

## Who is Jesus the Christ? Colossians 1: 13-20 (1-12) john 1:1-5, 9-14

Portions adapted from "Jesus: Why?!" by Michael Deutsch @ SermonCentral.Com

Have you ever asked yourself this question . . . . If I had the chance to tell someone about Jesus — someone who had never heard and who didn't know anything about Jesus — what would I tell them?



What would I want them to know about this God/man. How would I describe Jesus? How would you describe him?

I also wondered, and it's kind of funny or ironic or maybe even sad - - but what would I tell the people who are already at church?

- What can I tell the people who already believe in Jesus?
- What would they need to know in order to have better understanding of who Jesus is, to follow Him more faithfully?

Most people who've been to church know at least a little bit about Jesus' life and ministry, but the problem is — we tend to view him so much through our own modern filters that, if we were to come face-to-face with Jesus — we might not recognize Him.

We see Jesus through the filter of who we are, fitting Him into our mold; making him one of us. Jesus has been presented as a business leader in books such as "Jesus CEO" or "The Management Methods of Jesus." Some see Jesus is the Ultimate Republican. Others see Him as the Ultimate Democrat. And even others, like congressional hopeful Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, see Him as the Ultimate Socialist. Some portray Jesus as a first century Mr. Rogers; others as the original Chuck Norris or Rambo. Of course, all churches portray Jesus as one who would be recognized and right at home in their congregation, and would be an enthusiastic supporter of everything they do.

We've seen Jesus through the filter of ourselves for so long that at times we are in danger of missing a very important point: **It's not for us to conform Jesus into our likeness. It's for us to be transformed and conformed into His likeness.** (cf. Romans 8.29)

But, in order to do this, we need to know who Jesus really is as He is revealed to us in Scripture. The good news is that Scripture paints a very detailed picture of who Jesus is and what He's like. What we discover, is that many times, Jesus is not at all what we expect Him to be. He's full of surprises. And as we learn about who He was and who He is, we'll also have the chance to think about who we need to become . . . how we can become more faithful followers of our Lord.

So today, let's talk about who is this Jesus, that we should follow Him? What makes Him different from any other religious leader? And why does He deserve our devotion?

### **First Understand this: Jesus is God!**

He is God in the flesh. The Eternal God. Not an angel. Not a pre-existent supernatural being. Not merely a god. He is THE Eternal God. Jesus has always existed and will always exist - - and that is vitally important for us to know.

John's Gospel opens with these words

In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.

John 1:1

Jesus (God the Son) and God the Father, as well as the Holy Spirit, are One. One God. Each uniquely identifiable, yet One in nature. This is what we believe when we sing, "*Holy, holy, holy, God in three persons, blessed Trinity.*"

So as we pointed out a few weeks back, John's Gospel opens with this important truth: **Jesus is and always was!** John refers to Jesus as "THE WORD" (the LOGOS) which confuses us modern non-Greeks, because we think of words as merely letters on a page. But to the Greek mind, calling Jesus the "the word" (the LOGOS) meant that he was *the divine reason implicit in the cosmos, that which orders everything and gives it form and meaning.* Jesus is the uncaused cause, he was there in the beginning with God, and in fact He is God!

Now you may say, 'well, of course we know that's true!' I believe that Jesus is God; Father, Son, and Spirit are one and the same, yet distinct in three persons. But you should also know that there have always been and still are plenty of people who do not believe in this Jesus.

There was a popular belief in the 4th century called **Arianism**, which believed Jesus and the Holy Spirit were the first things created by the Father, and as a result they were inferior to the Father. They didn't have the same standing – which means Jesus' power to save us diminishes. This is what the Jehovah's Witness faith believes. They

fault Christians for worshipping Jesus instead of God ... and to a certain extent they are right. Many Christians think only of Jesus when they think of who God is. They pray to Jesus instead of to God the Father. But Jesus prayed to – and taught us to pray to – God the Father. Jesus lived and died as “the son of God” so that God the Father might be glorified.

My Father is glorified by this,  
that you bear much fruit  
and become my disciples.  
John 15:8

[Father] I glorified you on earth  
by finishing the work that You  
gave me to do.  
John 17:4

And so the Apostle Peter instructs us, *Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the **very words of God**; whoever serves must do so with the **strength that God supplies**, so that **God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ**. To him belong the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen* (1 Peter 4.11).

Father/Son/& Spirit, God the Three-in-one have always been. But each person of the Trinity serves a different purpose in our salvation: **the Father sent, Jesus went, and the Holy Spirit comes so that we might be saved**. Think about this the next time you pray as you ought to God the Father in Jesus name.

Then there was **Docetism**, which was the belief that Jesus only seemed to be human, and that His human form was an illusion. This goes all the way back to the late 2nd century. This was especially true of Jesus’ crucifixion. Many believed that Jesus was not really on the cross, simply because God could not suffer and die, so the person on the cross had to be an imposter or stand in. **Muslims** believe a variation of this idea. Considering Jesus only as a prophet of God – they find the idea of “Jesus as God’s son” abhorrent – yet still they believe that God spared him from the cross, putting a substitute in his place, so that Jesus later died a natural death. **Just think how this idea would alter our concept of salvation being provided through Jesus’ sacrifice in our behalf.**

now that we have been justified  
by [Jesus’] blood, we will be saved  
through him from the wrath of God  
Romans 5.9

Then there's another often recurring belief called **pelagianism** and semi-pelagianism, which teaches, that while we are held legally guilty of sin, our will was not corrupted by the fall, so we have the ability, freedom, and responsibility to decide if we want to believe in God or not. Our salvation or loss of salvation is strictly up to the life we live and the choices we make. Today, Free-will Baptist, and Four-Square Gospel churches teach this concept of Jesus

So, understand when we talk to people today, these beliefs are still being held. Many people do not believe in the Jesus of the Bible. Or they do not believe He existed, or that He was created, or that He rose from the dead. Nor that he has any power to forgive sins. Or that we can choose anytime we want to say yes or no to Jesus. As a result, such people, and I must add, too many Christ followers have very little reverence for Jesus or what we would call a healthy fear of God.

WHY? Because very simply, we don't have that high of a view of God.

- Imagine if we did?
- Imagine what the church could and would do if we worked solely to glorify God the Father?
- Imagine how we would live differently if we looked at Jesus as the real King of kings and Lord of lords.
- Imagine if we viewed Christ as someone who really died for you and me?
- If we meditated on the fact that someone was brutalized so I would not have to be brutalized? That God's son was put to death so that you and I might not be put to death?
- Imagine if we viewed God as the Lord God Almighty, creator of Heaven and Earth, and not merely as our personal genie?

Imagine what we might be like as a church? Not because we live out of fear. But we have an immense love for Jesus. And we are living out of a deep abiding love, grace, mercy, power and strength which fills us and which cannot be defeated. This is the church God calls us to be. And this is why in today's text that Paul prayed for us.

that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will ...  
that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord ...  
as you grow in the knowledge of God ...  
made strong with all the strength  
that comes from [God's] glorious power...

*<sup>9</sup>... we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,<sup>10</sup> so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. <sup>11</sup>May you be made*

*strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully<sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light.*

[God] has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins  
Colossians 1:13-14

*<sup>13</sup>He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, <sup>14</sup>in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:9-14)*

Redemption, forgiveness, being filled with the fullness of Christ's Spirit as together we live, grow, and bear witness for the glory of God. This is what is offered us as we get to better know Jesus – as the Bible describes him (c.f. Ephesians 3:19, 4:13). In the book of Colossians, Paul wrote...

[Jesus] is the image of the invisible God ...  
**In Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,**  
Colossians 1:15,19



Consider what Paul's telling us about Jesus in these two verses. This is so important because it helps give us the basics about who he really is. If we miss out on this, we end up with just a moral, good teacher, who is our example, and who becomes one of many ways to find salvation. Instead, Paul tells us - - Jesus is the physical image of the invisible God! All of God the Father was represented in his person. As Jesus told his doubting disciples "*believe me ... if you have seen me, you have seen the Father*" (John 14:9-11).

**Second, not only is Jesus God, but as God in the flesh he has shown us what the unseen God the Father is like. Jesus shows us who God is.**

This is especially important for you young people to understand: Think of it this way . . . Even if people do not know your parents, the way you live your life speaks for who your parents are. Just as Jesus showed God the Father to the world, you represent your parents to others. People say such things like:

*You certainly have made your parents proud.*

*Or: what would your parents think if they saw you doing that?*

Look at Jesus . . . He is God and He is the physical representation of God, living here on earth as "the son of God." The fact that He didn't sin, the fact He didn't fight and lash out and yell and scream, He didn't shy away from touching the sick, the lepers, the blind, the dead; His compassion, His sacrifice, it all speaks volumes to who He is and to who the Father is. So, all Jesus did, represented the Father (cf. John 14:10-11). In the same way you really do represent your parents!

Now, take this a step further, **you are also a child of God**. Jesus died for you, saved you, and now calls you His brother. God the Father is now also YOUR heavenly Father! So, all you do also represents who God is in your life. It's an awesome responsibility!

**As a child of God, when your character flaws come out, as well as when you do good! These all represent God! This tells people about your relationship with God, which is why we need to better know who Jesus is, and how to live our lives.**

**in [Jesus] all things in heaven and on earth**

**were created**, things visible and invisible ...

All things have been created through him and for him.

He himself is before all things, and

in him all things hold together

Colossians 1:16-17

*<sup>16</sup>for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup>He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together*

**The Bible also tells us Jesus is the creator of the universe.** John's gospel declares that He was there in the beginning. "The Word" was not a creation of God the Father, He was not born on some specific date, He was always here. There was never a time when He was not here, since "all things" were created by him, through him, and for him.

Jesus is not only the agent of creation but is also the goal of creation, not only was everything created by Him it was created for Him. In other words, everything was created for His honor and glory and praise! Since Jesus is receives the glory from creation, this again proves that He is fully God. And Jesus is the one who is constantly holding creation together.

Making sure we have the exactly correct levels of the air we breathe. He is the One who continually sustains His creation, preventing it from falling into chaos or disintegrating.

He is the head of the body, the church;  
he is the beginning, the firstborn  
from the dead, so that he might  
come to have first place in everything.

But the Word, the Logos, the eternal Son of God, didn't stay in heaven. In the fullness of time, to complete God the Father's plan for the restoration of His creation and to keep God's promises made to our forefathers, the Word took on flesh and entered our world as Jesus to seek us out and save us. Dying on the cross in payment for our sins, Jesus trusted God the Father to return him to life. And God did, proving that payment was accepted, making Jesus the very first to rise again to eternal life, but also making him preeminent among and sovereign over God's new creation just as he was in God's first creation

This is what "**firstborn**" means. Though it can mean "the first one born" in Biblical times it also means **the one having preeminence in the family or nation; "first place in everything;"** which is the status Jesus now again wears (*cf. Psalm 89:27 David, was the last born son of Jesse, God called him "first born" as king*). And as His Spirit comes to live in God's children, knitting us together into one body, Jesus is also the head of the Church.

And if Jesus is the head of the Church, "then the church as part of God's new creation does not exist to meet the needs of its members or to insure its institutional survival, but to fulfill the redemptive purposes of Christ, its head."

**So life in the Church is the new Life,** not the life of the old or first creation but the life of the new creation, achieved through his cross and resurrection. So he is preeminent in all things (Garland, NIV Application Commentary: Colossians, pg 91).

in [Jesus] all the fullness of God  
was pleased to dwell  
through [Jesus] God was pleased  
to reconcile to Himself all things  
by making peace through the blood of his cross  
Colossians 1:19-20

<sup>19</sup>For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup>and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. Colossians 1:19-20

And so we circle back to where we began. As creator and sustainer of the universe God the Son chose to take on human flesh to enter our world as Jesus of Nazareth to seek us out and save us. Then on the night of his death, Jesus took the bread and broke it, saying *"this is my body broken for you."* And he took the cup and shared it saying, *"this is my blood poured out for you" as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup remember me.*

Jesus died so we could be reconciled to the Father. So our sinfulness would be taken upon Jesus and with him nailed to the cross, so that we would have what's called **"imputed righteousness,"** where God now views us as righteous, not because of anything we've ever done, but because of all that Christ did for us on the cross.

Jesus is God and has been from time eternal! Yet, He gave up His divinity for a time to enter our world as a human; He came to seek and to save you and me. He has never changed, this was always part of the Father's plan. Just as the writer of Hebrews tells us, *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.* – Hebrews 13:8

Today, as we come to our time of communion, please take this to heart, hold onto these truths in your spirit, understand what all of this means, then live your life with all of the passion and strength that God's Holy Spirit living in you can give.

Let's pray about this.