

## WEEK TWO: (IN)VISIBLE IMAGE - COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

**message...***15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by [a] 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. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 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. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

**meaning...**As Jesus is the image of the invisible God, we are to be the visible image of Jesus...and in turn see every one as having being created in that same image.

**muse...**I may be no art critic, but I love art. I love looking at artwork—or at least what I *think*—is artwork and seeing how it relates an emotion, critique, or commentary on life, on culture. At times, you even get to get a glimpse into the life of the artist as it is representative of his own life or perspective.

When God decided it was time to become flesh, He came in the person of Jesus. Through Him, we get an accurate image of God. Everything that follows—all creation—is through Him and for Him. It doesn't matter what we think of the image or whether or not we think it is an accurate representation of the artist. In this passage, we are reminded that Jesus is God incarnate.

That same image is implanted in us. He created us in His likeness. We all bear that image. The difference is whether or not we are accurate depictions of Him. We all know those whom have yet to say they want to be like their Creator. The difficulty is when we have already made that decision and our image is no different. For while we claim to be image-bearers of the Artist, our lives look like our own handiwork. In other words, the image of Jesus is invisible in our lives.

People want to see artwork that speaks deeply to them, that can change their perspective on things. And Jesus uses us for this purpose. We are to be visible images of our Savior and, subsequently, see the same image wanting to come out in others. What would others say is the image of your life?

**memory...**This entire section of the first chapter of Paul's letter to the Colossians is often regarded as quite foundational to the Christian faith. It is not only important to grasp and understand in terms of who Jesus is, but it is one of those passages that, as a follower of someone we say we know, we should *know*. Go over this until it begins to transform your thinking, your perspective, of not only who Jesus is, but who we are as His image-bearers. *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.* (Colossians 1:15-16)

**meditation...v 15-16** Just as Jesus is the image of God, so are we, as Christ followers, to bear the image of Christ. What characteristics of Jesus helped people recognize Him as the

Incarnate God? What characteristics of us help others see the image of Jesus in us? What characteristics turn them away?

Since we are created by Him and for Him, what does that say of how we see others? How we view life? How we view our purpose? Does it alter your perspective on being a Christ follower? Why or why not?

**v 17** So often we have a false sense of security in ourselves. We fool ourselves into believing that, when things are going well, it is because of us. Then, when things fall apart, it is because God has allowed it. Why do we live with this kind of dichotomy? What would life look like if we *really* believed that it was our Creator who actually keeps everything going? Practically, what does that mean for you? What do you need to surrender to Him for the purpose of holding it together?

Read Hebrews 1:3-4. Compare that to Colossians 1:15-17. How do they reinforce what we are learning about who Jesus is? What characteristics are made more clear to you?

**v 18** If Jesus is to have “preeminence” in all things, what does that look like in your life practically? How do you know that He has this role...not only in the church, but in your life? As you examine what this means, do you need to make any changes in your life? If so, what are they?

There are several references to “the body” of believers throughout the New Testament. And while Jesus is the head (if we allow Him to be!), He uses us to be His feet, to be the other

parts to carry out His work of building the Kingdom. In light of this image, have you considered what He has called you to be? Are you doing it?

**v 19-20** What do you think it means when it says that in the person of Jesus, “the fullness of God was pleased to dwell?” What does that tell you about God? About Jesus?

Jesus came to reconcile everything. What does that mean to you? What does reconcile mean? What does the restoration of all things look like to you?

The closest meaning of God invading earth is “taking up permanent residence” in the person of Jesus. This very idea is not a foreign one to the Hebrews but it is to us. Why do we just want God to be in part of our lives? What is preventing Him from dwelling in us so that we reflect Him better? What idols stand in His way in your life?