



Week 7: Colossians 1:15b-17

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.

About This Week's Message – February 20, 2011

This week we look at Jesus as King and ruler of all creation. In this passage Paul points out clearly that Jesus was and is God and reigns with full authority as part of the Trinity. He created all things for his own pleasure and his own glory — including you.

*The following questions are the 1:10 Homework for the week of February 20, 2011.
Comments in the grey boxes will not be included on the 1:10 Homework your group receives.*

Getting Started

This week's study is based on Colossians 1:15b-17.

Start by praying for the Holy Spirit to guide you.

Then read through Colossians 1:15-20 a few times before moving on.

With your group, you might want to begin by reading the passage aloud. Maybe you would have someone read beginning in v. 1 and read it imagining a group of people around them, the whole church, hanging on every word of instruction for them from Paul.

The following questions are just introductory discussion starters. Remember that throughout you don't have to cover every single question with your group. Let the Spirit lead!

1. Growing up, did you ever hold any positions of authority and/or seniority? Student government? Yearbook editor? Team captain? Big brother? Write down all that you can think of...
2. What areas of authority do you have now? AND who are some authorities you submit to?
3. What is the greatest thing you've ever created... (or were most proud of after you made it)? What is the greatest thing anyone has ever created for you?

Digging Deeper

1. **Read Colossians 1:15, 1:18, Romans 8:29, Hebrews 1:6, and Revelation 1:5.** Each of those verses refer to Jesus as “firstborn”. What do you learn about Jesus’ position from each of those verses? (HINT: Go back and read each verse in context, reading it in line with a few verses before and after it.)

Nothing too deep here, just exploring again the way Scripture describes Jesus. Focus in on his role as God, King, Ruler...

2. How should the phrase “all things were created through him and for him” affect your attitudes and actions?

Obviously it should cause us to live in a way that honors him... recognizing that we’re not our own. Maybe turn over to 1 Corinthians 6:12-20.

3. How about the phrase, “in him [Jesus] all things hold together”?

Jesus is always fully in control. This gives hope and comfort when we recognize that he has us and will care for us. When everything else in life may seem like it’s spinning out of control and/or without purpose, we should never forget that Jesus is still on the throne.

4. Does that phrase give you hope? How so?

5. Early in this series, we recognized that Paul was writing this letter from prison. Is it significant that Paul declares the things in 1:15-17 while in that situation?

It's definitely a recognition of Jesus' sovereignty over everything, big and small. Paul may have been being persecuted by human authorities, thrown in prison, etc... (eventually he would even pay with his life), but over all of it he displays his confidence that Jesus reigns supreme.

A good parallel here might be the story of Joseph in Genesis 37-50. Maybe read the account of Joseph together in Genesis 37 where he was cast in the well by his brothers and sold into slavery... you could bullet point the rest of the story for the group... all of Joseph's trials and suffering... and then draw it to Joseph's conclusion many years later in Genesis 50:20 that while his brothers meant it all for evil, "God meant it for good." ----- What are the circumstances we face that would easily be seen as hard or even meant for evil toward us, that God may very well intend for good in our lives? (Romans 8:28ff) (Which leads right into the next question...)

6. What are some circumstances in your life where you need to remember and apply the statements of 1:15-17?

7. **Read Genesis 3.** Yep, the whole chapter. :) What does the serpent say will happen in verse 5?

He says that they will become like God if they eat the fruit.

8. **Colossians 1:17** tells us that Jesus "is before all things". He is eternal and existed before anything else. Pastor Josh mentioned that in reality, then, we were created to be a part of God's story, not the other way around. How is that truth significant?

Jesus existed long before we were ever created. He is eternal. Therefore, we were brought into HIS story, he wasn't brought into our story. We were added to his story not in the leading role, but in a supporting one that reveals God's glory and makes Jesus look great. – That's our purpose. – As humans we can only find our meaning in relationship to God, because He created us.

9. When you consider this along with Genesis 3 and the serpent's promise in verse 5... what, then, is a key component of Adam and Eve's sin and of sin in general?

A huge part, maybe even the essential part of sin is our struggle to take the lead role in the story. We sin when we make ourselves to be the protagonist (star, hero, etc.) of the story and delegate God to (at best) a supporting role, and/or (at worst) an antagonistic role! We try to put ourselves in the place of God as the one who rules and reigns. We sin, then, by rebelling against his authority and design.

Up Close

1. Where do you fail to put Jesus first?

Spending at least some time each week praying for each other will be huge in developing community and seeing growth in your group. Don't just skip over this. If you're starting a new group, it will probably be sparse at first, but set the pace early and establish prayer for each other as an important part of your time together.

Focus first on prayer for each other, but if you need additional ideas, prayer requests will be on the inserts each week after the 1:10 Homework.