

Colossians: The Supremacy of Christ (Col. 1:1-2)

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[0 : 00] Amen. Amen. Good to see you this morning, church. Good morning. If you didn't notice, spring is upon us.

! And I hope that many of you were able to get outside yesterday and enjoy God's creation. I think He's given us His creation as a way to refresh us, remind us of His presence even, as He holds all things together by the power of His Son.

This morning, we actually get to begin a new series. We're going to be, we just finished Philippians and we're just turning the page. And we're now in Colossians and that should take us through about mid-summer time.

And so looking forward to spending some time in this wonderful book. As Melissa mentioned, Scott is over at Lambstand this morning. Maybe we will be, maybe he'll make an appearance at the end. We'll see. We'll see.

But it's good to see many of you here this morning. Let me pray for our time and then we'll begin our study. Father, we do want to say thank you for just the gift of our salvation.

[1 : 23] Jesus, that you are the very mystery of God. And in you are hidden all treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And we want to worship you this morning, Jesus. We want to talk about you.

We want our affections to be redirected to you. So forgive us for any sins committed this week or any distractions, Lord, that have moved our eyes off of you, Lord Jesus.

And I pray this morning you would redirect our eyes and our hearts to worship you rightly, Lord Jesus. Because you're worthy. You're worthy of our praise.

You're worthy of our service. You're worthy of our very lives. And so would you minister through the power of your word and your spirit and your word proclaimed to your people this morning, Lord Jesus.

We pray a blessing on Lambstand. We pray for unction and encouragement for Scott as he delivers your word to them. And Lord, we want this city to be filled with people that pursue hard after you and invite others into a relationship with the living God through the person of Christ.

[2 : 38] And so we commit our time to you. Would you accomplish something good and profound in each of us? In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Well, this letter begins in Colossians 1.

We're just going to take the first couple verses this morning. And let me just read here how this letter begins.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy, our brother. To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae, grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Father. That's how our letter begins. And I'm curious if you have ever had the occasion to receive mail that was not addressed to you.

And it came in your mailbox. You knew it wasn't a letter addressed to you, and yet you were still dying to read that piece of correspondence.

[3 : 45] And perhaps even you snooped. You held it up to the light to try to see if you could read any of the fine print, the details. And then you felt a little guilt.

Well, this morning, we're going to read somebody else's mail. Guilt-free. Guilt-free. In fact, this is a letter Paul wrote to the Christians at Colossae.

He wrote it with Timothy. He and Timothy shared about six letters together that they wrote to churches. And we're going to snoop on their mail, as it were.

But in God's economy, he says snooping is allowed. In fact, it's highly encouraged. It's expected. And I just think it's brilliant of God to give us his word.

So much of the New Testament comes to us in letter form. And what it does is it puts theology in context into the nitty-gritty of real life.

[4 : 48] And so my job this morning is to help us understand the context of this letter. What I'm going to attempt to do is construct sort of a roadmap for us before we take the trail as we consider the particulars.

And so like any letter, there's typically a theme, unless it's just a stream of consciousness. But there's a theme here. And I've actually narrowed down this letter to three central themes that we will then be looking at more in detail as we work through the letter together in the coming weeks.

So that's the intent this morning to give us kind of an overview and give us three themes that come out of this letter. Now, first some context to this letter of the Colossians.

This is one of Paul's prison epistles. We just finished reading one of his others, studying it, the book of Philippians. There are four prison epistles, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and then the book or the letter Philemon.

And Philemon is interesting because it's a personal letter written to an individual named Philemon. And he lived actually in Colossae.

[6 : 09] And the church actually met in his home. And we know that from the letter of Philemon in chapter 1, verse 2, it says that the church met in his home. But these letters, Colossians and Philemon, were probably sent back to Colossae about the same time.

We know that these are prison epistles. Acts 28 tells us that Paul has been incarcerated in Rome for a couple of years, awaiting trial before Caesar. And I love that Paul, while he is in prison, he's not just whittling his days away, relaxing.

He's redeeming the time. He's ministering while he is in a difficult situation. In fact, we're reminded that Paul tells us in Philippians, Philippians 1:21, that life is ministry, right?

To live is Christ. So we should be finding ways for the Lord to use us in whatever season or trial or space that we are in life. And Paul was doing just that.

He was blessed to encourage other Christians, even while he himself was confined. He's in his own kind of state of scarcity, and yet he still gives. Now, how do we know that he wrote this from prison?

[7 : 21] Because he tells us that. He says this. In Colossians 4, 3, he actually says, I am in prison. It's pretty straightforward. Again, then, at the very end of Colossians, the very last verse of Colossians, Colossians 4, 18, he says this.

I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Isn't that wonderful? How do you know these things?

Are you making it up, Jay? No. The Bible's telling us. The best commentary on the Bible is? The Bible. The Bible. The Bible explains itself. We just have to read it.

But this image kills me from this personal letter, then, that Paul also wrote, writes to Philemon. At the same time, he writes this Colossian letter. And he says this in Philemon 1, verse 9.

He says, Yet for love's sake, I prefer to appeal to you, I, Paul, and this is the part that gets me, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus.

[8 : 30] You know, the fact that Paul was this weathered soldier, he's in prison, and yet he's still exhorting us. And I just think this image of Paul here towards the end of his life, it should remind us that discipleship is costly.

There certainly was a heavy cost that Paul experienced, and it destroys this lie, I think, of that, you know, there's different strata of membership a part of God's family.

You know, I don't have the gold package. I have the bronze package where you don't have to suffer much. Jesus' church rescued us in actually order to use us.

And Paul is such a wonderful example of this. Whether we speak or whether we write like Paul was doing or whether we give, whether we study or visit, there's a cost.

At the very least, the Christian life discipleship should cost us our most precious commodity, and that is this, of time. It's costly to serve the Lord when giving of our time.

[9 : 35] You say, I'm going to disciple a person? Well, that's time that you're giving to them. And so, Paul sets forth this wonderful example for us. The giving of himself.

The giving of his time. It's all God's anyway. Right? All right. Colossae, let's talk about this place. I have a map for us here. And I blew up kind of the Colossae section for some of us older than 55, needing that.

It's helpful for me. What do we know about Colossae? Well, it's located in Asia Minor. That's modern-day Turkey. It's about 100 miles east of Ephesus.

It was part of what we call the ancient tri-cities. Okay? Okay? We've got Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis, all located in the Lycus Valley within 10 miles of each other.

In the 5th century BC, historians describe Colossae this way. It's a populous city, wealthy and of considerable magnitude.

[10:45] By Paul days, it had diminished in stature. However, a trade route was circumvented that used to go through Colossae. They opted to go through Laodicea, and that hurt business, and that hurt the population.

And in fact, one Bible scholar says in Paul's day, quote, Without doubt, Colossae was the least important church to which any epistle of Paul is addressed.

Doesn't that get you revved up to study this book? Man, the least important church. Even archaeology has overlooked doing any excavation in Colossae for years.

And in fact, they've just finished surveying, and it's slated that they actually begin excavations, archaeological excavations this year. We'll see. We'll see. Sometimes those things get postponed indefinitely, but it's just been overlooked, the city.

And I just share that because there's a juxtaposition here for us here. We have just the unimportance of the city contrasted against the importance of this letter.

[11:54] We will not find a book in the New Testament that punches harder on the majesty and the deity of Jesus. When you think of Christology, think of Colossians.

Hence the title of this series, The Supremacy of Christ. This is gold, theological gold, when we want to think in terms of who is Jesus.

Now, what's fascinating about this letter, Paul had never been to Colossae.

How do we know? Well, the best commentary on the Bible is the Bible. He actually tells us that. He says in Colossians 1.4, He goes on in Colossians 2.1.

I think we have that verse for us. Colossians 2.1. He says this, For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you, and for those at Laodicea, and catch this, and for all who have not seen me face to face.

[13:07] Okay? So even though Paul has never visited this church, he has great affection for this church. And so maybe that leads to the next question.

Well, if Paul wasn't there, if he didn't plant this church, how did it begin? Well, we read in other portions of Scripture, on Paul's third missionary journey, he spends a couple of years, a hundred miles west of Colossae.

He's there in Ephesus. And while he's in Ephesus for those two years, he's teaching the Bible. And he says this in Acts 19.10. It says, This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

This is probably how this church was started. That there were students that Paul was instructing there in Ephesus who then planted this church.

Paul sets up a discipleship class, in a sense, in Ephesus. One of Paul's students in Ephesus, from Colossae, then brings the gospel to his city, and that's what actually he writes in Colossians 1, verse 7.

[14:21] He says, Just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, he is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf. So it's this individual named Epaphras that probably was the one to bring the gospel to Colossae, where the church was started.

So think of Epaphras from Colossae. There was another guy, similar name, Epaphroditus Philippi. Don't get those two confused.

They're different individuals. But what I love is both those individuals, they are without title. They don't have a ministry title, either one of them, and yet you see God doing work through them.

God uses his people to advance his kingdom. God uses ordinary people as his key strategy for the gospel advancing. And you see that in that Epaphras is the key individual to bring the gospel and to help establish this church.

So let's get into looking at kind of our main themes of this book. I've got three of them, and I've sort of written them out as exhortations.

[15:33] Okay? The first one is this, related to this letter. Do not forsake Jesus for an inferior version. That's theme number one.

Do not forsake Jesus for an inferior version. Don't settle. Don't settle. Get the best. I've owned nine lawnmowers in my life as an adult.

Nine. No man should ever have to own nine lawnmowers. Why have I owned nine? Nine. Because it took me a while to figure out what I really needed was a Honda. And then once I got the Honda, it was like, man, there's no turning back.

Now, I'm a little aged, so I have needed two over the years. But I'm just telling you, don't settle or you'll go through nine. You want the best. And Colossians has the best for us in terms of the Jesus that we should worship.

Don't settle for an inferior version. Who is the Jesus that Paul is talking about from the book of Colossians? Well, he tells us. It's not this popular domesticated Jesus.

[16:36] Here's the biblical Jesus that you want. Colossians 1, chapter 1, verse 15. This is what he says about Jesus. He is the image of the invisible God.

The firstborn of all creation. This is the Jesus, Colossae, that you are to worship. The image of the invisible God.

Jesus is the icon, we could say. The exact likeness of the invisible God.

You see Jesus, you see God. He's not a lesser version. He's not an inferior version. When the twins were younger, I would roar to them to teach them how to roar.

It's a father thing, I guess. And I remember I would roar. I'd be like, roar. And then they would respond. And they would always respond. You know, it wasn't as, you know, up from the South Pole, you know, roar, you know.

[17:42] And we would do this back and forth. I would roar. They would roar back. And it was kind of like their father's roar. But it wasn't quite, right? It was kind of a little inferior. They've improved greatly.

Don't ask them to roar after the sermon or I will be in trouble. But Jesus is not a lesser version of God. You see Jesus, you see God. He's not sort of like the Father.

He's not a vague representation. He is the perfect reflection. In fact, Hebrews 1.3 says that Jesus is the exact imprint of his nature. It's like if you were to see a coin and you would see the head of a sovereign on that coin.

It's the exact likeness of the king, of the sovereign. The image is the same as the actual person.

Jesus, Paul is saying here in Colossians 1.15, is in fact God.

Now maybe you heard this. He's the image of the invisible God. And then you stumbled over the next part where he says he's the firstborn of all creation.

[18:45] And you're like, firstborn? Jesus was created? Firstborn does not mean first created.

Okay? And it can't mean that. And we know that because on the next verse, in chapter 1, verse 16, Paul writes, for by him all things were created.

That's not a true statement if Jesus himself is created. So what does Paul mean when he says Jesus is firstborn? It's simply a birthright metaphor.

And it shows privilege. It shows status. It shows preeminence over all. Well, Jay, I think you're making a leap there.

Well, there's other examples. Joseph had two sons in the Old Testament. Manasseh, the firstborn, and Ephraim, the secondborn.

Genesis 41 describes these offspring. Yet God gave Ephraim, the secondborn, a place of status above his brother Manasseh. And in Jeremiah 31.9, he says, Ephraim is my firstborn.

[19:53] It's a metaphor. And it's dealing with rank, not chronology. And lest we forget, this book, this letter, Colossians, it's confronting false ideas about Jesus as though Jesus is something less than God.

And so what Paul is not doing here is he's not demoting Jesus, he's actually elevating him. He goes on and says this about Jesus, Colossians 2 verse 9.

He writes, For in him, in Jesus, the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.

Now think about that. That's shocking. Like, how can 100% and 100% share the same space?

How can Jesus be totally human and yet also totally divine? How does that work? I don't know.

[20:55] But it's what Scripture reveals. And then we have to go back to his letter to the Philippians in chapter 2, where he talks about how Jesus, in verse 7, he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

He set aside his privileges, his divine privileges. But it actually wasn't a subtraction. It's an addition. The deity, right?

It's there, and then flesh is added. Well, what is God like? Well, look at Jesus. John 14.

Hey, Philip, whoever's seen me has seen the Father. But maybe you're still struggling. Like, how can God take up residence in a physical body?

How can that work? And again, I don't. I don't know. I don't. But I'm not stressed out by it. I appreciate what C.S. Lewis says in his work entitled Miracles.

[22 : 01] He writes this. We cannot conceive how the divine spirit dwelled within the created and human spirit of Jesus. But neither can we conceive how his human spirit or that of any man dwells within his natural organism.

We can't even figure out us. So let's not stress about God, who is far above us. I don't know why we're so upset, adverse to this notion of 100% man, 100% God.

The fancy word is the hypostatic union. And we'll get to that when we get to that section. There's a lot of things we don't understand. I mean, church, let's be honest. Do you really know how grass grows? I mean, do you?

Do you actually make it? I don't know. You get some soil. You get seed. You get some water and some sunshine. And it's, I don't know. I mean, I know science has an explanation. But really, can we, let's not stress over these things.

It's just how Scripture reveals it. We can't explain it. Maybe for us, a good metaphor is music to help us gain a little glint of understanding.

[23 : 13] How can two different unique things share the same space? Well, music's a great metaphor. You got 100% acoustic guitar. And then you got 100%, I don't know what the, you know, drum box thing.

And they're both happening at 100% sharing the same space. And it's beautiful. Well, how does that work? I don't know that either. There's a lot I don't know this morning.

But maybe that's helpful for you as you try to wrestle with how can Jesus be both 100% man and 100% God. Well, why tell the Colossians this and us? Because of this.

There's bad theology floating around in Colossae trying to infiltrate the church. And so this guy Epaphras, who helped establish the church, he visits Paul in Rome, tells him about this junk theology.

Hey, they're trying to demote Jesus. They're trying to get rid of his deity. And Paul responds then in this letter, and he says in Colossians 2.4, I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.

[24 : 18] What Paul's saying here, guys, Jesus is God. Worship him as such. Jesus is God. I don't care what, you know, the pastors are saying in the other places.

I don't care what the prophets, the poets, our day, the pop stars are saying about Jesus. Don't be naive, friends.

Satan has been attempting to snuff out, erase Jesus from history from the very beginning. We just got done celebrating Christmas recently, and Herod the Great tried to get rid of Jesus.

Right? Where is he? Tell me. The Magi. Tell me where he is so I can worship, when actually he wanted to destroy. And I think he was simply a pawn of the enemy.

Satan failed at erasing Jesus from history. So I think for the past 2,000 years, he sought to domesticate him, declaw him, turn him into something less than God.

[25 : 19] He's a guru, just a guru. He's a prophet, just a man. His death means nothing. And if you look at church history, it's interesting because the very first three church councils, they all dealt with this issue, the deity of Jesus, because it was on the chopping block.

And that was a satanic agenda strategy to erase Jesus from redemptive history. That's the agenda of restoration theology today.

What's restoration theology, Jay? Well, restoration theology says this. The Bible has been corrupted. So you need a new book. You need a new revelation. And every one of these new sacred books, they domesticate Jesus.

The Muslims, they have their own book. Well, Jesus is just a prophet in their book. The Mormons, they have their own books. They've done it as well.

You demote Jesus to status of prophet, then he has no power to rescue. Now, how do we imagine and think of and relate to Jesus today?

[26 : 36] Well, I don't have bad theology. Well, what's in your mind? Is Jesus God? Or is he like the Wizard of Oz, this old man behind a curtain, right?

And he's not really that powerful. It's all kind of smoke and mirrors. Or maybe we think of Jesus. I just think of him in a manger.

That's a pet peeve of mine when we get around Christmas time and I hear Christians talk about, oh, we're worshiping baby Jesus. Don't do that, okay? Because I think the world loves that.

They love baby Jesus, right? There's no accountability. There's no power. There's no authority. The world loves Jesus to stay as a baby. Or maybe for you, you think of Jesus, he's like my life coach so I can gain success.

I can be all that I can be in this life. I think there's some people that reduce Jesus basically down to a vending machine, right? He's just going to give me what I want. If I obey him just enough, I'm going to get blessing in my life.

[27 : 39] Well, Scripture describes Jesus very differently. I went through some of the different titles of Jesus in Scripture.

This is what's said of him. He's the Alpha and the Omega. He's the beginning and the end. He's the creator, deliverer, everlasting father, gate, firstborn from the dead, good shepherd, heir of all things, image of God.

He's the king of kings. He's the lamb without blemish. He's the morning star. He's our righteousness, the prince of peace, the resurrection and the life.

He's the savior, the one mediator. He is the very wisdom of God. And those are just a few of the descriptions and titles that are given of Jesus.

Church, we live in a city that wants to domesticate Jesus. And as Lewis reminds us, right? He's wild, you know. He's not a tame lion. He's not for us to control.

[28 : 41] He's for us to bow down and worship. And until he returns, Paul says it this way to the Colossians. In Colossians 128, he says this. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

And church, let me just say this. We do it unapologetically. Because Jesus is God. So we will gather and we will worship, regardless of what culture and the world does.

Don't trade in the Jesus described in Colossians for a lesser version. Second theme that we find in this letter, don't forsake sound doctrine.

Do not forsake sound doctrine. Don't forsake God's word. If folks are saying wacky things about Jesus and the nature of salvation, you better know what God has to say on the matter.

And Paul writes in a couple places here, Colossians 1.9. He says this. And so from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

[29 : 58] And then he goes on in Colossians 3.16. He says this. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Do not forsake sound doctrine. Don't forsake God's word. Love it. Read it.

Dwell in it. Don't forsake your Bible and rather decide, oh, I'm going to be one of those spirit-filled Christians and let the Holy Spirit take over.

And that's a movement in Christian circles. The whole New Apostolic Reformation out of Redding, California, the Bethel group out of there. They're like, man, just let the Holy Spirit take over.

You don't need God's word. You don't need God's word. And I would just say, we do want to be spirit-filled. And we allow the Holy Spirit to take over when we dwell in the book.

[31 : 08] When we dwell and take seriously the words that the Holy Spirit wrote. You will never be filled. The word filled is the word controlled, influenced by the Holy Spirit if you avoid the words that he's written down for you.

We're people of a book. The evidence of a spirit-filled discipleship life isn't how emotional you get. It's how much your life is aligning with the Spirit's instruction.

How much of my life, of your life, is conforming into the image of Christ? That's the measure. And in Colossae, it appears there's this growing interest on experience.

And really the mystical. Oh, that's exciting. That's interesting. And they want that over sound doctrine. Paul writes this in Colossians 2.18.

He says this, Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism. What's asceticism? It's like beating the body. Okay?

[32 : 19] Torturing the body. Insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind.

Puffed up without reason. You've got to love that. What's Paul saying there? Puffed up. You're proud without reason. And dumb. You're proud and dumb. That's essentially what he just said there. There's a bad way to walk with the Lord.

What's being promoted as a better faith in Colossae. It's a very strange mixture, church. It's asceticism. It's this strange mixture of legalism and worship of angels and mysticism.

It's two things that don't actually go together. Like I've never heard of like a peanut butter and mayonnaise sandwich. That should never happen. And you have this very strange mixture of legalism and mysticism.

Like the two of these things going together. It's very odd. And perhaps what we have here in Colossae is this, it's kind of the beginnings of Gnostic thinking.

[33 : 28] Gnosticism was full-blown in the second century A.D. Gnostic comes from gnosis, the Greek word gnosis for knowledge. What is Gnosticism? It's this secret knowledge.

And there was this idea beginning to happen. I don't think it was full-blown in Colossae, but this idea that you get secret knowledge through the New Testament. And if you run into a Gnostic today, they would just say, you know, you've got to read the Bible in kind of a secret way, in a certain way. And find meaning that the authors didn't really intend, but it's in there. It's mystical. It's hidden. It's secret knowledge for the elite, for the special. Church, is mysticism in today?

Oh, yes. Big time. I think it's, you know, we saw it kind of sweep in the Dan Brown novels coming in and very popular in culture and this whole notion of like secret societies.

Ooh, what's that? Let's do that. I actually spoke with a Gnostic. I don't know if I've shared this story with you before. I'll just take it as I haven't.

[34 : 33] It's just better for me that way. Okay. Um, but this was actually on the west side. I had this interaction with a Gnostic.

I thought I was off duty. I was in an electronics store in the mall trying to replace a phone. So that kind of tells you the direction of the place I was in. And the kid who came up, he helped me.

He was happy to see me. And I just made a comment. I was like, man, this, the store is slammed right now. And he instantly, the first words out of his mouth, he says, I'm used to working hard.

I'm a Freemason. I was like, I didn't see that one coming. I'm like, I think I'm off duty, but I guess here we go. So I'm like, wow. I'm like, you're, he was very young man, maybe 21, 22 ish.

And I'm like, you're young to be a Mason. Why'd you join? And, and he was very proud, um, began to just prattle on about all the things he had accomplished.

[35 : 30] He's like, I'm this third degree guy. I'm mentored by this grandmaster so-and-so. And, and, uh, I was just listening to this for a while. He was just very proud of this. And I, I'm off duty, but I'm like, okay, here we go.

So I said, you know, that's great. But the further you get in at, at the beginning, it all sounds good. Self-improvement and figuring out God's name. And, but then the further you get in, the darker it becomes.

And so I'm sharing this with this individual. I said, you know, if you get to the place where you move from a 32nd degree to a 33rd degree, full-blown Mason, uh, you have to actually pledge your undying allegiance to Lucifer.

That's what I shared with him in the middle of the phone store. I shared this with him and he got very agitated. Um, he rejected that.

He told me that I was wrong and he actually was like becoming very aggressive. He's like, where did you hear this? Who, who, who told you this? And I just was like, okay, we're going to deescalate.

[36 : 35] I'm like, you know what? If I'm wrong, uh, you can dismiss what I said. And, you know, that's fine. He couldn't let it go. Um, and so he just started going on. He's like, you can't understand the mysteries of what we believe.

And then he said this, literally said, it's Gnosticism. I was like, I've never had anybody say that to me before. Uh, and so I just said, you mean secret knowledge?

And he was like kind of different shades of white, uh, very surprised that I even knew what Gnosticism, uh, meant was. And, uh, you know, I said, you know, I've actually studied a bit.

I actually am a pastor. And I thought that would kind of quell things. And then he got more agitated. He said, you know what? You can be a Christian and a Mason. Um, and I said, you know, it's problematic though, because a disciple of Jesus would never utter the words, I am giving myself to Lucifer.

And then all of a sudden this kid, he, he changed and he said, you know what? Lucifer is just a construct of ideas, you know. I'm like, isn't that interesting, right?

[37 : 49] Revealing, right? He, he knew more than he was letting on. Why are you telling me Lucifer is a construct of ideas, right? Unless you know what I just told you had merit.

And so he's basically then telling me, I can't understand, uh, masonry. I'm unenlightened. And then he said, you know what? I actually follow the men that spoke for God that were before the guys that wrote the Bible.

That's what he said to me. And so I just said, how do you know those men existed and spoke for God? What proof do you have? And he's like, well, what proof do you have that the men that wrote the Bible, those guys spoke for God?

And I was able to share a little bit about the Bible. I was able to share about, you know, it's historical. It's archaeological. There's prophetic evidence that screams this book is, is not from man. We have all these manuscripts, uh, in Greek.

We have almost 2,000 prophecies fulfilled in this book. In archaeology, there's evidence. It wasn't until 1993. There was not a shred of evidence that, that King David of Israel ever existed.

[38 : 48] And scholars decided he was a myth until a nearly 3,000-year-old inscription was unearthed in Israel mentioning David, the king of Israel. And then Time Magazine ran an article in 1993.

The skeptics claim that King David never existed is now hard to defend. So archaeology is on our side. And the fact that I knew something of his secrets, he just couldn't get over this, got very animated.

And I'm just like, where is this going? I just wanted to, like, upgrade my phone. And, and then all of a sudden, the manager comes over because I'm kind of making a scene and I didn't intend to do this, truly.

And he's like, he just got, and he's like, you need to come with me. And he replaced him because he's like, this kid is, like, getting agitated. And I just said, hey, I appreciate your time.

And I went to shake his hand. And he was, he wouldn't shake my hand. And he said, and he did this. And he just, like, and he walked away. And this is actually a Masonic symbol of distress.

[39 : 50] Of, like, if there's other Masons, help me. And I didn't know that at the time. And I was, I did some reading on it. But, church, here's the thing. We don't need secrets.

We need Jesus. And guess what? God's secret is Jesus. In fact, Colossians 2, 2, the knowledge of God's mystery is Christ.

What was concealed in the old is revealed in the new. And the gospel isn't a secret message or word for just a select elite few. It's for everyone.

I mean, people suggesting that you need secret knowledge not offered to others, if you hear somebody say that to you, you run away. Okay? Paul wanted everyone to hear his words about Jesus.

The kid I was talking to, he was proud because he had knowledge that was just, it was for a select few. Just the enlightened. That's not the gospel. It's for everyone. And in fact, Paul, he says this about the stuff that he's writing in Colossians 4, 16.

[41 : 01] He says, and when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans. I want the gospel to be known.

I want people to hear. Fourth, even the private letter that Paul writes to Philemon that lived in Colossae, Paul intended for it to be read to the entire church as well.

It was a personal letter. He says, hey, the church that meets in your home, it's for them too. He says that in Philemon 1, 2. So the point is this. Read the book.

Don't forsake sound doctrine. It's not secret, but you've got to read it so that you know the truth, so that you can live by the truth. Let's not be one of those Bible churches that's like, we love the Bible, we champion the Bible, but then we never read it.

Let's not do that. Folks, we are approaching summertime, and I get it. It's beautiful outside. You know what's wonderful? They have all sorts of Bible apps that you can put headphones on.

[42 : 02] I know it's going to shock you. How can two things exist at once? You can actually listen to God's Word and mow your lawn at the same time. It's shocking. I would just say find ways to let God's Word influence, saturate your heart, your mind, so that we can live rightly before the Lord and before this world in front of us.

Well, don't forsake sound doctrine. And finally, the last theme of the book is this. Do not forsake the transforming nature of grace. Let's not possess sound doctrine and then remain unchanged.

Paul loves to use a particular linguistic form throughout his writings. There's a mood in Greek verbs that Paul uses that deal with the potential reality of an action.

And he uses this linguistic device, the indicative imperative, two different moods in Greek verbs, to exhort, argue.

What's the indicative imperative? An indicative verb is a statement of fact or reality. An imperative is a command based on that fact or that reality. And Paul uses this device.

[43 : 26] He's like, let me tell you the things that are true and then how it should impact your life.

This is actually a great way to parent, by the way. You speak things in the indicative. This is what's true. We birthed you. And the imperative, go clean your room.

Okay? It's a wonderful way to parent, to go through life, right? You're a turner. Clean up your mess. And we do it all the time in our house. Now, it's a beautiful line of reasoning, and Paul splashes this line of reasoning throughout his letters.

The structure of Colossians is done just this way. Chapters 1 and 2 are primarily in the indicative form. He's painted for us. Here's the theological things that are true about you, about Christ.

And then when you get to chapters 3 and 4, he speaks so much in the imperative. Now go and do.

A great example of this contained in one verse is Colossians 3.1, where he says this.

If then you have been raised with Christ, okay? Raised. That's in the indicative mood. Raised. Seek the things that are above, where Christ is.

[44 : 30] Seek. That's now in the imperative mood. Keep seeking. Because you've been raised with Christ, pursue hard after him. Paul doesn't just skip to the application.

Okay? He actually understands that doctrine drives how we actually live. Church theology is meant to be highly practical. I remember taking a trip down to Mexico City when I was younger and observing folks that were on pilgrimage.

And they were trying to do penance and they were trying to get forgiveness. And I remember this one old lady who was like crawling on her hands and her knees, right? Blood on her knees, trying to appease God.

That was not just action. That was theology. She believed that, you know what? Christ, what he did on the cross is not sufficient. It's not enough. I have to somehow earn that. It's a works kind of mentality.

But it grew out of her understanding of doctrine. And it impacted the way she lived. What she was doing in that moment. If you are in Jesus, let that reality transform you.

[45 : 41] And I think people need to see believers that have actually been impacted by the gospel, the truth of the gospel. And then they see us actually live it out.

Like we need, they need to see that faith in Christ, that it's a liberating way to live. That it actually affects us.

Our doctrine, our belief that we're actually forgiven of sins, past, present, future, that it liberates us to live and to serve one another. They need to see that our faith actually impacts the way that we work, the way that we do marriage, the way that we parent, the way that we do family, how we treat one another, how we control our bodies.

Like there's power in that church. I was recently talking to an individual about a Christian business owner who has a horrible reputation.

Because this individual cuts corners. Doesn't always pay their employees the right wage. And it's like that's an affront actually to the gospel.

[46 : 49] Our faith should impact us. It should change us. It's the testimony we have. Whatever we do, we do it unto God's glory. The world doesn't need to see hype.

They don't need smoke machines. You know, they need to see people that actually have been rescued and their lives are changing. We're not perfect. We rely on the grace of God each and every day.

But we're being transformed. And it's powerful. And Paul says here, don't forsake the transforming nature of grace. It's not enough to just have sound doctrine.

Let it affect you. Let it transform you. Let it change you. In the very practicals of life. Oh, it actually should impact the way that I date as a single.

The way that I love sacrificially as a married. The way that I am a child to a parent. A parent to a child. Right? An employee to a boss.

[47 : 45] And vice versa. Like, my faith should impact all of those relationships. That's what people need to see. That's what the world needs. I'll end by sharing. I interacted with a gal back on the west side.

A gal that I had Ubered. And her name was Cassidy. I'm going to share her name. And she was very broken. A young gal. Her husband was currently in jail.

Wanted a divorce. She had a five-month-old child at home. She was struggling with substance. She was trying to stay clean. Just completely broken. And I got to pray with her.

And I then invited her. She actually lived in Seattle. And I had a good friend with a church near her. Where she was living. And I directed her there. And I shared with the pastor. Hey, Cassidy's coming.

And some of the folks that were there. Just notified friends to look for her. And I just think about this gal. Because she was like, man. She's looking for something real. She needs help.

[48 : 47] She needs change. She didn't need pretty people. She didn't need hype. She needed to see that there was actually hope for her. She needed to run into other people whose lives had been transformed and were being transformed.

This gal that was a club girl. She needed to see that, man. There was a possibility for a new life. Church, we are actually the evidence that the gospel works.

Church, we are going to be the evidence that the gospel works. And so, man. This letter is very practical. Because, yeah. It's going to celebrate Jesus.

High Christology. It's going to celebrate the fact that we have sound doctrine. But it's not going to leave it there. It's going to be very invasive in saying, hey. How is this actually informing and transforming your very lives?

So, church. It's going to be a great study. And I look forward to participating with you in this. Let's pray. Father, thank you for the fact that we have your word.

[49 : 51] And it comes to us oftentimes in letter form. And, Lord, we love the fact that it's not just this list of avoid this and participate in that. But it's people.

And it's correspondence. And it's dealing with real things that were occurring in culture, in cities, and in churches. So, Lord, would you refresh us in just our appetite for your word?

Jesus, we want to think about you rightly. You're worthy of our worship. You're God. You're our Savior if we have claimed the name of Christ.

If we've cried out to you for forgiveness. Lord, I pray that you would use this book in an instructive way, in a transforming way in our lives. And, Lord, I pray that as a result, there would be some that would meet you, Jesus, for the very first time.

We pray all these things in your name, Lord Jesus. And all God's people said. Amen.