

Sermon #6 in our Colossians Series- Colossians 1: 15-17 "He IS!"

Introduction: IL- Actor Morgan Freeman, who played God in the movie, "Bruce Almighty" is an avowed atheist. He says he doesn't believe God exists and that God is a mere human invention! False teachers in the first century and still today present a similar "less than God" Jesus. Today's text is Paul's answer to their errors in theology and practice and to those in 2022. Our text today reveals the truth that...

He is the Image of the invisible God- v. 15 The title of this message is right there in verse 15, and stated clearly again in verse 17- **He IS!** He is all these things in the outline and MUCH more! The Gnostics in Colossae promoted the error that Jesus was one of many gods that trickled down from outer space and had various responsibilities having to do with earth. Their views were horribly demeaning to Jesus Christ, and the true believers in Colossae countered that awful error by their devotion to Christ! Paul's word in verse 15 zeroes in on the centrality of Jesus in regard to creation and to the Church, the Body of Christ. Many Gnostics asserted that, because matter was seen as evil, God wouldn't even touch this planet or anything or anyone on it. Paul makes it clear that Jesus cared enough to come to this planet and touch the lives of millions of people out of love and grace and mercy. It is obvious in this 15th verse that Jesus is the very image of God the Father- the word 'image' comes from the Greek word translated IKON and that word in the Greek means "exact representation". God the Father is invisible as we learn in John 1: 18- ¹⁸ "No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known." And John 4: 14 reminds us that "God is spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Hebrews 1: 3 says ³ "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature." All false religions throughout history have erred by making images or idols to represent what they want to worship, refusing to follow the second of the Ten Commandments- Exodus 20: 4-5- ⁴ "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them." To grasp the nature of who God is as revealed in the Person of Jesus and His written Word is a life-long goal for a true child of God! Jesus made this statement in John 12: 45- "Whoever sees Me sees Him who sent Me!" Modern theology wrongly asserts that Jesus was a good man and good teacher but not God and certainly not the only way to God. In the process they attack His inspired Word, the Bible, by attacking the person of Christ. True believers understand that Jesus revealed God the Father as an exact, perfect representation of the Father. In Philippians 2: 6 and 7 we read- ⁶ "Though he was in the form of God, He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men." People in Jesus' day didn't get the picture for the most part. **IL-** Charles Wesley- Christmas hymn- "Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hail the Incarnate Deity!" The perfections of God the Father were accurately portrayed in Jesus. In summary of His earthly ministry, we read in 1 Timothy 3: 16- ¹⁶ "Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory." His supremacy is shown in His relation to the Father, the Spirit, angels and demons, and in His role as Head of the Church. The Gnostics taught that Jesus was spirit only and that He only looked like He had a body. They believed that the Deity of Jesus, if

He had any, came upon Him at His baptism and departed right before His crucifixion- that He was a spirit who came in disguise! But the Bible is clear- Jesus is the ultimate figure of the entire universe. Verse 18 in this chapter states unequivocally that Jesus is the Preeminent one of all history. To be 'preeminent' means to be flawless, impeccable, sovereign, dominant and notable for who He is! Simply put, Jesus is the perfect representation of God because He is God in the flesh. And we can come to know Him better and better and fall more and more in love with Him as we spend time listening to Him in His Word, communicating with Him in prayer and serving Him in whatever way HE chooses for us! The more I get to know Him the more wonderful He is to me. Isaiah 9: 6- "And His name shall be called 'Wonderful'." That word 'wonderful' means "separate and distinguished" and I can know that everything about Jesus is WONDERFUL! Paul's words about Jesus as the Image of the invisible God are the clear, unmistakable answer to ALL false teachers. Paul and Epaphras had their own Morgan Freemans, but we answer such false teachers in love by saying, "Let me show you the REAL Jesus Christ!

He is the Firstborn of all creation- v. 15 To be firstborn in the Jewish culture and other cultures is a title of high honor. The eldest son had many privileges and rights that those after him did not obtain unless he chose to give his siblings something he had as the oldest child. Jesus is the ONLY Son of the Father and is the Firstborn of all creation with immeasurable rights and privileges. In Hebrews 1: 6 it says- "6 And again, when he brings the Firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship Him." All the ranks of angels and even demons recognize His unique role as God's unique Son. His was in a priority of position. Paul could say to the Gnostics- "You name it- He is above it and of foremost importance! **IL**- The closest thing we have in our world today is King Charles 2 who, after the death of Queen Elizabeth 2, inherited the throne of England and now rules over the entire British realm. Hebrews 1: 3 states- "3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." He is the heir of all things with the right to rule over all of creation. Two practical truths stand out to me- Does He have first place in our lives? And also, nothing else should detract from our focus on Him- nothing we do is more important than a daily walk with Him- our LORD and Master! Under Point #1 I mentioned the Christmas carol, "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing." Here I will turn your thoughts to a well-used Christmas text- Micah 5: 2- "2 But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days."

He is the Creator of everything- v. 16 Paul was led to remind the Colossian church of what Epaphras must have taught them- Jesus is the Creator and He created everything for a purpose! And the Gnostics needed to be rebuked with the truth that only GOD existed before creation. And I want us to remember here and now that WE were created to bring the Creator glory! Your life and mine today are to be all about God's purposes in placing us here in Garden City and joining us together as the Village Church. Unlike the Gnostics who taught that Jesus was created as one of the many emanations from a far away God, it has to be obvious that Jesus couldn't be part of creation if He created it all! He is not part of creation, He is over all creation and its

Author and Perfecter. John 1: 3 emphatically states- ³ “All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” We wouldn’t be here this morning if it weren’t for Him! He is the Architect of creation, of angels and stars, planets and the souls of all humans who have ever lived. He is to be worshiped as the Preeminent One over all His creation and therefore is sovereign over all He has made. **IL-** Someone wrote, “Every single thing we have ever seen or touched depended on something else for its existence.” Jesus is the Master Workman of the entire universe, material and immaterial. But He didn’t create fallen angels. They fell away from God due to the sins of rebellion and pride, but Jesus is over all of them as THE Lord of all. Jesus is the Head over all creation and specifically over His Church. Ephesians 2: 10- “We are HIS workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works...” That’s one important way we can yield to His Lordship-¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord,¹⁹ are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.²⁰ For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit- through our service in His honor. ALL things He has made are here to fulfill His purpose and promote His glory. And that includes you and me! He created all things, but He didn’t withdraw and abandon His creation as the Gnostics contended. One illustration will make the point that Christ’s creation is immense and far beyond our ability to even picture it all in our minds. **IL-** It is possible to fit 1.3 million earths in the sun, just one of the 200 million billion stars we can estimate are out there in space! [that number is 200 with 21 zeroes after it!] Jesus created everything for His own purposes. Are you and I appropriately saying “Yes! to His purposes for OUR lives?”

He is the Sustainer of all He created- v. 17 The prepositions in this brief text say more than my mere words can say- **by** Him, **through** Him, **for** Him, **in** Him. BY Him all things continue to exist and have their appropriate place in the universe. Hebrews 1: 2- “In these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.” God provides all we need for life. Isaiah 40: 28-31 ²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. ²⁹ He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. ³⁰ Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted,³¹ but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” Jesus is the Master over every inch of His creation- is He YOUR Master? No mere man could uphold the whole universe. **IL-** We cannot even maintain gas prices! If Jesus were only a man, like the Gnostics claimed, He couldn’t maintain creation either and he would be irrelevant to today’s society. Think about it- what IF Jesus stopped holding everything together as He has for millennia? The entire focus of this text is JESUS- 13 times in the first 17 verses- He, Him, His, Jesus or Jesus Christ. We don’t need to worry that life is going to come crashing down- or WW3 beginning. God is consistently faithful. Are WE? How can we prove it? [Theme of the book of James] Jesus keeps everything going in perfect balance! He can keep you perfectly balanced when it comes to time with Him and time for other less important things by comparison! Pray about everything, thank Him for everything!

Conclusion:

So...is He your All in All?? How does that affect your daily life and witness?

I John 2: 6- "Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked."

1 Corinthians 2: 16- ¹⁶ "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?"
But we have the mind of Christ."

2 Corinthians 3: 18- ¹⁸ "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

Will WE let Him change us day by day?

Prayer

Song- "You Are My All In All"