

But soon after it started, Satan started attacking it with false teaching..

People had come into the church there and attacked the sufficiency of Jesus to save them...

Their argument was that Jesus wasn't enough...

Their argument was that a person also needed some special knowledge to be saved...

They needed Jesus + some secret higher knowledge....

Another group said that Jesus wasn't enough...

They claimed that people needed Jesus + following the rules to be saved...

And look, these arguments are around today...

People attack the sufficiency of Jesus today...

If you ask a Mormon, he will say that salvation is Jesus + all you can do in order to be saved...

If you ask a Roman Catholic, he will say that salvation is Jesus + his good works...

Some people refuse to see the incredible truth that salvation is found by having faith alone in Jesus Christ.

We talked about how some people see that as too easy or too simple and try to make it harder than the Bible describes..

So, the pastor at Colossae set out to find Paul in Rome and get instruction on how to correct this teaching...

And God uses Paul to write a letter to the church at Colossae to assure them of the sufficiency of Jesus Christ to save them...

Now, when Paul starts out his letter, he opens with a greeting introducing himself...

And then he expresses his joy over hearing that there was a true church in Colossae...

And last week, he told them that he had been praying for them to grow in their knowledge of God...

Because our knowledge of God leads to a growing obedience to God...

It causes our life to bear fruit...

It leads us to being mature believers...

And then last week, Paul breaks out in a prayer of thanksgiving to God over the truth of the gospel...

And how salvation makes us qualified for heaven...

Gives us an inheritance...

Was rescue of us from sin and darkness...

And then he ends his prayer of thanksgiving in verses 13-14 by saying how we are now forgiven and and part of the kingdom of God's Son....

And just the thought of Christ causes Paul to break out with a description of Jesus in verses 15-20...

The 3 Stooges were before my time, but I watched a lot of re-runs of them, and my favorite is the scene that is called Niagara Falls...

In that scene, just the mention of the two words, "Niagara Falls" transport Moe to a time when he got in a fight...

And the words even hypnotize him and cause him to play out the fight scene with whoever is hear him at the time...

It just happens to be Curly and he gets beat up a couple times just by accidentally mentioning the words "Niagara Falls."

Well as we read the letters that Paul writes to the churches in the NT, we often find Paul kinda carried off at times at just the mention of a single word...

This time, just the mention of God's Son in verse 13 causes Paul to take a minute to describe Jesus to the church at Colossae...

And in taking this rabbit trail of sorts, Paul lays out for the church at Colossae and for us, this glorious description of the Lord Jesus Christ...

That starts in verse 15 and ends in verse 20...

It is one of the highest passages in all the Bible...

People point to John 3:16....

People point to Psalm 23....

But Colossians 1:15-20 may be the richest and deepest verses of the entire Bible...

And I am charged with trying to give you the truth of them in 15 minutes...

But let us do our best to see the majesty of Jesus Christ in this incredible section of Scripture...

Do you want to know why Jesus is enough?

Well, let's begin with Jesus Christ and creation...

In verse 15, here is an incredible truth about Jesus....

He is the visible image of the invisible God..

God is spirit according to the Scriptures, but Jesus is the image of God...

He has hands, feet, head, etc...

Jesus gives us a picture of something that we can't see..

Jesus said, "If you have seen me, you seen God."

And on top of that, Jesus is the perfect image of God...

Though we are made in the image of God, we are not the perfect image of God...

The fall has marred the image of God in us...

Think of it as a broken mirror, -our image is not perfect reflection of God...

Now, what is incredible is that at the moment we are saved, we reflect God's image better and we continue reflecting his image better as we grow in our faith...

We will never put the mirror back together, but through the Spirit that sanctifies us, we begin to slowly put the pieces of the mirror back in place...

Jesus never broke the image of God because he never sinned...

He perfectly reflected the image of God his entire life...

Then Paul writes that Jesus is the firstborn of all creation...

This is where the false religions of the world love to hang out in the Bible...

A Jehovah's witness will take you to this verse and tell you...

“See Jesus was a created being...He was born first.”

Your Bible proves that Jesus was not equal to God...

Besides taking them to all the verses where Jesus claimed to be God, how do you answer this claim...

Take your pen out and in the margin beside this verse write Psalm 89:27...

I have put part of this psalm on the screen for us..

This is a psalm about King David...

God had anointed him king over Israel, and listen to how God describes him in verse 27...

27

***“I also shall make him My firstborn,
The highest of the kings of the earth.***

This is the same word here that is used in Col 1:15...

Now, a quick question for you...

Was David the first king ever born?

Well, no.

There were other kings on earth before David, and Saul was even king of Israel before David.

Was David the firstborn man?

Well, no.

How about this?

Was David even the firstborn in his family?

And the answer to that is no as well..

He was actually the last born of his brothers...

So, what does firstborn mean in psalm 89:27?

It simply means that God elevated David to the highest rank of all the kings of the earth....

He was the most important..

He ranked first...

Firstborn had nothing to do with order of birth....

It meant order of importance...

One more to throw in the white space of your Bible...

Exodus 4:22...

22 Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Israel is My son, My firstborn.

Was Israel the first nation of the world?

No, there were nations in the world in Genesis 11 at the tower of Babel....

And it wasn't until Gen 12 that God even went to Abraham to establish the nation of Israel....

So, does firstborn mean that Israel was the first nation created?

No, it simply means that Israel ranks ahead of all the nations...

Israel holds the place of prominence among the nations.

Now to be fair, can firstborn relate to time?

Sure, it can.

But in this context and in other contexts, firstborn simply means that what is being described simply holds the place of importance..

It is first in all this...

And in the case of Colossians 1:15, Jesus is God's image and He ranks first over all things...

And we see another reason why firstborn can't mean created in verse 16 because Jesus was the one responsible for all creation...

Verse 16 leaves nothing out....

ALL THINGS were created by Jesus...

In the heavens of outer space and on the earth, nothing exists that wasn't created by Jesus Himself...

That even includes things that we can't see, like the spiritual wars that rage around us all the time...

No one in those battles were created apart from Jesus Christ...

Satan is a created being....

He was created a holy angel, but fell along with other angels and became an enemy of God along with his demons...

That form part of the unseen world along with angels who remained loyal to God..

All things were created by Jesus Christ and then at the end of verse 16, we also see that all creation exists for Christ..

Creation exists to glorify Christ...

Everyone exists to glorify Christ...

That is why when someone elevates creation over Christ, they miss the point...

Creation exists to glorify Jesus....

Not the other way around..

The same is true for us...

We exist because Jesus created us to bring him glory in our lives...

That is why taking glory from Christ by seeking the praise and applause of people is sinful...

You were not created to be glorified in this world...

You were created so Jesus can be glorified through you...

In regards to what was happening in Colossae, what could you possibly add to Jesus that he didn't already possess...

Why would you need to add knowledge to Jesus?

He created all knowledge.

Why would you need to add good works to Jesus?

He created all good works...

If it all belongs to Jesus, all you need is Him...

Jesus Christ Reigns Over Creation...

Next, let's read verses 17-18...

II. Jesus Christ Holds the First Position (17-18)

17 He [y]is before all things, and in Him all things [z]hold together. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

To follow up what Paul said in verses 15-16, he reminds us of Jesus Christ and his position....

First, Jesus is before all things...

Jesus had no beginning; he was there when all things were created because He did all the creating.

And then we read this...

In Him, all things hold together...

Science is left with a lot of unanswered questions....

What keeps the earth from flying off its orbit and hurtling into outer space?

What keeps the sun in its place at the perfect distance to allow life to exist on earth?

What keeps our entire universe from being
swallowed by a massive black hole?

And you go and listen to astro physicists try and
explain the science of all that, but the truth is the
Jesus Christ keeps the whole universe by the Word
of His mouth...

When the kids sing, He's got the whole world in his
hands, they are singing the truth of Colossians
1:17...

Let me give you a quick thought....

You want to know what a chaotic world looks like?

Let Jesus simply move his hand that sustains us
this world just a bit, and chaos will break out
everywhere..

Let him remove his hand completely and the whole
universe collapses...

Much has been reported about the riots in this
country over the past few years...

People out of control in their protests and rallies...

If not for Jesus Christ holding this world together,
that unrest would spread to every part of the globe

and this world would literally be burned down in matter of time..

Guess what the future looks like for this world?

In the final 7 years of it, Jesus will weaken his grip on the world just a bit, and the whole world will be nothing but chaos...

He will eventually let go all together, and the world as we know it will be destroyed by fire..

Yes, it is bad in the world, but Jesus holds it all together still...

Please don't want for him to loosen his grip anymore...

You don't want to be around in that world...

Repent and come to Christ....

The One who holds all of creation together is the One who can begin to put you back together as well...

Paul goes on to say in verse 18 that Jesus is also head of the church...

If he is over all, He is certainly over the church...

He died for the church, and He lives to give life to the church...

That is why you answer to no man when you are part of the church...

You answer to the Lord...

That is why you follow no man when you are part of the church...

You follow the Lord Jesus Christ....

You read His words and you obey His words...

You don't listen to the words of a bishop or a cardinal or a pope, you listen to the word of Christ found in Scripture..

This church at Pine Grove doesn't belong to Bud Moss, it belong to the Lord Jesus Christ...

This is His church.

I can't do what I want to do here..

You can't do what you want here...

We do what the Lord says...

He is our head.

Paul then adds that Jesus is also the most important resurrected person in the world....

And that is certainly true...

Jesus' resurrection gives me hope of resurrection...

I cant say that for Lazarus' resurrection from the dead to the young girl that Jesus brought back from the dead..

Guess what happened to both of them?

They were resurrected only to die again because of their sin..

Jesus was resurrected, never to face death again...

And then the end of verse 18 sums it all up....

Jesus Christ is to have first place in everything...

He is ranked #1 because

He is God,...

He is the image of God....

He created everything....

And He holds everything together.....

He is the head of the church, and possesses the greatest resurrection of all time...

In football, every fan tries to convince that their team is #1....

We beat this team...

We had the hardest schedule..

We won the most games...

Everyone tries to throw out resumes to say that their team is the best...

Let me tell you this....

No one has ever even gotten close to Jesus' resume...

Not even close...

Yet, guess what most of the world believes and practices?

Their life is #1....

Most people don't even have Jesus in their top 25...

Most people live lives that demonstrate their belief that their life is the most important life in the world...

Jesus isn't first for sure, and for most people, he isn't even 50th in order of importance...

How arrogant can people be to think that they even compare to the life of Jesus Christ...

In the world, there is a #1 and the rest of us are not even close to #2 or 3 or 4....

There is Jesus Christ at #1, and nobody else is even ranked...

Yet, you wouldn't know by the lives that some people live...

People claim to have Jesus at #1 but do not keep the most basic of his commands...

People claim to have Jesus at #1 but can't give you more than a few verses of what He spoke in the Bible..

People claim to have Jesus #1 but have such a low view of Jesus' church that they are relived when they have an excuse not to come...

If Colossians is right, and it is...

But if Colossians is right and Jesus is #1 in all things, you better make sure your life reflects that truth....

And you just don't give lip service to it...

I can tell my wife all day that she is #1 but if my actions don't match that claim, it is just hot air...

Jesus Christ is first in all....

He holds the first position in the world, and He better hold in your life or you may not be His...

A final thing to see is in verses 19-20....

III. Jesus Christ Is the Source of Reconciliation **(19-20)**

Let's read verses 19-20..

19 For [aa]it was the Father's good pleasure for all the [ab]fullness to dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in [ac]heaven.

Here is the truth of verses 19-20....

Jesus is #1 in every way even to the point that he was fully God...

Verse 19 says that Jesus is fully God....

But then look at what verse 20 says...

Even though Jesus is # 1 and fully God, He went to a cross to make peace between God and man possible...

In a sense, a perfect God was treated like an imperfect man to make a way for all imperfect men and women to be saved...

When I was 4 or 5, my great uncle, whom I barely remember made me my first set of gold clubs...

According to my grandmother, he went to Western Auto, purchased a brand new set of clubs...

Brought them home, cut them off and put new grips on them to make them fit my size..

Now if you think about that, it is incredible...

Gold clubs were not cheap, but my uncle took a perfectly new pair of them and cut them off to make it possible for me to learn the game of golf with appropriate clubs...

That is an act of love...

It is also an act of love for God to take His Son, who is perfect in every way, #1 in all things, and cut Him off on the cross to make it possible for me and you to be saved and right with Him....

Yet that is truth of the gospel....

Jesus, perfect in every way, shed his blood for imperfect people to make peace possible for all who would repent and trust in Him...

One way that I know the Bible is true is that no one could make up a story like that...

A perfect Son being sacrificed for imperfect people...

It doesn't make sense to us...

If any of us had a perfect son, we would do anything to protect Him....

Yet, God took His perfect son and killed Him so that you could find a way off death row...

Who would do that?

Only a compassionate and merciful God...

This gets back to the truth that Paul is trying to get across to the Colossians...

Jesus is enough....

Because he was first and sinless and perfect, His sacrifice on the cross was sufficient...

And complete and perfect...

You don't need Jesus + anything.....

You simply need Jesus...

He has never been second place to anything...

He has never needed to improve...

And the message of salvation that comes through
His death that calls for repentance and faith in Him
is perfect in every way as well...

How can you improve on perfection?

And the same is true for the perfect gospel that had
come to the church at Colossae...

It was complete and full and accurate and glorious
and it didn't need the help of any man...

What God had delivered to them was enough to
save them fully and completely...

Conclusion

And that same gospel message comes to Pine Grove Baptist church today...

Jesus Christ is above all things...

None of us compare to his perfection...

Your sin actually puts you on the opposite side of Christ, who is sinless in every way...

The only way to be saved from your sin is to repent of your sin and trust in Christ alone to save you...

And I remind you, he is sufficient to save you...

He is the image of God...

He created all things including you..

He rules over all things...

He holds the first position in all things....

But the greatest news is that he never took advantage of being first...

Instead, he gave it all up to die in your place as the perfect Substitute for your sin...

A perfect God died for imperfect people...

Today is the day to repent of putting yourself first in all things and trust in the One who IS first in all things...

The Perfect One gave it up for the Imperfect You...

In 1738, a man by the name of Charles Wesley was feeling ill...

He and his brother had grown up in a religious movement that taught you could only be saved by living a perfect life free from sin..

Though that bothered Charles, he had done his best to live free from sin but had never had even a day's success...

One day, he was reading a sermon a passage in Galatians and was convinced that Jesus' sacrifice had earned his salvation and never works of his own...

He reportedly found his way to this passage in Colossians that talked about the sufficiency and supremacy of Jesus Christ and was saved...

The following day, he wrote this in his diary...

“At midnight I gave myself up to Christ: assured I was safe, sleeping or waking. I had continued experience of his power to overcome all temptation; and confessed, with joy and surprise, that he was able to do exceedingly abundantly for me, above what I can ask or think.”

He then sat down a few days later and wrote this hymn, called “And Can It Be”

Here is one stanza from the hymn based on Colossians 1:19-20...

***He left his Father’s throne above,
Emptied himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam’s helpless race:
’Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For, O my God, it found out me!***

***Amazing love! how can it be
That thou, my God, should die for me?***

Yet that is the truth of Jesus Christ...

Perfect in every way; King of all creation...

Yet died to save those who sinned against Him...

Amazing love, how can it be...

Respond to God’s love today....let us pray