

## ***Christ at Home*** **Colossians 1:15-20**

Let me invite your attention to Colossians chapter 1 this morning. Last week we finished our series through Galatians, so today we are going to a short three weeks series called “The Christ-Centered Life.”

This will bring us to Palm Sunday and Easter. After Easter, we will begin a 9-week series through the Old Testament book of Job.

But to get us to the Easter season, we are going to have a three week *topical* series, so a little different than what we regularly do in our preaching, which is to walk through a book of the Bible. But, again, this series is all about the centrality of Christ in all of life. This morning we are going to talk about “Christ at Home,” next week we will discuss “Christ at Church,” and then finally, “Christ Among the Nations.” So, that is where we are going over the next number of weeks.

Again, look in your copy of God’s Word or follow on the screen, a short passage from another of Paul’s letters, this time to a church in Colossae. Colossians chapter 1, starting in verse 15, Paul writes...

### **Colossians 1:15-20**

**15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. **16** 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. **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.

That passage has been called the greatest Christological passage in the Bible, that is, it is the greatest passage on Jesus in Scripture, and we can see why, can’t we? It declares some amazing things about Jesus.

Without an in-depth study of the passage, Paul declares Jesus to be the image of God, or God who we can see. God with flesh.

He describes Jesus as the “firstborn of all creation,” that is he has claim over all creation, like the firstborn of a family, who had the rights to the inheritance.

He declares that all things are held together in Jesus, that is, he sustains all things.

He is the head of the church, or he is the king over his people.

Jesus is the first to resurrect from the dead, the forerunner of all who would believe in him. We will all follow his experience, experiencing a glorified life one day.

Paul is clear to say that Jesus is the fullness of God, in other words, he is not some lesser version of the more powerful Father. He is not God, Jr.

And through the death of Jesus, where there was once enmity and hostility between and God, he has made reconciliation.

But look again specifically at a few of these verses again...

**Colossians 1:16**

**16** 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 1:18**

**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.

Again the phrases we should think through here are “for him” and “preeminent.”

All things we created by Christ and for Christ and that in everything he should be preeminent. This truth, that all of history is for Jesus and about Jesus should have massive implications for the way we view the world and the way we view our lives.

It is very important to understand that your life is not disconnected from a larger story. I think it can be easy to approach the Bible as merely a manual for living. We want to know how to handle a certain situation, how to pray, how to be a better husband or wife, etc... And, we do find answers to life in the Bible, but Scripture is not *primarily* a how-to manual. The Bible is *primarily* a divinely inspired book that reveals the God of the universe, through his words and his work. It is primarily a divinely inspired book that records for us redemptive history. It explains the world we live in, what’s wrong with it, what God has done to redeem it, and where the world is ultimately headed.

And it describes not just an idea of the world or a fictional world, it describes our world. The one we actually live in. And this is important because we are always trying to make sense of the world and our lives, but without the bigger picture of redemptive history we won’t interpret it correctly. Plus, without that bigger picture, when it comes to our

faith, we might end up viewing Christianity as an accessory to our lives. We end up taking center stage. Jesus becomes a part of our lives, rather than seeing our lives functioning in the greater story of Christ.

Understand, we should desire a Christ-Centered life because we live in a Christ-centered universe. whether others recognize it or not. All of history, past, present, and future revolves around the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Now, the Bible is a large book, with a lot of details, and we should strive to understand as much of it as possible, but in an attempt to make the bigger story easier to remember, some have simplified the main points of the gospel from the beginning of the Bible to the end down to four points. Many of you have probably heard these before. But quickly they are:

1. **Creation** - Genesis 1 and 2, we see God create the heavens and the earth, animals, and men and women. His creation is in order, relationships between Adam and Eve are in harmony, their relationship with him was in tact, all in all, it was very good.
2. **Fall** - The very good world that God created was corrupted by the entrance of sin through the rebellion of Adam and Eve. Sin brought conflict where there was peace, it brought a loss of relationship with God, it brought pain in childbearing and difficulty in work. The good world had fallen.
3. **Redemption** - Even though sin had brought death and brokenness in the world, God promised to redeem the world from its fallenness. And he did this by sending his Son, Jesus to live a perfect life, die on the cross for sins, and raise from the dead securing victory over sin, Satan, and death. Now all those who repent of their sin and turn in faith to Jesus can be reconciled back to the Lord.
4. **Restoration** - Even though Jesus' life, death, and resurrection accomplished our redemption, creation and God's people still aren't fully restored. We still live with sin in the world and sin in our hearts. Death is still a reality. Satan is still active. However, Jesus will come again and bring final restoration, with new heavens and a new earth where His people will dwell for all eternity.

Obviously, there is way more to what the Bible says and many other things to wrestle with and learn about the world, ourselves, and Jesus, but those are the four main points of the Bible's story: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration.

Now, I wanted to lay that out there for a few reasons. First, to see what Paul means in Colossians 1, that all of history is about the work of Jesus to reconcile fallen creation

and sinful men and women back to him. Our past, present, and future really is centered on Jesus.

Second, as we approach the topic of "Christ at Home" this morning, it is impossible to address every way that the gospel shapes our home in the short time we have. So, what I want to do is use the framework of the gospel as the lens through which we can view our homes. And in so doing, we can make a little better sense of what it means to have a Christ-centered home.

And by the way, this is true for *all* homes. Whether you are married or single, newlywed or married for decades now. Whether you are divorced, remarried, with kids, or without kids. Every home is in view here because every home is found in the world created by and for Jesus.

**So, following that four-point framework of the gospel, I want to point out four views of home in light of the gospel.**

### **1. The Gospel describes: The Home We All Want**

Look with me at Genesis 1 in how it describes the creation account...

#### **Genesis 1:26-28**

**26** Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

**27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. **28** And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

#### **Genesis 2:24-25**

**24** Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. **25** And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

So God creates all things, including the first man and woman. Adam and Eve enjoyed a good home, so to speak. A home that thrived under God's rule and reign, a home that was characterized by perfect harmony and intimacy with one another, a home in a good standing relationship with God.

It is no surprise, then, when God looks at this and describes it as "very good."

**Genesis 1:31**

**31** And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Isn't this how all of us would like to be able to describe our homes? Don't we all desire the ability to describe our homes as "very good?" And without lying?

We all have the desire to have a home that desires God's glory above all else. A home that experiences healthy intimacy, worship, discipleship, holiness, hospitality, love, joy and peace, and the rest of the fruit of the Spirit.

I mean, no one says the opposite. No one says, "I want our home to be broken. I want our home to be a place of conflict and pain." All of us want a home where wholeness and peace and love are the defining characteristics. For those of us who are Christians, we all want a home that has Christ at its center.

This is because God created us to know him and enjoy him. So again, the gospel describes the home we all want. However, ...

**2. The Gospel explains: The Home We All Have**

While we want our homes to be a place of love and joy, at times they are not. Perhaps for some homes, they rarely are or they never are.

Notice in the story of Scripture the effects of the entrance of sin into the world. God comes to Adam and Eve and the serpent and hands out curses and judgment to each of them for sin's presence in the world. But specifically in regards to our relationships, notice what he says to Eve...

**Genesis 3:16**

**16** To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you."

The relationship between husband and wife is no longer one that is naturally peaceful, naturally loving, and naturally God-glorifying. Instead, there is conflict.

And this is true not just for husbands and wives, but for all relationships. In fact, we see this play out very quickly in Genesis. Genesis recalls this downward spiral of sin even within one generation when Cain kills his brother Abel. And it doesn't get better from there.

**Genesis 6:5**

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Viewing our homes through the framework of the gospel helps us in making sense of the conflict that we experience in our homes. Sin is present in your home because it is present in your heart. Every home is inhabited by people who in their nature are often selfish, prideful, and rebellious.

If you've ever had a toddler in your home, you've had the experience of telling them not do something, only for them to look you directly in your eyes and then do the thing you just said not to do.

If you've been married for any length of time, you have had moments where you've grown irrationally frustrated by something that your spouse does, which in the grand scheme of things is not that big of deal, but still it causes you to lash out in anger. And, the other spouse knows that it frustrates their spouse, but stubbornly doesn't change a thing.

Every home has children who disobey, every marriage experiences some level of conflict, and every set of roommates will experience some level of disagreement. Even if you live alone, you do not live apart from the presence of sin, because it is our very nature. The fallen world includes fallen homes.

Paul Tripp explains the fact of sin on our relationships in his book on Marriage, "all of the horizontal battles [we face] are the fruit of a deeper war."<sup>1</sup> It is the war within our hearts as we battle the sin that occupies them.

**2 Cor. 5:14-15**

**14** For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; **15** and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

Notice the effects of sin here. Rather than living for Christ, the center of the universe, "Sin turns us in on ourselves. Sin makes us shrink our lives to the narrow confines of our little self-defined world. Sin causes us to shrink our focus, motivations, and concern to the size of our own wants, needs, and feelings."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Tripp, *Marriage*, 49.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Tripp writes, “Sin is essentially anti-social.”<sup>3</sup> We don’t really love our spouses or children or houseguests in the purest sense of the word, because we are often too busy loving ourselves. What we really want is for everyone else to love us as much as we love ourselves, and as long as they do that, things will go smoothly, but when they don’t there are problems.

So again, the gospel explains the home we all have, but this helps us in *navigating* the home we all have because, third...

### **3. The Gospel empowers: The Home We All Need**

**First of all, we all need a home inhabited by people who know and love Jesus Christ.** The home we all need is one in which each member has acknowledged their sin, seen their need for a Savior, seen that potential Savior in Jesus, and by repenting of their sin and putting their faith in Jesus, they have experienced the grace of the gospel.

We need homes where each member is quick to confess their sin, quick to repent, quick to ask for forgiveness, quick to make any changes necessary to have a home that is centered on the gospel.

But, we don’t do that perfectly do we? Even if your home is filled with Christians, they can still be stubborn, selfish, and prideful. And the home that is not inhabited by all Christians faces an even tougher challenge because one or more people there have no understanding of sin and no experience of grace. What do we do then?

**The home we all need is a home inhabited by people who relate to one another by the grace they’ve experienced in the gospel.**

Notice, how Paul instructs the church in Colossae later in his letter to them...

#### **Colossians 3:12-15**

**12** Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, **13** bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. **14** And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. **15** And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 50.

The Christ-centered home is the home in which each member has both experienced grace and extends grace. It is when we each take responsibility to relate to one another in the way that God has related to us through Jesus.

But we so often don't do this. Instead of relating to our spouses, children, roommates, or even guests with the grace of the gospel we relate to one another with the burden of the law. In other words, in limiting our love for one another only when they meet our expectations, we place a burden of perfection on them, that no person can stand under.

Now, to be clear, we definitely address sin, we don't sweep it under the rug. The gospel doesn't ignore sin, it addresses it, yet it also forgives it.

But again, we can be guilty of cultivating a home that is built more on legalism than the gospel. This is when our love and acceptance are dependent on the actions of others.

And this is the result of sin in our hearts. Again sin is anti-social, so it actually dehumanizes people. Those in our homes, instead of being loved, are reduced to one of two things. They will become either *vehicles* to get what we want or they become *obstacles* in the way of what we want. If your spouse or children are meeting your demands then we treat them with affection. Or if they become an obstacle in the way of what you want, you respond with irritation, impatience, and disappointment.

For example, we might show more love and patience to our children when they make our lives easier not harder. We show more love to our children when they make us look good to others.

We love and stay committed to our spouses only when they meet our needs, and when they fail to do so we cast them aside or walk away. Like a contract we expect them to live up to their side of the agreement, and if they don't then the contract is null and void.

And if we aren't placing the burden of perfection on others, we place it on ourselves. We can try to find our identity or worth only when our home, our literal house, is social media-worthy: when it is perfectly clean, is decorated with incredible style, has all of the modern upgrades and remodeling.

Or we have to have perfectly obedient children because in our minds that means we are perfect fathers and mothers. Or we have to have perfect date nights, because then and only then do we have the perfect marriage.

But isn't all that just self-righteousness? It is the opposite of the gospel. The gospel says that because of my being reconciled back to God by faith in Jesus, my identity



has changed. I am accepted by God by grace and do not need to have a perfectly clean home, perfectly obedient children, or a perfectly romantic marriage. Would all of those things be nice? Of course, they would. But to place such hope in them that my identity or someone else's identity is shaped by it means that the law has taken place of gospel.

And to withhold love from others who don't provide for me what I need is the opposite of the gospel.

But, the gospel empowers the home we all need, because in receiving the grace of Jesus we can extend it to everyone else in our home. We turn from treating our spouses and children and guests as merely a means to get what we want, and instead willingly love them with joy. We address sin, but we are quick to forgive, show grace, seek reconciliation, even when we don't think they deserve it. After all, that's what God did for us in Christ.

Christ at home means viewing our relationship through the lens of the gospel and not legalism.

Now, a home that is built on the gospel is a great goal, but I also know that for some, maybe many this morning, it sounds more like a fantasy or dream. You live in the midst of conflict, sin, and incredible pain because of the things you've done or because of what someone else in your home has done.

But remember, that the grace of Jesus can empower you to walk through that and even if your home never resembles a home that is centered on Christ...

#### **4. The Gospel provides: The Perfect Home We Will Have**

##### **Revelation 19:6-9**

**6** Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. **7** Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; **8** it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. **9** And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

##### **Revelation 21:1-4**

**1** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. **2** And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem,

coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. **4** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

When we see what God has done for us in Christ, as we look to the final chapters of Revelation especially, we can find steadfast hope even when the home we all desire seems so far out of reach.

Understand, that the Christ-centered life is not a life that looks perfect. This means that the Christ-centered home is not a home that looks perfect. In fact, the perfect home does not exist. ***But...it will one day.***

Our spouses will fail us to varying degrees but we have a faithful bridegroom in Jesus who has never failed us and never will fail us. Our parents will fail us to varying degrees but we have a perfect Father in heaven who loves his children perfectly and without end. Our homes might be missing certain loved ones due to loss, but our future home will be with our Savior who will never leave us and a home that will be untouchable by death. Our literal homes will decay and break down but our future home will be eternally beautiful.

Again, the Christ-centered home is not one that is perfect but it is hopeful. And even when it seems so far away, we firmly set our hearts on the coming day when our home is with Christ for all eternity. In the meantime, we strive to relate to one another through the gospel that has given us that hope.

So, if your home isn't all that you'd love it to be, if it is a place of brokenness and pain, the Christ-centered life turns to Christ. Turn to him for hope, peace, and help. If it is a place of unforgiveness and bitterness, the Christ-centered life will extend the forgiveness that they've personally found in Jesus. Even when there those in our homes who might not know the grace of the gospel, we who have should rest in it ourselves and seek to demonstrate it through our loving actions to them.

## **COMMUNION**

To help us remember what we have in the gospel, we have been given the gift of communion. By eating the bread and drinking the juice we preach the gospel once again to ourselves, to others, and we do so “until he comes again...”

**1 Cor. 11:23-26**

**23** For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, **24** and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." **25** In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." **26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

## **CONFESSION**

Before we observe communion together it is always right to have a time of reflection and confession. So with heads bowed and eyes closed let's spend a moment in private prayer and confession.

## **PRAYER**

## **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

### **Romans 5:1-2**

**1** Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **2** Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Because of Jesus we have been reconciled to God for all eternity. For those who have repented of their sins and have put their faith and hope in Jesus alone, you are welcome to take the elements any time during the next two songs. So, let's stand and continue to worship together...

## **VERSES**

Colossians 1:15-20

Colossians 1:16

Colossians 1:18

Genesis 1:26-28

Genesis 2:24-25

Genesis 1:31

Genesis 3:16

Genesis 6:5

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

Colossians 3:12-15

Revelation 19:6-9

Revelation 21:1-4

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Romans 5:1-2

## **SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Identify and describe the four main points of the Bible's storyline.
2. Why is it important to remember that our lives are part of a bigger story?
3. What does it mean that "sin is essentially anti-social?"
4. What does it mean that sin reduces people to either vehicles or obstacles?
5. How should the gospel shape the way we handle conflict?
6. How should the gospel shape the way we raise our children?
7. How should the gospel shape the way we practice hospitality?
8. Spend time praying for one another, that we might have homes centered on Christ.