



Week 8: Colossians 1:18a

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 27, 2011

This week is Ecclesiology 101 — a study on the theology of the local church, because Jesus is “head of the body, the church.” So what is it? What is the local church? Not only that, but what makes a local church true and biblical? During the message we dissect the following definition of the local church as written by Mark Driscoll in his book *Vintage Church* (p. 38):

Definition of the Local Church:

“The local church is a community of regenerated believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord. In obedience to Scripture they organize under qualified leadership, gather regularly for preaching and worship, observe the biblical sacraments of baptism and Communion, are unified by the Spirit, are disciplined for holiness, and scatter to fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission as missionaries to the world for God’s glory and their joy.”

*The following questions are the 1:10 Homework for the week of February 27, 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 1:18a.

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. When you think about “church”, what are the first five words or descriptions that pop into your head?
2. If someone asked you to describe Wawasee Bible, how would you describe it? Why?

Digging Deeper

1. **Read Matthew 28:19-20 and then Acts 1:4-9.** These are the last words of Jesus to the Church before he ascended. What does Jesus say is the mission of the Church?

The mission is to make disciples. Really, it is to make disciples who make disciples who make disciples... The command in Matthew 28:19-20 isn't "go", it's "make disciples". "Go" should probably be translated "while you are going"... or "as you go". So, "as you go about your life — MAKE DISCIPLES!" Jesus then goes on to say how... "baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you (which would include teaching them to go make disciples of Jesus!)."

Acts 1:4-9 lays out where this will happen, how it will all go down... The disciples, believers, the church will be Jesus' witnesses all over the world, spreading the gospel and making disciples.

2. What role are you playing in fulfilling that mission?

Are you sharing your faith? Are you actively discipling someone?— Actively teaching them to obey all that Jesus taught and commanded? If not, why not?

A goof follow-up question might be: "If someone isn't making disciples, are they really a disciple?"

Another follow-up might be: "Who is someone in your life, your everyday life "as you are going" that God might be calling you to disciple?"

3. **Read 1 Corinthians 12.** How is the church like a body?

Everyone is different, with a different part to play — the key is to remember that Jesus is the head. Jesus is the one who ought to orchestrate all the activity of the rest of the body. Without the Head, the church is a corpse.

4. What does it mean to you to be part of the Church?

The goal is that we recognize we're in New Covenant relationship with God and with one another.

5. How has God blessed you through the Church?

Some negative stories of how the Church, or past local churches have hurt someone... but don't camp out there... move past it by focusing on the ways God blesses us as part of the church. Get specific.

6. How has God used you to bless other members of the Church?

Get specific. How have you or those in your group served and connected with others in the church? How have you brought others into the church? What is the BEST way to bring someone into the church and help them get deeply connected so that they are blessed by the church?

7. **Read Ephesians 2:11-22.** Jot down some observations of how Paul describes the Church.

8. **Read John 17:15-18 and 20:21.** What does Jesus pray for and say to the Church?

That the church is SENT. The church is God's missionary to the world, and a healthy local church is growing in the ways it operates as a missionary to its local culture and community and the world as a whole.

9. How might this play out in your life? How does it? How should it?

In other words... "How can you live as a missionary?"

You're the representative of Jesus and of our church to everyone you come in contact with. How good of an ambassador, emissary, missionary are you being?

A good missionary is very strategic in how they spread the gospel... how can you be strategic in the way you live out your faith and share your faith in Jesus?

Up Close

1. Where do you fail to put Jesus first?

Try to avoid generalizations here and get specific.

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.