

'Life's about ...'

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Preacher: Andrew Price

[0:00] Well, as a staff team, we've been thinking about how we can keep growing our church under God. And we've had an increase of visitors at a number of our services and thinking about how we can help them decide if they want to join our church.

That is, get on board with the boat called HTD. But I realise that first we need to make sure that those who are already on the boat, us, are on the same page.

That we together are committed to what life's about, what church is about and what membership in this church is about. In other words, it's about not just being on board with this church, but on board with God himself.

And so over the next three weeks, we're going to start with a big picture, what life's about. Next week, what church is about and then what membership is about. When membership really does cover all of them, you've got to have this view.

If you, well, you don't have to, but that's the view that our church has. And it'll become part of a new membership course for new people starting next year. But today, I wanted to start with thinking about spinning plates and rotating planets.

[1:12] I'm pretty sure we're familiar with rotating planets. You know how planets rotate around the sun. I think we're now down to eight planets. I grew up with nine planets, but Pluto got gypped.

It's now called Plutoid. Is that right? Were you taught that at school? Can't remember? Neither can I. Anyway, you're familiar with the concept. And then there's spinning plates where people spin plates.

Like this guy who's having trouble keeping the north going. And he says, don't try it at home. Try it at someone else's house. So it's a wrong place. Anyway, that'll do.

You get the idea, right? Rotating planets and spinning plates. And speaking of spinning plates, actually, you know what? I thought I'd give it. Okay, you ready?

No, neither am I. I'm just joking. But you get the concepts, right? And when it comes to spinning plates, I think that can sometimes be like our life.

[2:16] That is, we're running, trying to keep all these things spinning in our lives. Juggling all the things that we've got on our plate. Pursuing these things in life.

These things or these plates are things like prosperity. You know, trying to chase after more money. Keep that plate of prosperity spinning. Or plans. Or plans. You know, working hard to get our plan to get this uni degree and get that job.

Live here, move there. Or possessions. Like our hope to get a better car or better clothes or better phone. Our pleasure. Good food. Or travel or sport.

Physique. Like our health. So we can live longer and look younger. I say that. We. Me. You're already young. But I'm pretty sure all of you looked in the mirror before you came to church tonight. Except King Lee. I saw him before. No, I'm only joking. That's what you get for being the MTS apprentice. You get bagged out all day. Or progeny. Which is just the fancy word for saying kids and grandkids.

[3:23] I was just trying to keep the letter P. Now, none of these things are bad in themselves. In fact, they're all important things. And God has given us these things to enjoy.

It's just that we often turn these good things into God things, don't we? By prioritizing them. Running after them. And making sure we do everything we can to keep them spinning.

As though they're the most important things in life. As though life is all about these things. These plates. But that's not what God says. God says life is all about Jesus.

Life is about his son. And so rather than spending our lives chasing after spinning all these plates. And trying to keep them going. Like the guy in the video. We're meant to be more like rotating

planets.

Whose lives revolve around the son. S-O-N. Where his priorities shape our priorities. As Sharon was saying at the beginning of the service. Though.

[4 : 27] And that's what we see in our passage tonight. Though the context is a little bit different. The Apostle Paul was writing to the church in Colossae. Which is modern day Turkey. And they were tempted to add different Ps to Jesus.

P like philosophy. And religious practices. And Paul tells them. That they don't need to. Because the son is supreme. I was trying to think about this.

And immediately I thought of the supreme ice cream. Which is connoisseur cookies and cream ice cream. And at \$13 a tub. It ought to be supreme.

Right? Although at the moment. Coles half price. So if you want to get it. Half price of Coles at the moment. But to add other philosophies and practices to the son who is supreme.

Would be like adding. I don't know. Tomato sauce to your cookies and cream ice cream. It's just nuts. Right? But so too is thinking. For us.

[5 : 23] That our plates of prosperity. And plans. And possessions. Pleasure. Physique. Are more important than the son. That's nuts too. Firstly because those things often let us down.

You know our plans often fail. Don't they? Our prosperity often goes. Doesn't it? Money goes. Much quicker than it comes in. And secondly.

It's nuts. Not just because those things don't last. They often fail. But secondly. Because God has actually made the son. His son. Supreme. In all of life. Such that he should be supreme in ours.

And so let me show you from the Bible. Firstly. The son is supreme in this life. This world. Verse 15. The son is the image of the invisible God. The firstborn over all creation.

Here we see that God has made his son. The ruler. Over this world. This life. And we see it in two ways. First with the word image. To be in the image of God.

[6 : 25] Means to reflect his loving rule. In our world. You see an image. Often represents. Or reflects someone. So when Queen Elizabeth.

Towards the end of her reign. An image or a statue was built. That represented her. Complete with her dogs. Or corgis down the bottom. And in the ancient world. These images.

Whether they were statues. Or pictures. Or coins. Were meant to remind the people. Of the king or queen's rule. It's why most of our coins.

Even today. Here in Australia. Still have Queen Elizabeth's head on it. Because it represents. Her rule. Over Australia. Well we are God's coins.

We are God's image bearers. Who are meant to reflect. His loving rule. Over our world. Just as we heard. In our first reading. From Genesis. You know.

[7 : 20] God created them in his image. And told them to rule over. The fish of the sea. The birds of the sky. And so on. Though we haven't done a. Particularly good job of it. As humanity.

Have we? We tend to exercise. A selfish rule. Rather than reflecting. God's loving rule. But not the sun. He perfectly reflects.

God's loving rule. Over creation. Why? Well because the sun. Is God. Notice the third word. Of verse 15. The sun is not.

In the image. Of God. The sun. Is. The image. Of God. As we said in the creed. God from God. Light from light. True God. From true God.

The sun is God. And so he can. Perfectly reflect. God's loving rule. Jesus could say. Later on in John's gospel. Whoever has seen me.

[8 : 17] Has seen the father. Father. And so if you want to know. What God is like. You look at Jesus. Right? But the point is to be. To be the image of God.

Means the sun is God. And rules over creation. Perfectly. The idea of ruling. The idea of ruling. Is also seen. In that other word. Firstborn. The word firstborn.

Can mean either. The one who is born first. In the family. Which is normally. How we use it today. Any firstborn kids. Here. There's a couple. Yep. Yep. I was born second.

In my family. And so I was often overlooked. And hard done by. You're laughing. But all the other second borns here. Know exactly what I'm talking about. Don't you? Yeah.

And so firstborn can mean. One who is born first. But it can also mean. The one who has first importance. The highest status. In the family. After the parents.

[9:13] Now after these two ideas. Are related. Even today. And so often the one who is born first. In the family. Is then given first importance. Often by giving them responsibility.

To look after the younger siblings. Brothers and sisters. I'm sure if you're a first child here. Your parents have said to you. Look after your brother and sister. And things like that before. Well here in our passage.

In verse 15. The word firstborn. Just means that second way. First in importance. Jesus. Or rather the son. Was not born first.

Into God's family. As we'll see later. But he is first in importance. Has the highest status. Is entrusted with looking after. Ruling over.

The creation. That's why it says. Firstborn over all creation. And so both words. Image and firstborn. Mean ruler of this world. But why?

[10:10] Why is he ruler of this world? Well verse 16 goes on to tell us. It starts with the word for. Or because. Gives us the reason. In him. The son. All things were created.

Things in heaven and on earth. Visible and invisible. Whether thrones or powers. Or rulers or authorities. All things have been created. Through him. And for him. It says.

Jesus is first in importance. Over life. Because he created life. In him. All things were created. That is. All things were created.

In reference to him. Which the verse explains. In terms of being made. Through him. Yes. We rightly said. In the creed. Before. A moment ago.

That we believe. In God. The father. I think. Can someone click next. Because you might have done something. With the computer. There we are. We believe in one God. The father. The almighty. Maker.

[11:05] Of heaven and earth. Yes. That is right. We do believe in that. It's just that God the father. Created all things. Through God the son. Much like an architect.

Might create a building. Through his builder. And since the father. Created all things. Through the son. Then. The son. Always existed. He wasn't born first.

Into God's family. He's always been God the son. And that's why the creed. Also says. Eternally begotten. Of the father. That is. Eternally the son. And then it goes on to say.

Begotten. But not made. And then through him. All things were made. Yes. He took on human form. When he was born of Mary. But he was always.

God the son. And then he became. Fully human as well. And notice this verse. Says that. Not only were all things. Created through him.

[12:00] But also. For him. He is the purpose. Of creation. Do you realize. God made everything. In this world. For Jesus. I remember.

Being at a wedding. Of a friend. I didn't know him. Heaps well at the time. But he still invited me. To his wedding. We've become. A good friend since. And the bride. Had just walked in.

Down the aisle. Actually. Or dressed up. Looking stunning. The groom. The groom was beaming. The people were oohing. Everyone was smiling. Then the minister seated. Everyone. Looked at my friend.

Dan. And his bride. Chrissy. And said. People often say. At weddings. That people. A couple like these two. Were made for each other. And let me tell you.

That that is. Not true. And you can almost hear this. The face of the bride's mother. Went white.

[12:55] People were kind of muttering. What was going on. And then went on to say. They are firstly made. For Jesus. And they make a lovely couple too. And everyone just kind of relaxed. At that point.

You see. Everything has been made. Through the son. And for the son. That's why. He is ruler over creation.

He's the creator. Of all things. And not just the creator. But the sustainer. Verse 17. He is before all things. And in him. All things hold together.

Everything holds together. In Jesus. In other words. He sustains everything. Jesus the son. Raises the physical son. Every morning.

He maintains. Every heartbeat. In this very room. Tonight. All things. Hold together. In him. Do you see. You're getting to.

[13:52] Getting to glimpse. How supreme. And important. The son is. In this world. In this life. And in case. We're not convinced. He's not just supreme.

In this life. But also. He's supreme. Over new life. Point two. Verse 18. And he is the head. Of the body. The church. He is the beginning. And the first born.
From among the dead. So that in everything. He might have. The supremacy. Here the son is the head. Of the church. The head meaning. Having authority over.
Ruling over. Like heads of state. If you like. Or like our heads. Are meant to rule. Our bodies. And as head of the church. He rules over the church. Which of course.
Is us. Those who believe. In Jesus. In Jesus. And have new. Spiritual life. With God. Now. You see. We were once like. Zombies.
[14 : 46] Right? Spiritually. Dead in sin. But just walking around. The earth. But once we believe. In Jesus. We were brought to new. Spiritual life. With God.

And Jesus. Is head over. That new. Spiritual life. Head over us. As his church. But he's also the ruler. Or head over. New physical life too. Because he was the first.
To do it. It goes on to say. He is the beginning. Of the first born. From among the dead. The first one. To physically rise. From the dead. Which is what we celebrate.
Every Easter. And then he goes on to say. He's also the first born. From among the dead. Yes. He was first. But again. That's first born. In terms of first importance. Like we saw before.
The one who has been entrusted. To look after. And rule over. Everyone. Who will rise from the dead. And we know this is the emphasis. Because that's the purpose.
[15 : 42] In verse 18. Which ends by saying. So that in everything. He might have. The supremacy. Growing up. I used to have been to transformers.

And the supreme transformer. Is. Optimus Prime. Right. And if you say anything different. We're going to have words. After the service. Okay. It's Optimus Prime. No question.
And. I remember. When I first started getting pocket money. I saved up. And the very first toy I bought. Was Optimus Prime. Here he is.
Still in the original. Somewhat faded packaging. And I love this guy. Because he's the supreme transformer. He comes out. And it opens up. And you know.
This guy transforms as well. I'd take it out. But it's a bit too precious. I let my son play with it once. And we didn't speak for about a week. But anyway. Jesus.
[16 : 38] Is the Optimus Prime. Actually he's better than that. He's supreme. Not just over transformers. But over everything. Right. Supreme.

Over all things. But why is the son supreme. Over this new life as well. Well verse 19 tells us. For. God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.
And through him to reconcile to himself all things. Whether things on earth or things in heaven. By making peace through his blood shed on the cross. All things though.
Hang on a second. Not all people are reconciled to God. Are they? Many still reject God. Don't they? And not all place. In every place.
Enjoys peace. I mean just turn on the news. We know that. Right. And so. How can he have reconciled all things? Well it's talking about the decisive moment.
[17 : 56] That brings order and peace to our world. Which as it says. Was the death of the son. For at the cross. Jesus paid for our sin and conquered death. So that reconciliation and peace of all things.

Has already been won. It's just now a matter of timing. That is we can either enjoy the reconciling forgiveness of Jesus. Now.
Or. People will experience the reconciling judgment of Jesus. Later. When every knee will bow. And every tongue confess that he is Lord.
And there will be peace. Whether they like it or not. Either way. The reconciliation of all things. Has already been won. There is peace. It's just partly felt now.
And will be fully felt. Later. On the last day. It's like what happened back in the second world war. The decisive moment. Was what became known as D-Day.
[18 : 53] I don't know if you still study this at school or university. And it was the invasion of Normandy on the 6th of June 1944. That was the decisive moment that allies won the war against the Nazis.

And brought order and peace to our world. But complete order and peace wasn't felt. Until almost a year later.

On VE Day. Victory in Europe Day. On the 8th of May 1945. When the Nazis were finally forced to surrender. Until then they still fought some fights.

But it was futile. Because the war had already been won decisively on D-Day. The cross is D-Day. The decisive moment in history.

When the son paid for sin. Conquered death. And brought peace to our world. It's just that we don't feel the full effects of that. Until VE Day. Which is his return.

[19 : 54] When people will be forced to surrender. Such that there will be felt peace in our world. The point is the son is supreme in this new life.

Because by his death he won the peace needed. To reconcile all things. Whether now through faith in Jesus. Or on the last day when every knee bows.

And Paul applies this to us. In verse 21. He says once you were alienated from God. And were enemies in your minds.

Because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body. Through death. To present you holy in his sight. Without blemish. And free from accusation.

Our sin once made us enemies with God. That's strong language isn't it? Enemy. But at the cross. Jesus paid for our sin. So that we can be forgiven.

[20 : 53] Reconciled. Given peace with God now. That comes with that new spiritual life with God now. For incredibly we are now counted as holy in his sight.

Without blemish. Free from accusation. Even though we keep messing up. For every time we sin. The blood of Jesus continues to cleanse us.

And free us from any accusation. It was a bit like the other day. We cleaned our kitchen floors. And then our dog. Who I'm still finding hard to love. Walked mud in from the outside.

And we kind of chased after it with a towel. Cleaning up each dirty paw print he made. And as soon as he put down a dirty paw print. We had to clean it up again with a towel.

Oh, that's another reason why I love our dog. Well, every time we sin. The death of Jesus is like that towel that continues to clean it. Grant us forgiveness for it.

[21 : 53] Such that we remain permanently free from accusation. Which is amazing. When you think about it. And this freedom from accusation. Confuciation also means we can be certain.

Not just of this new spiritual life with God now. But new physical life later. As we saw before. A new body. Being raised from the dead. Whether ashes or buried or wherever.

To enjoy life in a new creation. With no more war or suffering. Or the pain of freeway closures.

Trying to get around today. It's been pain in the neck. This is a certain hope we have as Christians.

That certain hope held out in the gospel. But there's a big if. Verse 23. If you continue in your faith. Established and firm. And do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. Of course, to continue in your faith. Implies you have a faith.

[22 : 50] Doesn't it? And so can I ask. Do you? I don't know all of you. I don't know where you're all at with Jesus at the moment. So I need to ask. Do you believe in him?

Because it's the only way. To receive that hope. And to be made holy. Free from accusation in God's sight. Do you have faith in Jesus?

And for us who do. Then we're obviously to continue in that faith. But a faith that is lived out. Like a faith that acknowledges the son's supremacy in all things. Including our own lives.

Such that we live like rotating planets around him. Where his priorities become our priorities. Which is for our good anyway.

For it means instead of suffering despair. When our spinning plates fall. We can benefit from the son's loving warmth. Of peace and purpose and hope. And so when our plans fail.

[23 : 51] We can have the peace that he is in control. And that his plan for us. Is still for our good. That he will never leave us nor forsake us. Or when we don't get the union results we want.

Or the job we want. Or our health fails. And stops us from doing what we once did. He still gives us purpose and worth. Because we can still serve and live for him.

And when we face suffering and death. As some of our older members are. I was just visiting someone this afternoon at Box Hill Hospital. Who probably only has a day to live. And yet she knew exactly where she was going.

Because of the hope held out in the gospel. Which gave her peace as well. The point is it's worth living our lives. Like rotating planets around the sun.

Rather than spending our lives chasing these spinning plates. And so are you living like this. Such that his priorities are our priorities. When it comes to how we use our money.

[25:00] Do we prioritize giving to the gospel work. Even if it's just a little bit. Or what about our words. Do we use our words to build others up.

Rather than tear others down. Our eyes. Do we prioritize what we watch online. Or with our phones. Based on what Jesus' priorities are for our eyes.

Our time. Do we prioritize meeting together. As God's people. I remember. When I first started HCD.

I started a 4pm afternoon service. Down in the Hudson Taylor room. When it was just made. And under God's kindness. Things were going well.

And I remember one day. A guy said. Oh I love this 4pm service. And I said. Oh why is that? He said. Because I can enjoy my whole weekend. Without any interruption.

[25:58] And then I can come to church at the end. I don't think he realized. He was calling church an interruption. But it did make me realize. That he was making. Church revolve around his weekend.

Rather than his weekend. Revolve around his church. And that was the moment. I decided. I'm closing this service down. And moving it. To the morning. Which is what we did. Do Christ's priorities.

Shape our priorities. Even in little ways. Let me finish with one more story. About an older member. Who just last month. Turned 101. That's pretty impressive huh?

We actually got a couple of 101's. And one 102. And another one on the way. This one though. Is called Olive Wilkinson. And our partial care worker. Helen Baxter. Who some of you know.

Took some flowers to her. She's up at the orchards. On Anson Creek Road there. On behalf of our Wednesday afternoon service. Which is the congregation she came from.

[26:58] Before she could no longer. Leave her aged care place. But Olive's priority. Is to serve others. Because that's Christ's priority.

For her. And yet at 101. With limited mobility. Still stuck in an aged care facility. It's a bit hard right? But she still asked Helen.

To take a photo of the flowers. With her waving. And to pass on a message of thanks. And encouragement to the congregation. She said.

Tell them I'm joyfully trusting in Jesus. As I wait for him to bring me home. Isn't that marvelous? Even 101. Old Christian.

Can still find ways to serve and encourage others. All because Christ's priorities are her priorities. The big point.

[27:53] Because the sun is supreme in all of life. This life. And new life. New spiritual. New physical life. Then he ought to be supreme in our life. Such that we live.

Like rotating planets around him. Are we on board with what God has made the sun? Let's pray we would be. Let's pray. Our gracious Father.

We thank you. That you have made your son. The Lord Jesus. Supreme in this life. Such that all life is about him. Help us to be on board with you.

We pray in his name. Amen.