

Lord of All

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[0 : 0 0] All right. Thank you, Bear. Morning, Win Harbor. How are you? Good. Good to see you. If it's your first time with us, so glad that you're here with us as well. My name is Jesse, one of the pastors. And yeah, again, glad that you're here. Those of you who may be listening to the sermon later on in the week, glad that you're tuning in, staying up with us in this Colossians series. And I look forward to having you back with us in the flesh. So we're going to be in Colossians chapter one, verses 18 to 19 today, verses 18 to 19. And so in case you're an OG like me, you like to open your Bible, you brought it with you. You can go there, turn there right now and read along. We're also going to have the scriptures up on the screen for you. So as Alan alluded to, we've been in Colossians now for two weeks. This is our third week, Get to Preach part three. And you'll notice so far how much of Colossians talks about Jesus and points to Jesus, right? And that's why we love this letter so much. It's why we wanted to go through it. It's small. It's a little letter, but it's, man, it's like 120 proof on Jesus. It's like super potent and powerful. It packs a punch. And we're in the part of the letter where quite possibly the writer has forgotten where he's at. See, back in the day, this guy, Paul, writing a letter, what he would often do is he would often be speaking and then someone would be dictating on paper for him and writing the letters that way. And it seems like Paul got lost in what he was talking about with Jesus and just broke out into worship in verses 15 to 19. And that's what it seems like here. And many clever guys think that as well. And so we're in the middle of this. He's just exalting Jesus and talking about how great he is. And so I'm picking up in the middle part of that section, verse 18, and it starts with this. It says, he is the head of the body. He, Jesus, is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

So we're going to look at those few verses, right? And there is so much there. I'm so excited to talk about this sermon. What Paul is getting at, what he's talking about in those few verses, this big idea is that when it comes to God, when it comes to spiritual being, spiritual power, anything that could be created and could exist, is that Jesus is the greatest of all time, right? Now think about this. We love as people, we love to rank everything. We love to put things in lists and priority order.

Like kids ask me, my kids ask me all the time, dad, did I do it better than my sibling? Did I perform better or, you know, pull it off better than my sibling? People Magazine deliberates on who wore the dress better, right? We have sports. I mean, this is like, if you turn on ESPN, any particular talk show, they're trying, they're doing some debate about who was the greatest of all time. Was it, is it LeBron or is it Jordan? Of course it's Jordan. If you're, if you're a LeBron fan, you're totally wrong. Sorry. But what do we base those things on, right? We rank these things. We think about those things. It's, it's about, we look at, we look at their people's performance. Like we try to look at the facts. We try to look at statistics, these, these objective measures. So Jordan versus anything else. Like if you look at me, it's like, yeah, just, you may like Jordan, but come on, the stats are super debatable in that. And I have to admit, yeah, subjectively, I'm always going to vote for Jordan because that's how I grew up. I'm dating myself, but that's where I grew up. And I wanted to be like Mike. But the point is no one's, no one, no one person's performance makes them a unanimous greatest of all time. There's always going to be a debate about any of those things.

Now in Paul's day, there wasn't a vast field of sports figures that they debated over. That wasn't what was happening. They had this vast field of gods that they were debating over. And Paul isn't just saying that Jesus is the best of that field. He is saying that Jesus is in a field of his own. He's so unlike anything else. He's so above other than any other thing, other gods, anything like that. He says this in verse 18, that in everything Jesus might have preeminence.

[4 : 24] And so Paul uses this really interesting word. It's a very peculiar, particular word here. He doesn't say that Jesus is the greatest or the highest. There's lots of words he could use for that. If he was trying to get his point across, he uses this word preeminence. And this word is a really loaded word. It's a Greek word. It has interesting meaning. It means surpassing all others, highest in rank and influence, first in kind or pattern, before and above the rest of its kind.

So there's a lot there. And if you were to try to distill preeminence down to a simple idea, a simple picture, I think we would get the picture of an author. That's what that word probably is the closest meaning to what that word means. Now you think of author, that really doesn't sound impressive.

But let's tease this out some more. To author, to be an author is to create. It is to give birth to something, something that didn't exist before. So before truth, beauty, or wonder can emanate from a book or from a song or from a canvas, it first had to emanate from an author. The author is its beginning.

And that is what Paul is getting at here. And it's why he's caught up in worship in this moment. Jesus is the beginning. That's what he's saying. Jesus is the beginning. Not that he had a beginning, but that in him, all things have their beginning. He is the author of all. He's preeminent, which means Jesus should be worshiped above all things. Now, I have a friend who isn't a believer. Maybe you're in the room and you're thinking the same way as this. He once told me that, man, his problem with God, it's God seems like an egomaniac because he's saying like, you should only worship me. It's like, man, who's like that? God is really lacking in humility there. And if you think about it, man, we don't like people that are like that, right? Always needing the attention, always need to be in the center of attention, always doing something so that they could receive praise and look at me, look at me, look at me.

Now, we don't have a problem of giving some people a little of our worship, but the fact that God says he alone should be worshiped above everything, man, that kind of rubs us the wrong way. Sounds more like a character flaw than anything else, right? But let's think about this. Let's think about this. If Jesus is the author of all things, if that is true, we are saying that he's just not an author among many other authors. He is the ultimate author. He is the greatest author. And so let's pursue this, let's pursue this further. Books, songs, art can never transcend their creators. It never can, because without them, they wouldn't exist. We kind of really get that, right? So when I first read Lord of the Rings, I wanted to know who the author was. I cared about who the author was, and I praised Tolkien for his contribution to making that book and creating that book.

[7 : 30] When I first heard Tribe Called Quest song, the scenario, I wanted to know who they were, right? This hip-hop band of all time. Sorry, that's just how it is. Greatest of all time. Why? Why do we do these things? You and I, you can think about anything you like, any book you like, any song you like, any painting you like, whatever it may be. We want to know who the author is. Why?

Because when we experience something exceptional, when we're deeply moved by it, when it stirs us to wonder, we want to know who created it. We want to know who the author is. And why do we want to know who the author is? Because intrinsically, we know as people, someone deserves the praise. Someone deserves the credit for creating that thing. And then the second thing we want to know is, man, what else did they create that I could enjoy, right? And in case you don't think we give them praise, no, we do. We absolutely do. How, you might ask? Well, we paid loads of money to see them perform live. I mean, concerts are always packed out, right? And in those concerts, man, people are going crazy. They're cheering. They're raising their hands, waving them around, you know, taking pictures all over the place.

Or maybe in the case of paintings, we pay millions sometimes to own their creation. We'll drive and pay money to go into a museum to see it and stare at it.

We even create award shows to recognize and praise the artists who give life to the art that we love. And what I'm getting at here is that we give praise to many kinds of authors and creators. It's actually pretty natural, pretty natural to us as human beings. We all do it. And it's only fitting that we should recognize greatness, right? Game recognizes game. So now it is one thing to give praise to the artists as consumers of their art, right? Consumers, we get to stand back. We get to pick and choose which artists work we like the most, what kind of hits us the most. And for consumers, the power is in our hands to give praise. Like we get to choose. But with Jesus, it doesn't work that way. Because we're commanded to worship him. So the question we should be asking, why is that different?

Well, it's because of this. Jesus's church has a different kind of relationship with him as an artist. We aren't consumers of Jesus's art. We are his art. We are consumers of Jesus's art. We are his art. We are his song. We are his painting. We are his workmanship. We are his masterpiece. So our very existence is to glorify him. Colossians 1.18, it picks up on this. And he is the head of the body, the church, the church, not buildings. He's talking about people. He is the head of the body, the church. What does that mean? The church exists to worship Jesus above all things.

[10 : 29] Now, many of us hear that and think of coming together on Sunday and singing songs. And that's definitely a part of it. It's definitely a part of what we do. But there's a lot more to worship than just that. I mean, we do have some ground to take in singing with more passion and thankfulness and gratitude in response to the revelation of who Jesus is. But that's a totally different sermon.

But worship, what I want to get at is, man, worship isn't just that moment of singing. Worship is the response of all we are to the revelation of all God is. Worship is all of our life lived out of the power and presence of Jesus. Like Paul says, Jesus is our head, which not only means that he is above us in rank. That is true. More importantly, he means that he is our life source. That's what that means. Jesus is our life source. And so, therefore, as the body should remain in the head to be alive, so we must remain in Jesus. He is our life source. John 15, 5, Jesus is talking to his disciples about abiding in him. Look how important this is. Jesus says, I am the vine. You disciples, we, you and me, we are the branches. All right, here we go. There we go. Cool. This is going to be hard because I like to talk with my hands. I don't know how this is going to go. We're going to give it a shot. Just hang in there, guys. You know, all right, cool. Jesus is talking about abiding in him. I'm the vine.

Jesus is the vine. We are the branches. Whoever abides in me, Jesus says, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit. For apart from me, you can do nothing. Not even one little thing?

Not even a little bit of something? No. He says, apart from me, you can do nothing. There isn't any way, any other way to interpret this except that we have to remain in Jesus. To be a disciple of Jesus is to remain in him. He is our head. We are his body. We remain in him. He is our life source.

We don't ever have a choice to disconnect from that. A branch can't blossom or bear fruit if it's cut off from the vine. Now, if you break a branch off, the vine doesn't die. It's the branch that does right. The vine, it goes on living. It is the life source. And so it goes with Jesus's body, his church, his people, each one of us, you and me, when we aren't connected to our head. And so this is getting at Jesus. He is the author of his church. He authored it. He gave it life. He birthed it, but he sustains it as well. He not only authored his church, he sustains his church. He sustains us.

[13 : 20] We don't start with Jesus and then move on to better things. There is no better things. We don't need anything else in addition to him. That's the reality. It's not Jesus started the church and we need to reach outside of him now to make sure that we can continue on. Jesus started, man, he started, he started One Harbor Church. He's going to sustain One Harbor Church. A gal was telling me, Ashley Gurman was telling me, she woke up today and her little son Uriah, how old is he?

He's five years old. And he was just saying like, wow, you know, mom, without Jesus, One Harbor wouldn't exist. I was like, wow, man, that is amazing and profound and beautiful and so true. Jesus started One Harbor Church. He sustains One Harbor Church. And you know what? If he wants to, he can shut us down.

Hopefully not. But the point is, he is our head, our life source. We are his body. Our job isn't to force fruitfulness. Jesus alone does that. No matter what our effort is and how much time we put in and what we do, we can't force fruitfulness. Our job is to practice faithfulness. Okay?

That's what it means to abide in him, remaining in Jesus, our head, our life source. That's our job. That is what you and I are called to do. And when we do that, what happens is we end up revealing Jesus more and more. Where do we reveal him to? Both to Christians and non-Christians alike. Now, some of us follow Jesus like we can be connected to the head without being connected into the body.

There's a reality of that too. I'm cool with Jesus. I love Jesus. I just don't need the whole church thing. But that doesn't compute in this body analogy. Paul could have used a lot of different pictures here, but he chose body and head. Now, a body is made up of many different parts, but they are connected to one another. They're interconnected to one another, working together. They don't exist in isolation, which means this. When you and I, when we practice faithfulness, others around us benefit from that. They're strengthened by that, and they receive the grace of that flowing through us, and therefore the church is strengthened and built up. And that's how God works. It's an amazing thing.

[15 : 46] Which means, conversely, when I don't, the body suffers. When I don't practice faithfulness, the body suffers. A couple of examples of this, right? When I practice faithfulness, how others benefit. Man, a couple years ago in this community group, and we did this season of just sharing testimonies, and it was really powerful, right? It was like a sanctified truth or dare term. It was really cool. And what we were doing is we were saying, here is my story. Here's who I was before Jesus, how Jesus saved me, what he's doing in my life. And there was transparency. There was vulnerability. There was confessing of past sins and what we did, even sins we know that God had forgiven us of. And things that we had really never told a soul, maybe, except for God and a couple other people. And you know what? In those moments, after people confess something pretty big and gnarly, we got to look at them in the eye and say, God has forgiven you and he accepts you. And you know what? So do I. I don't hold that against you. And I cannot tell you why that's powerful. I cannot tell you why that affects people's hearts and souls. I just know that it does. Because what happens is,

I think what happens is, is that we are affirming and we are bearing witness to you, and we are seconding and saying, I agree with God's grace and forgiveness and mercy and healing in your life. That's what's happening in that moment. And we need to receive that from God.

But man, when we receive that from each other, it's like, man, all of a sudden it even makes even more sense, right? The Bible says on the, on the, on the, uh, through two or three witnesses, let everything be established, man. In Revelation, it says, they overcame by the word of the lamb and their testimony.

They did not love their lives unto death. They overcame by two witnesses there, the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony. And so there's, there's this reality is like, man, as much as we need this forgiveness from God, man, we need to hear this and the truth of Jesus's grace and forgiveness toward each other. And those are powerful moments and they lead to amazing healing.

And then, so, so that's an example of when I practice faithfulness and we practice faithfulness, how, how the church and the body and people are strengthened and built up. Now, let me show you something, what happens when we don't practice faithfulness and the body suffers. I'm going to use myself as an example because you know what? I'm, I don't practice faithfulness a lot, right? In my 20s, you know, I was fighting. I had this like huge porn addiction. I was fighting it and fighting it.

[18 : 26] And, and, and, and man, I was taking a lot of ground and there was a lot of grace there and everything, but there was like, man, there was, it was just hard to, to get past. And like, I felt like I just reached this plateau. And man, one day the Holy Spirit just had this little conversation with me.

He just said, Jesse, I can't use you to bless my people if you keep on this path. And I can't tell you what that did to my heart. I can't tell you how much I was like, whoa, that was a huge wake-up call. Like, man, see in example, number one, I showed up faithfulness, listened faithfulness, applied the gospel faithfulness. And I got to be a channel by which God grace flowed to people. And there was others there that were doing the same thing.

But an example to you, my, my private sin, my unfaithfulness, it would have inhibited God's grace flowing from me to others. Now it doesn't mean I wouldn't have been saved. I would have still been saved. It's just that the church would have been adversely affected, right? Now that's pretty cool. That's a pretty cool phone ring. Let me just say this, man, neither of these things are easy to do.

Neither of these things. But here's the thing. When we love something and we are willing to do hard things, when we're, when we love something, we are willing to do hard things. Jesus demonstrated this best, which is why the church is, the church, it worships him as the greatest of all time. The second half of Colossians verse 18, it says, he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, which is getting at this. Jesus did what no one else could do. You know, a couple of verses before this, Paul writes that Jesus is the firstborn over all creation, right? He's the firstborn over all creation. Now he uses his firstborn imagery again, but this time he says that Jesus is the firstborn from the dead, right? Now we should be asking, why is that necessary? Why did Paul have to point that out? I mean, to be, to be the firstborn or firstborn over all creation, it's like, how can you get better than that? But it's because of this, Paul's getting at and pointing to reality that everyone would see death reigns over this creation. The creation we live in, this present time we live in right now, death reigns over it. We can't get out from under it. We know that to be true. Everything that we see tends toward entropy. So let me geek out a little bit, right? Second law of thermodynamics, everything is trending towards decay. All you science guys are like waving your hands finally, you know?

I gave you Lord of the Rings and I gave you like second law of thermodynamics. You can be happy. And now you may be thinking like, wow, just geeking out. That's like a high school level geeking out. And I was like, that's about as clever as I can get. Okay. So give me a break. All right. So second law of thermodynamics, everything is decaying. We know that, man, the sun is eventually going to die out. Our bodies are breaking down. We get flabby and wrinkled and balding and forgetful and all those things, right? My forehead keeps growing this way. I can't get it to stop. We can't stop those things.

[21 : 37] None of us could stop those things until Jesus, until Jesus first born from the dead. He came and he defeated death. He came and he broke the law of entropy. Now you might be thinking, ah, wait a second here. Christians are still dying. People are still dying. The sun is still slowly burning out.

If you haven't noticed, the law of entropy is still in play. Now, if Jesus died, he's the first born from the dead and disrupted that, how can that be? Second Corinthians 4.16, Paul picks up on this idea.

We do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. And so this verse captures the essence of the paradox that we're in. We are simultaneously wasting away and being renewed, right? So now what we do is we live right now in this in-between moment, right? There is this both the old creation that is subject to futility, this old creation that is tending towards entropy and this new creation in Jesus that he earned that is forever and is being renewed day by day by day. It is what is called the already but not yet of Jesus's kingdom. We already live and experience the new creation inwardly, but we have not yet received it fully. But one day, the old creation will give way to the fullness of the new creation. That's the hope that we have. Jesus will have total victory over death and sin, and those things will be no more. All that will be left is the fullness of life, no more death. And it is because of Jesus. It is because of what he's done. He defeated death.

Now, remember when we talked earlier about using stats to debate who's the greatest of all time. That one stat, no one else can match. Nobody has defeated death. Nobody has done it. Nobody has overcome the laws of entropy except for Jesus Christ himself. And it's not even close, man. That is why Jesus is the greatest of all time. He alone is worthy to be worshiped. He alone is worthy to be obeyed. He alone is deserving of all our love and all of our devotion. And so we wait with great hope, anticipating that day when we will receive the fullness of Jesus's kingdom in the new creation. But until then, friends, we don't have to feel like we're getting a subpar experience of Jesus.

We haven't received the fullness of Jesus's kingdom yet, but we live with the fullness of Jesus today. Verse 19, for in him, in Jesus, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

[24 : 33] Jesus is all we need. What we're seeing here, what we're seeing Paul saying here is that God did not hold himself back when he came to earth. All of God came in the person of Jesus. All of God came and walked among us. He came and he experienced our frailty, our pain, our sickness, our temptations, our trials, our brokenness, our hurts, all of those things that you can experience emotionally and mentally. Man, he experienced that. All of God was on the cross. All of God went on the cross under all of God's wrath.

Man, Jesus gave all for us, guys. That's what we see here. He gave all for us so that all of him could dwell with us today and forevermore. And we get all of him now. We get to experience all of his love, all of his mercy, all of his goodness, all of his grace. Therefore, Jesus is all we need.

Jesus is all we need. That is why abiding in him isn't some drudgery of a commandment that we have to obey. And we are talking here about the fullness of God that we get to enjoy. Man, we get that. We get him and that is enough. That means you and I, we can lose everything, money, health, family. But if I have Jesus, I still have everything. If I could have the band come up.

If you're here, maybe you wouldn't consider yourself a Christian yet. Man, I just want to throw this out to you and encourage you in this. Jesus isn't something you need to make your life better.

It's not something you kind of add on to what you already have to fix some problems. And he is everything you need. He is all that you need. He is sufficient. He paid it all. He paid it all for you dying on the cross. He loves you that much. And you today can know him as the greatest of all time.

[26 : 45] Pray. I'm encouraging you today, calling you today. Pray and ask him to save you. Invite him to be your Lord and Savior. Surrender to him. Now for those of us in the room who are Christians, man, I want to say, man, I want to ask you. I ask you these questions. Is Jesus your greatest of all time?

How does that look? Are you giving him glory? Are you coming to him as a consumer, kind of picking and choosing what parts you like about him? Or do you realize that you're his canvas?

That you were created in him. You are a new creation in him. His workmanship that exists to glorify him. Are you living life as if Jesus isn't enough? Are you acting like it's Jesus plus something else? Is it Jesus and the American dream? House? House with a white picket fence? One and a half kids? Plenty of money in the bank.

How are you doing being connected to him? Remaining in him? Abiding in him? Him, our life source? How are you doing in that? And then how are you connected to his body? The church?

And then I want to invite you to consider this. What is Jesus calling you into today? What is your next step in following him? How is he calling you to do that today? As we come to communion, this reminds us that Jesus is our life source. We're the church because of him. Paul talks about this, man. He's, we exist because Jesus paid the price with his own blood. His body broken, which represents the bread. His blood was shed. And we partake of those things and we participate those things when we come to communion. We realize and we remember that, yes, Jesus, as I take this bread, as I consume it, as I drink this cup, which represents your blood, I'm reminding myself that you are all I need.

[28 : 52] You are my life source. And so let's come and let's eat with thankfulness. Pray with me. Jesus, you are Lord of all. You are Lord of all. There is nothing that even comes close to you.

You are the greatest of all time. You defeated death for us. Firstborn from the dead. You are the head of your people. You are our life source. You are our sustainer. And we thank you for that and give you praise. Amen.