

The Man, The Myth, The Legend
Week 5: Jesus and Eternity - Part I

**I. We've started this fall with an intentional focus on:
Jesus!**

A. The theme for the year is "Every Way But One!" If we're a community defined by our pursuit of Jesus, we can be different in every other way and still move unified in the mission to push through boundaries to share God's story from Norfolk to the nations.

- 1. If we're going to do that, we have to do the hard work of actually defining our pursuit. The word "Christian" has many assumptions that go with it, but at its core, to be a Christian is to be a Jesus follower.**
- 2. If we crack open our Bibles (which I highly recommend doing) we will discover a story. There are certainly propositional statements or statements that simply assert a fact or command, but more often in the Bible we get narrative, poetry, and vision (Apocalyptic) literature, and its primary purpose is to reveal the character and work of God and His purpose for humanity! I think that's amazing!! There is a cohesiveness to the Bible that reveals God's plan to be in relationship with humanity, even though when given the choice, humanity decided to turn their backs on God.**
- 3. We don't have time to go through the entire story of the Bible today. Let me sum it up like this: God created the universe, and He made it perfect. He created humans in His image and part of that involved the ability to choose. Humanity rebelled against God, and this is known as sin. This didn't catch God by surprise and the decision had already been made that God would rescue humanity from the penalty of sin and restore the broken relationship.**
- 4. This is all an act of God. Good behavior can't fix our sin problem. God isn't primarily focused on our good behavior anyway. God wants our heart! The behavior flows out of a heart that is right with God.**

B. What did God do to win our heart?

John 3:16 - 16 For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

- 1. God "gave" or "sent" His Son, His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. As the story of the Bible unfolds throughout the Old Testament, we get to the 1st Century A.D. and we discover that God's plan is so unimaginable that He would send His very Son, Jesus.**
- 2. What does it mean that God "gave" or "sent" His Son? It has to mean that God the Father was in relationship with the Son prior to His being sent or given! Who is Jesus, this Man who was born of the virgin Mary, lived in Roman occupied Israel, was crucified, and was resurrected on the 3rd day? How do we think rightly about what we have seen and heard, and the significance of what God has done in Jesus Christ?**
- 3. These are the very questions that the first Jesus followers were trying to work out. They didn't have it all worked out before they began to follow. We don't have to have it all figured out either to place our belief in Jesus, but what joy it is to increasingly discover the magnitude of what God has done in revealing Himself fully in the Person of Jesus Christ!**

II. We need to wrestle with the eternal nature of Jesus Christ to have some sense of the significance of God becoming flesh and dwelling among us. There are mysteries of God that we can't understand, or we would be like God. But in our pursuit of God, we begin to express like the Apostle Paul:

Romans 11:33 - 33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments and untraceable his ways!

A. In the mental exercise that is Colossians 1, let's not allow the unsearchable depths to deter us, but rather to stand in awe of our God who is Trinity: Father, Son, and Spirit. One in essence; Three in Person. Father, Son, and Spirit who is co-eternal. God who has forever been and will forever be!

- 1. The Apostle Paul is writing this letter to refute false teaching. It's hard to say exactly what flavor of false teaching, but it was some type of teaching that involved secret knowledge or insight into spirituality that was in addition to the revelation of Jesus Christ. These teachers were promoting exclusive knowledge that included Jesus, yet Jesus was just one stop on the journey of acquiring true knowledge.**

2. Paul will refute that as totally false and in so doing gives us one of the richest bios of Jesus Christ, the Son of God! But this is some bio! Listen to who our brother and king is!

Colossians 1:15-17 - 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities- all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and by him all things hold together.

3. To begin understanding the significance of Jesus the Man who walked the earth, who had friends, who got frustrated, who died and rose; we must see beyond the 33 years that Jesus walked among us. Jesus, fully man, is at the same time fully God, co-eternal with His Father. There was never a time in eternity past in which the Father and the Son, along with the Spirit, did not coeternally exist in relationship! You and I are “made” in the image of God. Jesus “is” the image of God. We know the heart of the Father because it has been fully revealed to us in Jesus.
4. This is so significant because we don’t have to doubt the heart of God. The Son who has forever been coeternal with the Father, took on flesh, and entered into time and space. Jesus loved unconditionally, He noticed the unnoticeable, He stood for those taken advantage of, He exercised power over creation, and most shocking of all, forgave people of their sins!

Mark 2:5-7 - 5 Seeing their faith, Jesus told the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” 6 But some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts: 7 “Why does he speak like this? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

5. Yes! They had the last part correct, but they missed the significance of these words being uttered by Jesus. These pharisees were looking at the Son of God and calling Him a blasphemer (someone who demonstrates blatant disrespect for God). What was Jesus doing in going around healing people? Sure, He wanted to demonstrate love and compassion, but He also wanted to demonstrate that He held power over creation! Jesus was a man, but He was no ordinary man. He is the image of the invisible God! God in a bod!

B. To say that Jesus is the “firstborn” over creation isn’t by any means to claim that the Son was created. God became incarnate taking on flesh and blood through the virgin birth, but the Son has always been coeternal with the Father. So, what do we do with the term:

Firstborn?

1. The text gives us a huge hint! God the Son is the firstborn over “all” creation! Do you know what the Greek word for “all” means? All! The Son could not have been created and still be the “firstborn” over all creation. We’ve looked at the word “firstborn” before because it also comes up in the Book of Hebrews.
- a. The Greek word is “prototokos” and it isn’t about the process of being created or the birth process. “Prototokos” is a word indicating position! The Son of God wrapped on flesh and entered His creation. As “prototokos” He is supreme to all creation. The Son has a unique relationship with the Father as the only begotten Son (not made). Jesus is therefore in a superior position to all that has been created. Let’s do one better. Jesus, as the Word of God, stands apart over all creation because He is the very mediator by which “all” things have been created!
- b. All things mean all things. The waves and the wind? Yep! He can calm them with His word! The governments of this world? Yep! They rest upon His shoulders!
2. The Son didn’t create evil; He created beings with the choice of good and evil. Those are two very different things! And yet, the Son exercised complete authority and power over evil by His death and resurrection!
3. The Son reigns above it all, He stands before it all, and He holds it all! In our pride we can flat out deny it, but it doesn’t change the reality that it is true. We can also follow suite with the droves of Christians out there bemoaning the problems of this world, or we can move out boldly knowing that Satan is still on a short leash, but the time is quickly approaching when the victory that Jesus has already secured is going to be evident for all to see. In the meantime, people might think we’re foolish or crazy, but I’m going to make the choice to wake up every day and be reminded that Jesus stands above it all! We get the privilege to call Him brother and king!! That is a reality worth celebrating!
4. When we live in the confidence that Christ is the center of it all, life might not be easier, but it should keep things in their proper perspective. When we place anything else into the center of our life, things get rocky quickly.

C. The earthly ministry of Jesus, the man who walked the hills of Israel, gave sight to the blind, and forgave people of their sins, only comes into proper focus when we look from an eternal perspective. Eternity past and also eternity future. There was a universal shift that occurred when the Son of God, coeternal with the Father, entered into human existence to rescue humanity. We live in a privileged time because we've seen the full revelation of God in Jesus! What the prophets of old longed to see fulfilled, we know has been fulfilled!

1. The Son of God who is mediator over all creation has walked among us and through His death and resurrection is now in the supreme position as mediator over the new creation. This is made evident in the Church. Not the building or organization, but the universal Church who are all those across time and space who have trusted Jesus as Savior and Lord.

2. Here's how Paul describes this:

Colossians 1:18-20 - 18 He is also the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile everything to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

D. Just as God's Son is in the supreme position over all creation; Jesus, who is God's Son, is also supreme over redemption. The One who created us demonstrated the depths of His love by being the same One who rescued us from our sin and reconciled us to the Father! The old hymn says it beautifully:

"The love of God is greater far, Than tongue or pen can ever tell; It goes beyond the highest star, And reaches to the lowest hell; The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win; His erring child He reconciled, And pardoned from his sin."

1. The resurrection of Jesus has demonstrated that all authority has in fact been given to Him. The Father is patiently waiting for the proper time, but Colossians 1:18b is a purpose clause. That means that God is being abundantly clear on what will come to pass. One day Jesus, the Son of God, will be acknowledged universally as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Not that all of His creation will be saved. We must keep Colossians 1 in the context of Scripture. All will one day recognize the authority of Jesus but there will be those who reject Him as Savior and Lord and remain cast out eternally.

2. Jesus has displayed the fullness of the Father. There is not one characteristic or quality of God that He has left us guessing about. He is on full display in the Person of Jesus Christ. Through Jesus He is reconciling everything to Himself. Reconciliation is entirely a work of God, and it is entirely mediated through the Son, Jesus Christ! There are no other paths to God. We come to God on His terms, which by the way are really good terms, or we reject Him.

E. Next week we're going to look more into the future, but let's not lose sight of the eternal nature of the Son and the significance of what took place on the cross 2000+ years ago. The "prototokos" or the One supreme over "ALL" creation entered into the very creation He created and to a human race who willingly walked away. Jesus has reconciled "EVERYTHING" to the Father by making peace and shedding His blood on the cross. Jesus is now and forever will be the "prototokos" over the new creation that is made evident through His Church. God is revealing His glory throughout the nations and doing so through His Church. This is the revelation of God that is now fully evident to us.

1. What will we do with Jesus? He's demonstrated His love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. Jesus has already bridged the gap, but He will not force your embrace. I pray we'll embrace Him today. Not only do I hope we embrace Jesus, I pray that He changes our lives today as we reflect on our eternal God and our eternal Lord Jesus Christ who transforms us through His eternal Spirit.