

The Supremacy of Christ

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[0 : 00] Good morning. Happy Mother's Day once again to the mothers. It's a pleasure, Lorna. Let's pray together and let's ask God to bless the preaching of His Word.

Father, we come before you this morning to once again get our lives and our eyesight and our vision restored.

God, we want to see the world as it really is, which means we want to see it through your eyes. We want to understand who you are and we want to know what you're doing in our world.

And so this morning, God, as we come to your Word, won't you speak to us? Oh, Holy Spirit, how we need you. God, come and take the words of your Scripture and apply it to our hearts, we pray. Come open our eyes to see. We pray, God, even now, prepare our hearts, Lord, to receive from you, God. And so we pray these things in your wonderful and powerful name.

[1 : 05] Amen. Amen. This morning, we are in week two of our study of the book of Colossians. Colossians is one of the most incredible and wonderful books in the Bible.

And so I'm very excited for the next eight weeks, or this week plus six more, we're going to be going through the book of Colossians together on Sundays and in many of our CGs.

As we get up close and personal with the Bible's teaching about the supremacy of Christ over all things and what it means for those of us that are followers of Jesus, that we are in Christ.

That's what the book of Colossians is all about. Now, today's passage of Scripture that Echo read to us is one of the most famous, one of the most wonderful passages of Scripture for churches like ours that love the teaching of God's sovereignty over all things.

As a church, we love to pray about God's sovereignty and teach about God's sovereignty and sing about God's sovereignty. The fact that Jesus is not just good, He is Lord of all.

[2 : 07] And for churches like us, this passage of Scripture is like poetry to our ears, right? But the Scripture we read this morning is far more than just a statement or an exclamation about the bigness and the majesty of God.

It is that, but it's also telling us more. And so in order to understand it, let's just go back and once again look at the context of Colossians and the context of chapter 1. So Colossians is written, the Apostle Paul is in Rome under house arrest.

He's been preaching the gospel. He's been arrested. He's in house arrest in Rome. And his old friend Epaphras that started this church in the town of Colossae is also arrested in Rome.

And Epaphras tells him about the church in Colossae. And he says things are going really well, but there's a couple of challenges. The challenge is the church is being influenced by a bunch of groups.

The one group is saying, Jesus is good, but he's not enough. You need to add to Jesus a whole bit of religious duties and observations, religious days and Sabbaths and all these festivals.

[3 : 13] And another group are saying, look, Jesus is good, but he's not all that he's made out to be. You need to add to Jesus some secular thinking and modern philosophy and all these things. And so Paul writes to this church to encourage them around three things.

To encourage them about the supremacy of Christ. That Christ is over all things. That Christ is in a category of his own. There is no one else like him. He writes to encourage them that the gospel is powerful.

The gospel isn't just another philosophy that a bunch of people believe because we think this is the most appropriate way to address life. The gospel is the power of God that gets inside of us and changes us.

And then the third thing Paul writes to encourage them is what does our life as a follower of Jesus look like now that we are in Christ and Christ is in us? And so that's the second half of Colossians

chapters 3 and 4.

It's all about what does the life of a Christian look like? What does it mean for your work and your home and your family and all these things? And so that's what the book of Colossians is all about. [4 : 15] Now, the apostle Paul was a very brilliant man. If you've read much of the New Testament, I'm sure you can agree, right? One of the most outstanding church leaders, church planters, a great apostle, obviously loved God, incredibly wonderful man.

But I have one thing against the apostle Paul. Do you know what it is? He writes the longest sentences. Have you ever found that? The most incredibly long sentences that are sometimes hard to understand.

And in fact, the passage that Echo read to us this morning is only the second half of one of the longest sentences in the Bible. In Colossians chapter 1, from verse 9, which is what we looked at last week, all the way to almost the end of what was read this morning is one sentence.

And what that means is to understand the passage we read this morning, we've got to go back a bit, remind ourselves of what we looked at last week and see how that flows. So last week, verse 9 starts like this.

He says, We've heard about your love for Christ and your love for all the saints. And then he says, Therefore, since the day we heard about you, we haven't ceased praying for you.

[5 : 23] And this is what he prays. That you will be filled with the knowledge of God's will. That you will have wisdom and understanding. Okay, so Paul prays for these Colossian Christians that they'll know something of what God's will is.

And we said last week, it doesn't just mean to know the Bible technically, like a tax consultant knows, you know, the tax code. It doesn't just mean to know what is God's will in every situation, like, should I wear a blue tie today or a red tie?

That's not what it means to know God's will. To know God's will is to have the mind of Christ, to have wisdom and understanding, to see the world the way God sees it. And I guess it's to answer these questions.

Who is God and what is God doing in the world? To know what the mind and the will of God is, to have wisdom and understanding, is to know who is this God? And what on earth is he doing in the world?

And it's amazing how you can have a PhD in theology. You can understand all the Greek and the Hebrew and know all the stories of the Bible and not know the answer to those questions. Who is God and what is he doing in the world?

[6 : 27] And then Paul writes and says, if you know that, if you get the will of God inside of you, if you understand this gospel paradigm, it will lead to a couple of things. And what, Mark, if we want to be a church that is bearing fruit, that's the first thing.

If we want to be a church that is walking in the ways of God. If we want to be a church that is walking in the ways of God such that please him. And if we want to be a church that Colossians 1 says is strengthened and is steadfast to go the distance when life gets tough and things aren't always easy.

When we are strengthened and because there's something inside of us that can allow us to go the distance. We've got to be a church that can answer those questions. And so in light of that, we get to our passage this morning.

Who is God and what is he doing in the world? And so let's look at Colossians chapter 1 verses 15 to 23 this morning. Now, I've got three points as always.

Every good sermon has only got three points. I promised Edwin yesterday I'd have two points. But I'm sorry, Edwin. I snuck another one in there this morning. So three points. Jesus and creation. The problem of creation.

[7 : 32] Jesus and redemption. Okay? So let's dive into our scripture this morning. Look at verse 15 with me. Paul writes this. He, that's Jesus, he is the image of the invisible God.

I'm not sure about you, but when I consider the awesome magnitude of creation, and I don't even understand a one-hundredth of what creation is all about, when you understand the fact that there are hundreds of billions of galaxies that we know about, who knows what we don't even know about, that each one of those galaxies consists of hundreds of billions of stars, it is all quite overwhelming, isn't it?

When you think of the vast expanse of our cosmos, it all can be overwhelming. And yet, in the Old Testament, the people of God, as they looked up in the night sky, and they saw, they understood that God was magnificent.

God was awesome. He was very different from themselves. He wasn't just a slightly better version of themselves. There was something majestic about the God of creation. And yet, at the same time, they had witnessed his involvement in the world.

They saw his dramatic deliverances from Egypt and their enemies. They saw his provision in the desert, in the wilderness. They encountered his appearances to men and women of old.

[8 : 53] They saw his demonstrations of power through people like Elijah. Sometimes they saw and understood God's providence, his leading and his guiding through people like Queen Esther and Joseph.

And then, of course, his word that he spoke through the prophets. And so, in the Old Testament, the people of God knew, though God is transcendent, in other words, he's distinct from us, he's not like us, he is other and out there, he's also imminent, which means he's close, he's personal, he's involved in our lives.

But still, though the people of God got to experience God and encounter him in so many different ways, through the priests, through the prophets, through the temple, through dreams, through angels, through God's deliverance, still, what is he like?

Who is this God? They got to see glimpses of him, but what is this God really like? I think of Moses. Remember, in the Old Testament, God describes Moses as somebody who speaks to God face to face, like a man speaks to a friend.

And yet, even Moses said, God, show me your glory. Let me see your infinite worth. And God hid him in a cave and then passed by him. Then you cannot see me for all that I am.

[10 : 06] And yet, here we see that Paul says Jesus is the image of the invisible God. In Jesus, we somehow get to see the nature and the character of the eternal God, perfectly revealed, perfectly made known.

As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians, in the face of Christ, we get to see the glory of God. We get to see the infinite worth and the majesty of God in the face of Christ. In Hebrews 1, it talks about Jesus like this.

It says, Remember, back in the day, when you used to travel, before thumbprints and eye retina displays, you used to have this thing called the passport, right?

I guess we still have passports, but they don't really look at them these days. Remember back in the day, they used to actually stamp the passport? When we came to Hong Kong, we had a piece of paper, employment pass, put in there.

They stamped the passport, stamped employment pass, you're good to go. That stamp is the exact representations, like stamp one, stamp two. If you're Singaporean, talk about the chop, right? Chop one, chop two.

[11 : 17] Do we talk about that here in Hong Kong? No, okay. In Singapore, stamp is a chop, right? So stamp one, stamp two. The one image is the exact picture or representation of the other.

The one is not a drawing, it's not an artist's impression. You stamp once, you stamp twice, the exact same picture. Jesus is the image, the exact representation. When we see Christ, we see something of who God is.

And remember, as human beings, we're created in God's image. We are meant to bear God's image on earth. And yet, as human beings, we have a long history of falling short, of doing that very well.

But not Jesus. Jesus is the image of the invisible God. The perfect representation of what this invisible God is really like, we see it in Jesus.

Because verse 19 says, in Him was the fullness of God pleased to dwell. Perfect God. Perfect man. All coming together in the person of Christ. Jesus, the image of the invisible God.

[12 : 19] But not only that, look at what Paul says next. He says, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. Now, I think if you are of Asian descent, you probably understand this better than Western counterparts like me, right?

This idea of the firstborn. Firstborn doesn't necessarily only mean first in time. It means first in rank, first in status, right? First in position of prominence.

I think the Chinese word is something like John T. Is that right? Did I get that even remotely right? Okay, nodding head. The idea of firstborn. So in ancient cultures, think about this. In ancient cultures, your land was your wealth, right? Your family's wealth was tied up in the land. Land was so important. And so you've got a plot of land that your family farms. And it comes time to hand over the wealth to the next generation, your inheritance. Now, in the ancient cultures, they didn't just say, Listen, I've got six or seven kids. I don't really, but just imagine. [13:19] I had six or seven kids, and I'm going to split up my land six or seven ways. Because what will happen? After another generation of each having six or seven kids, the land gets split six ways, and then another 40 ways, and then the next generation.

Eventually, after two or three generations, your farm has been split up hundreds of ways. It's now the size of the piano. And you're not going to get a lot of farming done on the piano, right? That's not going to produce a lot of wealth.

So what would happen? To preserve the family's wealth, the family would hand on the entire estate, the whole inheritance to the firstborn son. And everything went to him, but then it was his responsibility to look after the family and to provide for them.

Okay? So in other words, the firstborn is not just first in time. It's also first in status. It's first in prominence. In a sense, the firstborn son is kind of like the dad, like the father in the family. Now, look at what Paul says here. Using this imagery, he says, Jesus is not just a billboard to show us what God is like in human form. More than that, he is the firstborn of all creation.

[14:28] He is first in rank, first in status. He has the highest and the most prestigious rank in all of creation. It's not just of all human beings, in all of creation. Never has anyone or anything come close to his supremacy and his authority.

Jesus, the firstborn of all creation. And then Paul explains why this is the case. Now, you may think the reason why Jesus is firstborn was because he was the first one who was made, right?

Jesus made us, but he was made before all of us. And so because he was made first, he has a position of rank or status. But that's not what the Bible says. Look at verse 16 with me.

It says, he is distinct from all created beings because he is the source of all created beings. Or as verse 16 says, for by him, all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions, rulers or authorities, that's all created things, angels, demons, all things were created through him.

It doesn't matter where you go in the cosmos. You can go to the moon, you can go to heaven, you can go to earth, you can go to Mars or to the furthest reaches of our galaxy, you'll still be within Christ's created order.

[15:45] It doesn't matter whether you understand it or not. Things visible and invisible, even some things we don't understand, even things that we have not invented and have not yet discovered about the world, Christ made them.

It doesn't matter what power or authority such a thing has, whether physical power, emotional power, psychological power, spiritual power, all things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions, rulers or angels or authorities, all things were made through him and by him.

Remember, at this time in the city of, the town of Colossae, the Colossian Christians are being pressed because the people around them are saying, yeah, Jesus is good, you know, we'll give you that, but there's also Apollos and there's, you know, Aphrodites and there's Hermes.

They're the other gods as well. And Paul writes and says, no, Christ is supreme above every other being in the entire cosmos or universe.

Christ is different. Christ, the man who died on the cross just 30 years before, is different from every other being. And friends, whether you're a Christian here or not, and especially if you're not a Christian, this question about who is Jesus is a question you have to answer.

[17:07] You have to come to the place of working out who is Jesus. Who is this man that died on the cross? What do I make him out to be? Is he really the name above every other name? Is he really the only one who can ever save?

We sang about it earlier. Jesus is the name above every name. Jesus is the most powerful man. Is that really who he is? And in our day and day, we may not be tempted to trust in Apollo or Hermes or the other Roman gods, but we are tempted to trust in other things to secure a good future for us.

Things that we expect will provide us with a good life. We get the right boss. Maybe the market forces. Things go well in the market or maybe a relationship.

Maybe the things that are more nuanced than that. Things like our intellectual ability. Our reasoning or our rationality. Things that we trust. These things will secure us the good life. And Paul's assertion here is that all things, visible or not, material or immaterial, all things come to existence because of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And therefore, he is Lord over all things. I was talking to a friend just recently this week who at work, there's some challenges, there's some retrenchments coming, and some people in the office are going to lose their jobs.

[18 : 24] And maybe his job is on the line. He doesn't know. And so there's a lot of tension and angst in the office. What's going to happen? Do we have a job? And this friend, who's a follower of Jesus, was not particularly worried.

And so his colleagues eventually said to him, what's up with you? Why are you not worried? All of us are worried. You don't seem to be worried. And this is his answer. Do you really think that my God, who made the entire universe, cannot provide for my family?

My God is the Lord of all things. Friends, you see how practical this is? I don't know what challenges you're facing. Maybe you've been to the doctor and you're waiting for a medical report. And you don't know what that report is going to say. Maybe you are pregnant with your first child and you aren't sure about the health of that child. Maybe you want to become pregnant. You're trying for kids.

Friends, God in heaven is Lord of all things. And your life is safely in his hands. But even that is not enough because look at what Paul goes on to say. He says, For by him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible or invisible, whether rulers, authorities, dominions or powers, all things were created through him and for him.

[19 : 40] In other words, not only is Christ before all things, before anything was made, at the end of all time, when the world is wrapped up, all things will come down before Christ, before all things were made for him or to him.

We often think all things were made by him for us. And that's not what the Scripture sings. All things are made for him. Or another way of saying that is for the praise of his name.

At the end of history, when the world is wrapped up, every created being will fall down on their knees and say, You are God and I am not. All things were made for the praise of his name.

And so here we have Christ before all things, creator of all things, and at the same time, we have Jesus Christ, the end goal, the one for whom all things were made. And so Paul summarizes this in verse 17.

Look at what he says. He says, He is before all things and in him all things hold together. Christ is before all things, he's at the end of all things, and he's currently holding all things together right now.

[20 : 42] And it's a remarkable summary of the supremacy and the sufficiency of the man who just 30 years before was being nailed to a Roman cross for this remarkable claim that he really is God.

Jesus hung on the cross, but he didn't stay there. And so here, within one generation, Paul is saying, this man who hung on the cross really is Lord of all. You see, sometimes we think, oh, well, you know, Jesus, the myth has grown over a couple of generations and over hundreds of years, the story of Jesus grew into this elaborate fable where now hundreds of years later people are talking about him as being the Lord of all.

No. Within one generation, within one generation, the church knew that this man, Jesus, who died on the cross is who he said he is. He's the Lord of all. But what's even more astonishing is this, that the apostle Paul, the man who wrote these words just a few years before this, one of the most brilliant Jewish minds, one of the most outstanding intellectuals of his day, this man who was bent on eradicating and destroying the Christian faith, a man who had given his life to destroying any traces of faith in Jesus, stands up now and says, it's true.

It's true. This man, Jesus, who I tried to destroy with everything inside of me really is who he said he is. He is the Lord of all. He is not just like other gods. He is not just a good force.

He is not just a man from whom we can learn some good things. He is the supreme Lord of all creation for he is before all things and in him all things hold together. Friends, Christ, the Lord of all creation.

[22 : 19] Secondly, the problem of creation. Now, this understanding that Jesus is sovereign over all things raises a question because if Jesus really is the Lord of all, if Jesus really is supreme over all things, why is our world in such a mess?

Well, the human world anyway. You could argue that the cosmos and the galaxies are doing all right on their own, but why is our world in such trouble? There's wars, there's hatred, there's fighting, there's oppression of ethnic minorities, oppression of children, oppression of women, there's hurts, there's hatred in our hearts, and not only that, there's disease, our bodies are aching, and not only that, the physical world itself seems to be taking strain.

There's floods, and there's earthquakes, and all these things. If Jesus is Lord of the whole world, what's he doing about it? How's he looking after it? Remember, Paul was writing this letter at the time when Nero was emperor of Rome, which was not a good time for Christians to be in Rome. And so, the Christians might have been thinking, well, you say that Jesus is Lord, but it doesn't look like he's doing a very good job because things aren't going so well for us. Nero's persecuting the Christians, he's about to set fire to Rome, the church is under persecution.

Where is this Lord of all that we're supposed to worship? Who is this Lord of creation, and what is he doing about it? Well, before we get there, we need to understand the reason for this mess.

[23 : 52] And what's caused the problems that we encounter? And the Bible's answer is that we have. We have. The problem with the world is the problem of humanity. It started off with our very first ancestors, the very first moral agents made in God's image that God made for us to reflect him, to love him, and serve him.

And they went off on their own. And we, as humanity, have followed in their footsteps. We want our own autonomy. We want the God that made us to serve us. We want to be our own masters. We want to be our own lords. We want to be our own gods. And while this takes a million different shapes and forms, and it looks different in different ways, the essence of all of this is what's wrong with the world.

That is, human beings were made to love and serve the God that made us in his image as an act of worship and instead we've loved and we serve ourselves. And we've asked God to join our plans and to love and to serve us.

And the problem of this, what the Bible calls sin, is it's a distortion and a breakdown of everything in the world. It means our relationship with the God that made us is broken and distorted. It means our relationships with one another are broken and distorted.

[25 : 02] That's why you have things like racism and sexism and oppression of people. It means our relationship with our physical world is broken and distorted. We now use the world to serve us rather than serving our world to the glory of God.

But also, it means our relationship with our very selves is broken and distorted. We are conflicted inside. We don't even understand ourselves. And so the problem of sin is that all our relationships with God, with each other, with the world, with ourselves, is distorted and broken.

And verse 13 of chapter 1 talks about being captured by the domain of darkness. One author said it like this, In other words, while Christ is the supreme one, the one in whom all things find their origin, on whom all things depend for their very existence, to whom all things belong, he does not now seem to be the head of all things as he ought to be.

All powers do not presently recognize his supremacy. There is sin, there is darkness, there is death. And so the question is, what is this sovereign, majestic, or supreme God going to do about his world that is out of order?

Third thing, Jesus and redemption. You'll know that Claire and I have two wonderful children, and they love Claire's cooking, as you heard earlier.

[26 : 22] And our children are four and six, and our children love drawing pictures, coloring in and drawing pictures. I'm sure all children that age do it, but our children especially love it. And they love drawing pictures for other people, writing cards for other people.

I'm sure some of you have received their cards. They are forever writing letters for others, right? But seldom do they get it right first time. Very often they start and something invariably goes wrong. They spill water over it or they draw out of the lines or something goes wrong, and there's big tears. There's big drama in our household, right? And Shiloh's got this line, my youngest daughter, the four-year-old, who says, it's all ruined, and she'll scrunch it up and throw it on the page and put her head down and cry, right, when she's messed up her precious Picasso drawing.

Well, friends, is that what God does with our world? When God, the Supreme Creator, looks at this world that He made and sees it gone wrong, does He just scrunch it up and go, it's all ruined, time to start again?

Is that what He does? No. What Paul is going to show us is that just as it pleased God through the power of Christ to create the world, so in the same way it pleases God through the power of Christ to recreate the world or to redeem the world or to heal His broken world.

[27 : 44] In other words, what is God doing right now? He is sovereignly restoring His supremacy. He is becoming what He already is by renewing creation.

But He's not going to do it the way that we think He might do it. He doesn't do it by scrunching it up and throwing it aside. He doesn't do it by sending in the armies to go and destroy His enemies that have destroyed the world and eliminate all His enemies.

He doesn't do it by taking all the Christians out of this horrible, puffy, physical world up into heaven to a spiritual, ethereal world where we can just live in this on the clouds and play harps.

That's not how He's renewing His world. He's doing it by entering His world. He's doing it by taking on human flesh. He's doing it by recreating it from the inside out. He's doing it by changing one individual life at a time.

Look at verse 18 with me. Jesus came not to eliminate humanity but to fix it. Not to destroy humanity but to free it. to take that which is lost and broken and recreated in His image.

[28 : 49] Look at verse 18. So we've just heard about how Christ is supreme over all things. All things are made by Him and through Him and for Him. He upholds all things and now verse 18 says He is the head.

But this time not just the head of creation, not just the head of all things in general, He's the head of something specific. He's the head of His body which is the church.

The English gives away the punchline there. The Greek just says He's the head of the gathering, the head of the assembly of people. So Jesus is now the head of a body of people, some kind of gathering or assembly.

But who is this body? What's so special about them that Jesus is now the head of this body? Well, let's keep reading. It says He's the head of His body, the church. He is the beginning or more specifically the new beginning.

We know He was there at the beginning of all creation but now He's the head of a new kind of beginning, a different beginning, a recreation. He's the head of a new beginning, not just a scrunch it up and start again kind of beginning, not just a destroy His enemies and repopulate the world with new people kind of beginning.

[29 : 57] There's something different about this beginning. It's the kind of beginning that someone, it's the kind of new start someone experiences when they've been enslaved and they're now set free. It's the kind of new beginning that you get when someone's been declared dead and then the doctors resuscitate them and bring them to life.

It's the kind of new beginning that I think Nelson Mandela from my country experienced after being set free from being in jail for 27 years as a political prisoner. Set free.

There's a new beginning and this is what Jesus, this is what He's saying. This is what this new creation involves. Jesus taking that which was lost, that which was empty, that which was imprisoned, that which was enslaved, that which was dead and He gives it new life and that makes sense because the next line says He is the new beginning, He is the firstborn, there's our word again, the chief, the preeminent one, amongst those who were dead.

You see what Jesus is doing here? Jesus is creating a new humanity, a new people, a new body, a new beginning but this body, this new people is not made up of those who have got it all together and are faithful.

It's not made up of those who have always obeyed all the rules. Jesus is not some political leader that's been kicked out of power. He's now retreating to His faithful constituents and regrouping and re-forming a new political party to take on the rebels.

[31 : 25] That's not what's happening. Jesus is going off to the very people that asked at Him.

Jesus is going off to the very rebels that put Him on the cross. Jesus is going off to the very people who cried, crucify Him.

Jesus is going off to sinners like you and me and He's changing us on the inside. He's recreating us. He's going off to the thing that went wrong in the first place which is our heart and He's giving us

a new heart and then He's welcoming us into His family as a new body, as a new people, as His church.

Remember that old wonderful hymn? It says, Behold the man upon the cross, my sin upon His shoulders. Ashamed I hear my mocking voice crying out amongst the scoffers.

It was my sin that held Him there until it was accomplished. His dying breath has brought me life. I know that it is finished. Jesus is the head of His body.

He's the head of the new beginning. He's the head, the firstborn of those who were once dead. And look at verse 21 with us. Verse 21 says, Don't you know you who were once alienated, who were once hostile in mind, doing evil deeds?

[32 : 35] He is now reconciled. He is made new. He has restored the relationship by His death in order to do what? To present you holy, to present you blameless, to present you above reproach before Him if indeed you continue steadfast in the faith.

Friends, this body of people, this new creation is made up of those who were once dead in their sins but are now alive again. Made up of those who were once broken by sin but are now being made new. Of those who were once slaves to the domain of darkness but are now being set free on the kingdom of His Son.

And this body of people Jesus calls His church. Friends, do you see what God is doing in the world? What is Jesus doing in the world? Who is God? He's the sovereign supreme one of all the world. And what is He doing? He's recreating the world. He's recreating, but He's doing it one life at a time. One individual at a time. He's moving in and He's recreating us from the inside out.

Jesus is not recreating the world by making new stars and galaxies, by making new planets and new cosmos, new ecosystems. He's not doing it by making new countries or tribes or ethnicities, but He is making a new people.

[33 : 46] He's making a new Israel. He's making a new nation. He's making a new body. He does it by recreating the very thing that caused the problem in the first place, by recreating our hearts, by giving us a heart of flesh that we will be included in His family.

He is the head of His body, the church, the beginning, the firstborn amongst the dead, that in everything He might be what He already is, which is preeminent over all things.

And how did He do it? How did Jesus do this? Well, verse 19 tells us. It says, For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through Him to reconcile all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross.

Friends, the way that Jesus is reconciling the world to Himself, the way that Jesus brings about a new creation is that He went to the cross. He went and He hung there. He took our sin upon His shoulders. He took the very thing that was destroying us upon Himself and let Himself be destroyed on the cross.

It is the only way that Jesus could destroy the sin inside of us without destroying the people in whom sin dwelt. And so Jesus went to the cross and He took our sin and He took our shame upon Himself and allowed that to be destroyed.

[34 : 59] And then Colossians 2 says, In doing so, He overcame His enemies. He triumphed over the very ones that were causing this mess in the first place. Jesus died on the cross.

In verse 16, we saw that in Him all things were created. Verse 19 tells us, In Him the fullness of God was pleased it will. In verse 16, we said, We saw that through Him all things were made.

And now we see that through Him all things are being reconciled. In verse 16, we saw to Him all things are made. And now we see to Him all things will be reconciled. Friends, the great rapture in the unity of the world, the great discord of the whole created existence, the great dissonance in the totality of all things has been put right to Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection because He has made peace by the blood of His cross.

See, friends, Jesus is Lord of all creation, but He's not just Lord of creation. He's Lord of redemption as well. He's the Lord of the new creation. Just as God, it is through God and God alone that the whole world was made, through God and God alone is the whole world to be saved.

Just as God needed no help with His creation plan, God needs no help with His redemption salvation plan. Just as you and I didn't contribute a single thing to the creation of the world, so we don't contribute a single thing apart from our sin to the salvation of our hearts.

[36 : 24] Friends, this is the amazing promise of Colossians 1, that Jesus truly is God and He's Lord of all creation. And while it may not always seem so, while it may seem that the world has fallen and things are out of control, the promise of Colossians 1 is that God is gloriously and

majestically at work in His world, restoring and recreating all things.

He is as much Lord of redemption as He is of creation. Well, let's bring this to a close. I want to close with asking this question, so what? Very briefly, two things.

What does this mean? What does this mean for the Colossians and what does it mean for us in Hong Kong? What does it mean tomorrow as you go to work? What does it mean tomorrow as you're at home, as you parent your kids? What does it mean as you are retrenched or you need to do the retrenching?

What does it mean as you receive that medical report? Two things it means. First thing is this. The Colossian Christians, 2,000 years ago, in their head they knew that Christ is Lord of all.

They had been told, they understood that Jesus is the supreme God of all creation. And yet every day they were constantly being told that Rome is their security. Rome is what will provide their peace.

[37 : 36] Rome will look after them. If they are just faithful to Rome, Rome will be faithful to them. And so while in their heads they knew Jesus was Lord, in their hearts that truth was being challenged. And friends, that's just as true for you and I.

If you're a Christian this morning, you probably know that Jesus is Lord of all. But every day as we go into our city, that truth is being challenged. You're being told that your boss has your future in your hands.

Your education holds your future in its hands. The market forces hold your future in its hands. But friends, this is the most liberating thing, that in all the world there is not a single iota.

There is not a single atom in all creation, not a single day in the future which is outside of God's sovereign hand. For Christ is supreme over all things. There is not a boss in all the world that has more say over your life than what Jesus has over your life.

There is not a market force that can rob you of your future more than God wills or God will allow.

There is not a single job promotion qualification that can secure your future more than Jesus.

[38 : 37] He is the supreme one. But the second thing it meant for the Colossians is this. It meant great patience in the midst of trials and difficulty. So think about this. Epaphras and Philemon, we read about them last week, they hear about the gospel in Ephesus and they go back to Colossae and they tell their friends and their neighbors and their colleagues and they say, we've found the Messiah.

Jesus is Lord of all. Christ is the King. Caesar isn't King. Jesus is King. And Jesus is coming back. He is the supreme ruler of all. And they preach this and the people believe it and they believe in their hearts and they become followers of Jesus.

And then a few years go by and things don't seem to be changing and life is hard and Nero becomes emperor and things become difficult and this church is still a small church.

It doesn't grow. And after a while they're starting to think, is Jesus really Lord? He seems to be taking his time. He thought he was coming back. Where is this Jesus? And as things go wrong they can start to wonder.

Is Jesus really at work in this world? Friends, but Paul writes to tell them that Jesus is establishing authority. Jesus is becoming what he already is. But he's doing it through his body, through his church.

[39 : 51] He's doing it one individual at a time. Reconciling sinners to himself so that in everything he might be preeminent. Friends, isn't that true for us as well? We read the news, things go wrong.

We read how the church is being persecuted in various countries around the world and we think, where is the Supreme Lord? Jesus, if you're Lord, what are you doing about it? Where are you? Are you coming back anytime soon?

Friends, the truth of the gospel is that God is at work in the world. God is at work here in Hong Kong. He's reestablishing his supremacy one life at a time, one reconciled sinner at a time, one dead person made alive again.

And so Paul writes in Colossians, he says in verse 23, therefore continue in the faith, stable and steadfast. Don't shift from the hope of the gospel.

This Christ Jesus is Lord of all and he's coming to prove it. Friends, this is God's word to us. Just as Paul wrote to the Colossians to remind them that Jesus is supreme over all things, so God would remind us this morning.

[40 : 52] I don't know what challenges you're facing, but Christ is supreme over all things. And just as Paul wrote to remind these Colossians of the power of the gospel, often understated, often not with a lot of fanfare, often not with a lot of glamour and glitz and bright lights, but Jesus is at work.

The power of the gospel is changing people's lives so God would remind us that the same, that God would encourage us. He's at work in the world. He's at work in Hong Kong. He's at work in our city. And this is our hope, that while the world is reeling from the effects of sin, while the world is broken, we are not without hope, because Christ is Lord, reconciling all things to himself, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Let's pray together. Jesus, we, for many of us, we know this truth in our heads.

We understand, or we think we understand the wonderful teaching about your sovereignty and your supremacy. And yet, God, we need that truth to drop from our heads to our hearts.

As we go to work tomorrow, as we travel, as we look after kids, as we look after our aging parents, as we look for work, Father, won't you remind us, God, that there is not a single atom in all creation, there's not a single day in the history of the world which is beyond you, which is outside of you.

[42 : 27] And God, while we don't always understand these things, while the world seems to sometimes be reeling, God, won't you remind us, won't you open our eyes to see the supremacy of Christ over all things.

Won't you show us, God, that you are not just like one of many gods, but you are the one and only supreme God and you are wholly sufficient. Lord, I pray, come and open the eyes of our hearts. God, for those of us that are feeling hurt, for those of us that are feeling the pressures of the world in which we live, God, won't you come and minister to us? Won't you come and fill us with your spirit?

Won't you come and remind us, God, to keep our eyes steadfast on you. Jesus, we sang this morning, come and be the center. Help us to fix our eyes on you, we pray.

Christ, come and take the throne of our lives. We pray these things in your name. Amen. Amen.