

Parting Words of Hope and Power

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[0 : 0 0] Well, we've just started a series through the book of Acts, and over the last couple of weeks we've come to see that the book of Acts is just volume two of this multi-volume set. Volume one was the gospel of Luke. The gospel of Jesus Christ is recorded by Luke for this person known as Theophilus, and then the second volume in this set is the work of God working through the apostles and kind of laying the foundation for this church, and as the disciples then begin with this life-giving message of the gospel, and then that message is taken out of Jerusalem and then spills into the known world, and the work of God working through that message, and the work of discipleship in others who hear the message, and the church age is born. As a part of learning from the scripture, we also want to give you some object lessons, and we've been hearing from a family in our church who's kind of done this for themselves, and this is week three of kind of seeing the snapshots of how God has worked through the Manwiller family to encourage and to be a blessing to some others in our community with the gospel, and so this is the third segment of that series.

Thank you. As we were embarking on the journey of educating our children and utilizing the public school system to do so, with the goal of knowing Him and making Him known, we were able to build relationships with parents, teachers, and other students. After building relationships with people, one way we've been able to live Christ in front of them has been through serving. I've gotten to run the scoreboard for soccer games and announced the players, giving me connections with the coaches and players.

We've also been able to communicate with school leaders to help gather names for needy families for our church's Thanksgiving food drive. As I mentioned previously, God gave us two more children at the same season that our older boys were entering the public school. If I wanted to be involved with teachers and students, I needed to be creative, but also do things I was already able to do. I like cooking and making sure my people are well-fed, especially during sports season. So that became an avenue of serving. Our whole family has been involved in preparing and serving meals for football and soccer teams. One year, we organized the pregame cookout for the soccer team's senior night and even had some Maranatha family serve with us. I also enjoy playing the piano and accompany. Two years ago, the Lord opened up the time and opportunity for me to serve the band teachers and quite a few students by supporting them when they perform their instrumental solos. It's such a neat opportunity to be a smile and a voice of encouragement in the life of a teenager.

Another way our whole family serves the teachers is by baking something for them each Christmas. Chocolate chip cookies are a favorite. When I look back at the leadership positions that I was in, I feel like there was a lot left to be desired and how I served and led. But I'm thankful for how I was able to lead still, specifically as the soccer captain and band section leader. On the soccer team, I was able to live the gospel out through my sanctification as I often struggled with losing or performing poorly. But God worked at my heart through the season and allowed me to show how God's forgiveness is real. I was also able to pray with my team before two games my senior year. And in band, I helped the less experienced percussionists learn their parts and work on their technique. Even after leaving high school, I have still been able to serve Westland as this last soccer season, I tracked and analyzed some statistics for the soccer team and could keep up my relationship with the coach. Serving is a powerful thing that points to a humble savior. Whether it's been picking up trash on the soccer field or just being willing to serve others and band, people truly appreciate willing servitude. And some will and have wondered why I do it. This provides a wonderful way to show Christ to others and point them to a humble servant savior. We like to help with making meals, cookies, cookies, and other things our family does to serve people.

What we're going to learn through this series is that God delights in using you. Those who have devoted themselves, humbled themselves to the Lord and are yielded to His plan, His strategy for

accomplishing His purpose in the world. And what a joy it is that God can use me. With all of the all the things I bring to the table, all the weaknesses, all the frailties, and God wants to use you. He wants to use you through, especially through your willingness. Your willingness to go where God has called you to go and to be in the circles that God has placed you and to depend upon His word and depend upon the power of His Spirit. As we come to the book of Acts this morning, I want to encourage you to turn with me, if you would, to Acts chapter 1. If you're using the Pew Bible, you can find it on page 909.

We saw last week that Christ prepares a people. He prepares His church, and there are some things that He does to begin to prepare His church. And fundamentally, He begins by helping to bolster and supplement their faith. Help them to understand that the message that they believe is credible.

[5 : 33] The message they believe is dependable and trustworthy. It's easy for us to see that the words that we find in the book of Acts is Jesus preparing His men for the mission that God has called them to.

Last week, we saw this trustworthy word, this trustworthy witness, the credibility of the word of God through the voice of His Son, Jesus Christ, but also the credible word of God through the various eyewitnesses who saw and captured the life of Christ from their own perspectives. Written down for us in the gospel of Luke, and not just there for those in the first century to be able to enjoy, but for us to be able to see, to be able to enjoy, to be able to evaluate its credibility, this trustworthy account that has been given to us by our Lord. We know that faith is anchored in fact, and that God has given to us a credible witness. He's given us a witness that is confirmed and established for us, and even Luke says that the whole purpose of it was that you would have certainty concerning the things that have been taught. If we're going to be people of faith, Jesus understands, or God understands, that there are evidences. It's not just we're believing in something that doesn't have credibility, that God has, by

His grace, given us His word. Second, we find that there are many proofs about the risen Lord, and we looked briefly last week at all of the the credible witnesses that testified to the resurrecting work of God through Christ being raised from the dead. The women who were at the tomb, the disciples who came, these disbelieving disciples who saw Jesus on a number of occasions. We saw how Jesus appears not only to the disciples, not only to the disciples, but also to 500 others as they make their way to Galilee. And this essential piece of Christ's resurrection, we know that faith without resurrection is vanity. So Jesus demonstrated that He is one who raised from the dead to help, again, bolster our faith.

Third, we saw that we have a kingdom message, that Jesus came and He proclaimed the kingdom of God for the 40 days that He was with the disciples in the region of Galilee. His message was a mark of His ministry, that all the way through the public ministry of Jesus, He was proclaiming this kingdom message that we saw throughout the gospel of Luke. Luke 4, 43, Jesus says, I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God, for I was sent for this purpose. In Luke 8, we find soon afterwards, speaking of Jesus, He went on through the cities and villages proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And it was a message not only that Jesus preached, it was a message that He then entrusted to His disciples. In Luke chapter 9, the disciples were to also spread that message. It says, He called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure all diseases. And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.

Then in the next chapter, not only for the disciples, the twelve, but also for a group of 72 followers, those who followed after God. After this, He says in Luke chapter 10, verse 1, the Lord appointed 72 others and sent them on ahead of Him, two by two in every town and place where He Himself was about to go. He tells them, whenever you enter a town that they receive you, eat what is set before you, heal the sick and say to them, the kingdom of God has come near to you. That kingdom message was prominent through our Savior and it was prominent in the ministry of the disciples even before the crucifixion. That's where we pick up things this morning. We come to see that what Jesus spoke and what He modeled, not just in terms of the power, but is something that God has graciously then entrusted to His faithful disciples and to His faithful followers who come after Him.

[10 : 12] Acts chapter 1, if you're there with me, picking up in verse 6. Let me read this for us as we begin our study for this morning. It says, So when they had come together, speaking of the disciples, they asked Him, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? He said to them,

It's not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. And when He said these things, as they were looking on, He was lifted up and a cloud took Him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes and said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who has taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him going into heaven. We find in this last scene of Jesus with His disciples these parting words. What will Jesus say to His disciples? What confidence will He seek to instill in them? What hope do we find that Jesus is communicating? What message of power, what message of promise is Jesus relaying to His disciples and subsequently then giving to you?

And giving to me? What confidence can we gain from the message that Jesus is giving in these parting words? We see these messages of promise. We begin here in verse 6 and we see that Jesus is communicating His power to ensure every promise. Every promise that has been resident within the life of Christ is now being fulfilled by Him in a scene here, even in the opening scene. This hope-filled message.

While Jesus might be saying goodbye, this will be the last time that they will see Him and hear His words on a physical basis. But His words are meant to instill hope in them. This is not goodbye forever.

And what He has set in motion now is simply to confirm His intention now for them to carry on the work that Jesus began. This passage begins to answer this question, why did Jesus leave? What is He seeking to accomplish? Now that all the work of salvation was complete, His death, His resurrection, now what is Jesus intending to do? Why would He leave? And this passage will help to set us on the course of understanding this continuing work of Christ and the example that He is setting for the disciples and for us today to understand His purpose, His mission for us. Here they are, they've gathered together. We see that in verse 4, while they were staying with Him. We see that in verse 4. He ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father. There was something they needed to understand.

There was something they needed to learn about the waiting part of trusting in the promises of God. And so here in verse 6, as everything is now finally in place, they ask this obvious question, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? That's an obvious question. Everything's done. The work of salvation is complete. Christ, you've done it. You've fulfilled it. Now, now bring it on. [14:04] You've promised this kingdom. Let's have it. Let's see it. Let's enjoy it. He's fulfilled every promise. The seed of the woman. Remember the promise that Christ would crush the serpent's head. That's been accomplished. Jesus, who is now also the seed of Abraham, who's proven that God will, in fact, provide a lamb. The seed of David, who came to a virgin named Mary, who was born in a little town called Bethlehem, and who demonstrated unmistakably that the Spirit of the Lord was upon him. Luke chapter 4, verse 18, talks about the Spirit of the Lord that would rest on the Messiah. Jesus is this seed. He paid for sin for those who rebelled against him. He's made a way through his death and resurrection. He's accomplished all that was necessary to now usher us back into fellowship with God, to restore that fellowship that was once broken, and that we can enjoy because of what Jesus has done, and everything is now in place. Certainly, the disciples were thinking, this is the time. This is the moment they've always waited for, the moment they've always imagined. It was an obvious conclusion, but notice the response of the Lord in verse 7. It says, He said to them, it is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority. It's not time yet, guys.

It's not the moment. There's still some more waiting to do, and I think this is significant because Jesus Jesus doesn't correct their theology. Jesus doesn't say, now time out, guys. I know I've been talking about the kingdom for the last 40 days, but you are totally missing it. The kingdom is just not going to come in the way you expect. The kingdom is just not going to be the kingdom that you anticipated. Rather, He confirms their expectations. Jesus saying, you've understood correctly. Yes, the kingdom is going to come in the very way that you expected, but it's just not going to come right now. Your expectation is right. The kingdom will come in just the way that you have expected, but don't worry. Don't worry. It's not here yet, but the Father has a schedule. The Father has a time. The Father has a season. He has an appointed time in which He will come, and the Son will honor the timing that the Father has put in place. You have the right facts, but you have the wrong time.

And this is what Jesus has been after. This is what God has been after from the very beginning of creation. To invite a people to be a people who depend upon His timing. We see that over and over again, especially as it relates to Abraham. Remember Hebrews chapter 11 verse 13? God had given him promise, a promise of a land and seed and blessing. And it says this, that these all died, speaking of Abraham and Sarah and Noah and Enoch and Abel, these all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar. God intends to create awaiting people.

[17 : 50] God intends to create an expectant people. God has given us explicit and clear promises. In awaiting people, in awaiting people, learn to trust in God's timing. That's not easy, is it?

It's not easy to wait for God's timing. But you see, Jesus is God's emphatic yes to His promises. That Jesus has come, and because Jesus has fulfilled all that God has promised in the Old Testament, Jesus is in fact the, yes, I'm going to see it through. You can trust me. You just have to wait for my timing. You just have to believe that my timing is the right timing. God will honor His promise to David. And just as the disciples anticipated fulfillment of that promise, we're reminded that God will continue to see it through. And He initiated this by a portrait. A portrait. This flashback that Jesus gives to His disciples before He even goes to the cross. In John chapter 14, verses 1 to 3, Jesus says this, Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many rooms.

If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

Jesus told the disciples before His crucifixion, I'm going to leave and I'm going to come back. And guess what? This is the moment that we see Jesus begin to put the wheels in motion.

He's made this promise. He's reestablished this kingdom priority, this message the disciples have heard throughout Jesus' entire ministry. And now Jesus, instead of just leaving in a flash without them being able to even see Him in a bodily, physical way, Jesus is now being captured away, as we're going to see in just a couple of verses. He's captured away to secure this promise in the minds of the disciples. Promise made is a promise kept. I will keep this promise. I will return. And while I'm gone, I'm preparing a place for you. You can trust me.

[20 : 21] Huh. So we need to live in light of His sure return. Living obediently. Living worshipfully.

Living expectantly. If Jesus were to come back today, would this be a time to celebrate? Or would this be a time to be ashamed? We learn from 1 John 2, verses 28 and 29, that John says, And now little children abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink from Him in shame at His coming. If you know He is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of Him. Your King is coming. Are you living in anticipation of that promise? Are you trusting in the fact that Jesus has secured everything that is necessary to accomplish the once and for all promises that He's made? He has the power to ensure those promises. Are we living in light of His return? Second, we find in verse 8, the very beginning of verse 8, But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Not only did He ensure every promise, but He has the power to equip for every purpose. God has given us specific, clear commands.

But He's not given us those commands for us to work out on our own power, because if we do, if we think we can, we're going to fall flat on our face. But God has given us promises, but He's then also supplied the power. Promise comes with power, the power of the Spirit. And this morning, if you have the Holy Spirit, and you know you have the Spirit, if you're a person who has come to a place of recognizing your sin, recognizing that it has separated you from God, that you've confessed your sin, that you've asked for forgiveness, that you've turned your life to Him, you're looking to Him as the King of your life, the Master of your life, and you've then enjoyed the benefits of His cleansing, His cleansing work, His forgiving work. And if that's the case, for those of us today who are living in this latter time, we have the assurance, the guarantee that the Spirit is living in us. At this point in this story here at the beginning of the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit had not yet come in that way on these disciples. And so Jesus is encouraging them, wait in Jerusalem until you start carrying out this mission. You need the power before you can do and carry out this promise. And so this kingdom message was accompanied by power, and the disciples got to see this power worked out in the life of Christ.

As He raises the dead, as He casts out demons, as He walks on water, as He's stilling and calming the storm, as He's distributing the loaves of bread. And Jesus graciously then entrusted that power to the disciples so they could see it and experience it for themselves. But all of that took place when Jesus was present. What would happen when Jesus was absent? What would happen when Jesus was no longer there?

And John read this promise earlier. I think it's worth repeating in John chapter 16, verses 7 and 8. Jesus says to His disciples, Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away. For if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you. And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. The promise of God's power through His indwelling Holy Spirit that God has given to us. The Spirit, the very Spirit who worked out those miracles in the first century through the life of Christ. It was because of the power of the Spirit working through the Son. And this kingdom message would not rest on human power. This kingdom message would rest alone on the power of God to accomplish His work. Every person who has placed their faith in

[25 : 12] Christ for forgiveness has access to that power. Now, whether or not you put that power to work is a decision that you make for yourself. But we have all been given the distribution of that indwelling Holy Spirit to work out that power. What does that power accomplish? Well, I want to put this little graphic up on the board so that you can see all of the things that you have access to because of the Spirit's power. And the verses that reinforce the promises that we have the power of fellowship with one another and fellowship with God. Ephesians 2.18. Of understanding the Scripture, the clarity of the Word of God. We have access to know what God says through His Spirit. Conviction of sin, assurance of salvation, service, the ability to serve in the way He's called us to serve, fruitfulness in ministry, a spirit of generosity and endurance and victory and courage. You see, all of the things, and this is just a sampling, of all that God has made available through His Spirit. Are you enjoying experiencing the work of God's power in your life? So often, I find in my own life that I am not, I'm not being strengthened in the way that I should be strengthened. And there are a number of reasons for that. There are three I just want to just briefly draw to our attention. Why do we not experience the power of the Spirit? First, because we grieve the Spirit. We grieve the Spirit. Ephesians chapter 4 verse 30 says,

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. There are things in our life that we know are out of bounds, that we've been given very specific and explicit and clear instructions, and we choose in our heart to continue to go the way of the world, the way of our heart, the way of our flesh, instead of following after the way of God.

And in doing that, we grieve the Spirit. Our sin makes God sad. It makes God grieved. It breaks His heart. And by grieving the Holy Spirit, then we are, we're keeping ourself away from being able to experience and enjoy the benefits of His Spirit power. Second, we quench the Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians chapter 5 verse 19 says, Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything. Hold fast what is good. abstain from every form of evil.

We quench the Spirit by knowing what the Bible says, but by not really applying it to our life. We don't care what the Scripture says. Maybe we don't even go and find out what the Scripture says about something. We are quenching the Spirit, but by not allowing the Word of His Spirit, the Word of God, to speak to our life, to direct our energy, our obedience, our decision.

[28 : 37] So we're not doing what Proverbs 3, 5, and 6 says, By trusting in the Lord with all our heart and leaning not to our own understanding, in all our ways acknowledging Him, and He'll make our paths straight.

But if we don't care about being directed by God's Word and by His Spirit, then we're going to quench the Spirit's power in our life. Third, we resist or reject the Holy Spirit.

There's a number of verses we could go to, but Galatians 5, verses 16 and 17 help to summarize this by saying, Walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the flesh.

For the desire of the flesh are against the Spirit. The desires of the Spirit are against the flesh. For these are opposed to each other to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

[29 : 45] There's two decisions in life. To allow the desires or the passions of your life to lead you to fulfilling and gratifying the desires of your flesh or to follow the desires or passions of the Spirit which will lead you to life in obedience, in sanctification.

And we resist the Spirit by choosing our flesh over choosing the things the Spirit wants in our life. And so we throw away.

We dismiss the power that's available to us especially to live a life of obedience to God but then to then carry out in obedience the things that God has called us to do so we can enjoy the benefits and blessings of fruitfulness.

God desires us to be a people who are enjoying and experiencing His power. It's accessible. Every believer has access to Holy Spirit power.

And Paul will say the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead is the power that's resident in every believer. That power that Christ put on display is a power that we can enjoy if we submit ourselves to the Spirit and His working in our life.

[31 : 09] Third, we see a power to extend to all people. This power that Christ has promised that will expand. That's expansive power.

It's extending power. It reaches. It reaches from Jerusalem all the way to the uttermost parts of the earth. Look at this. You will receive power, verse 8, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

That's power. This statement. You will receive power. I love how Jesus puts this. These definitive future promises.

You will receive power and you will be witnesses. It's non-negotiable. For those people who submit themselves to Christ and enjoy the benefits of His power, this will happen.

You'll enjoy my power and you will be my witnesses. And this witness will extend all peoples on the earth. God's ultimate goal is to make a people for Himself.

[32 : 16] And it begins with you. God's Word, this message of the kingdom, is meant to change your heart, change my heart, so that we can be instrumental and useful for God with this kingdom message to begin to influence and to change the hearts of those who will hear wherever they are.

And this goal is anchored in God's promise that goes all the way back to Abraham. Genesis chapter 12, verses 2 and 3. God says, I will make of you a great nation, Abraham.

I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. You want to be a blessing today? I will bless those who bless you. In him who dishonors you, I will curse.

And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. God's promise to Abraham that extends to all nations. There it is.

And it's a goal that's also repeated in the Scripture, in Galatians chapter 3, verse 8. Paul says this, in the Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preach the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, in you shall all the nations be blessed.

[33 : 36] Why the delay? Well, a part of the delay is so God can put to work these remaining promises. His gospel to every nation, every language, every people on the face of the globe.

And we have the benefits of seeing this promise working power and to be a part of the program that God has put in place going all the way back to the beginning. Jesus reinforced this goal to His disciples at their commissioning.

Matthew 28, verses 18 and 20 says, And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. You see, authority again and power again resident in Jesus.

And what is it for? What's its purpose? Well, here it is. To go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded and behold, I'm with you always, even to the end of the age.

God's power working through His people to accomplish gospel work around the world. This kingdom message, not just for the Jews, but including the Gentiles, all nations, all peoples.

[34 : 57] And God is working through His Son to reclaim humanity for Himself. This is not a new plan, by the way. And I love how the Apostle Paul puts this in Ephesians.

In Ephesians, he says this in chapter 3, verse 7. Of this gospel, I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given to me by the working of His power.

To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and to bring to light for everyone.

What is the plan of the mystery hidden for the ages in God who created all things? Let me just pause there for a moment. This plan has been in place from before time began and has been encapsulated in the God who created all things.

This plan that the Apostle Paul is now communicating power to accomplish this purpose. What? What does it do? Verse 10. So that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

[36 : 07] This was according to the eternal purpose that He has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord. Now we get to take part in this eternal plan of God.

This plan of God in preaching this gospel message this life transforming message and welcoming individuals to participate in this work of God in becoming saved redeemed.

His mission begins though at home. Mission begins as you come to understand what this gospel means to you and then what your responsibility is to enjoy and experience the power of God in taking that message out.

We've been promised His Spirit but it begins at home in Jerusalem. It begins in the places where God has put you. Your families, your communities, your neighborhoods, your workplaces, your school, wherever you might be, your Jerusalem.

Are we witnesses? Are we those who understand and recognize the mission that God has put us on but also this promise, this unstoppable promise of God to accomplish His work?

[37 : 32] You will be my witnesses. Will you be His witness when you enjoy His power? Finally, we see His power to establish all preeminence.

His power to establish all preeminence that Jesus Christ is Lord. He is preeminent. He is supreme. And what He does here in verse 9 to 11 helps us to understand once and for all that He is leaving but He will come back.

He will establish once and for all that He is King over all. Notice verse 9. And when He had said these things, speaking of Jesus, as they were looking on He was lifted up and a cloud took Him out of their sight and while they were gazing into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes and said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven?

This Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven. this confirmation.

Jesus is taken up in a bodily way. You can better believe that Jesus will come in just the same way. Here is your object lesson to the credibility of our God.

[38 : 52] That even before the crucifixion took place, Jesus had promised that He was going to go and prepare a place for them. He promised that He was going to leave them but come back and now, again, we see this confirmation.

now the resurrection has happened and now Jesus is leaving just the way He said He would leave and we can be assured that as He left, He will come back. He will come back to establish once and for all that He is preeminent, that He is supreme.

Colossians 1, verses 15 and 17 help us to see this preeminent Christ. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation for by Him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through Him and for Him.

And He is before all things and in Him all things hold together. Jesus, as Creator, is preeminent over the universe, visible and invisible, the physical and spiritual.

Everything that you can see and everything that you cannot, Jesus created it, it happens through Him and it happens for Him. It serves His purposes. He is supreme.

[40 : 16] He is preeminent. But then verse 18 of chapter 1 says something more. Colossians 1, 18. And He is the head of the body, the church.

He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent. Why is that there?

What purpose does that serve? Jesus is over the church? Well, we already know that from Him being over all creation, being over all humanity, over the birds and over the fish and over the mountains and sun and moon.

We know that Jesus is already over people and over physical things. Why did He add the church? What's the purpose of this? Well, the purpose of this is to say that Jesus is also over, has overcome every sin and overcome death once and for all.

He is supreme over that too. And we have the joy, church. We have the joy that everywhere we go, that we, as representatives of those who've enjoyed and experienced the benefits of His salvation from sin, that everywhere you go, your life can say, Jesus is supreme because He's conquered

every sin in your life.

[41 : 47] He's conquered death. He's going to capture you away and you're going to enjoy the benefits and blessing of life eternal with Him. Your life, says Jesus, emphatically, is supreme.

It's a joy and a privilege but a great responsibility. Does our life say that Jesus is Lord? When people see us, do they see a waiting, expectant people?

People who believe in the promises of God, people who have anchored their hearts in His future coming. Do they see a people who are empowered by God?

People who are demonstrating that there is something about them that is quite distinct, something that is not normative in this world. They see that there is a, you see that there is a love from you that cannot be seen anywhere else in this world.

They see that there is an affection for others in you, that there is a message that they're hearing about the work of the Savior. Are they seeing there's a message in a kingdom heart, a mission, and a purpose to share that message with others?

[43 : 10] Are they recognizing in your life that there is a preeminent God and that you have bowed the knee to that Lord and that you are serving Him with your life?

Oh, may God help us as we seek to do better at making Jesus preeminent so that when people see us, they say, yes, there is a supreme Savior.

There is a supreme God, a preeminent one. And they see that because of the work of Christ in His church. Oh, may God help us to represent Him faithfully.

God, we thank You for Your Son, Jesus, for these parting words. What words of power, what words of promise, what words of hope.

And Lord, as we evaluate our lives and we see so many times the frailty, the powerlessness, and even the rebellion in resisting Your Spirit, God, I pray that You would help us to recognize where we're out of step, that we would lay that at Your feet, we would enjoy Your forgiveness, and that we would move in the direction of our Savior.

[44 : 28] Oh, God, help us to be representatives of Yours and to a watching world, may they see through us that there is, in fact, a supreme God.

we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. God bless you. Have a great week.