

The Mediator of the Mission
Colossians 1.3-23
Series: Mobilizing the Mission
January 24, 2021
The Village Church at Shell Point

I. Illustration

- A. When I was a boy, a mere lad as David Pavey might put it, my brother and I would play “army”
 - 1. I know that’s probably not politically correct today
 - a. But that was in the early 60's, not that far removed from WWII
 - b. And TV shows like Combat were popular; and we watched them
 - 2. Part of what got us interested in such things were memorabilia my father brought back from his days in the army, during WWII
 - a. He had been wounded in the Battle of the Bulge – Germany’s last ditch effort to counter the Allied advance
 - b. But he had a bunch of stuff
 - c. Hats, badges, patches – stuff like that; some of which I still have
 - d. And we played with them
- B. I became interested in those days in the issue of rank
 - 1. I learned that the military world is rigidly hierarchical
 - a. My father had become a lieutenant in the army
 - b. A second lieutenant, then a first lieutenant
 - c. I knew that was higher than a sergeant
 - d. I also knew that was lower than a captain
 - 2. After captain
 - a. There was major
 - b. Then lieutenant colonel
 - c. Then colonel
 - 3. Then the army moves into the generals
 - a. Brigadier general – one star
 - b. Major general – two stars
 - c. Lieutenant general – three stars
 - d. General – four stars
 - e. General of the army – five stars
- C. My father became a policeman after the war
 - 1. And he progressed through the ranks
 - a. And the police department was pretty much as hierarchical as the army
 - b. I have my father’s plaque which he received at his retirement with the badges of each of his ranks
 - c. Seven of them – from private all the way to major, which was his final rank

- d. In the police department there were only two ranks higher – lieutenant colonel and the colonel, who was the superintendent of the police department
- D. Few people have risen through more ranks than Dwight D. Eisenhower
 - 1. From lieutenant following his graduation from West Point
 - a. Through captain
 - b. Lieutenant colonel
 - c. Brigadier general
 - d. Major general
 - e. Full general
 - f. General of the Army – with all five stars
 - 2. And as D-Day approached – the mission to which I’ve called attention in this series – he was promoted to the Supreme Commander of Allied Expeditionary Forces
 - a. In that position he directed Operation Overlord – the operation which launched the Allied invasion of Europe
 - b. He was thus the commander, not just of the U.S. Army, but of the armies of Britain and Canada who participated in that invasion
- E. Anytime you have the title of “Supreme” – that’s got to be pretty special
 - 1. But interestingly, even when Eisenhower was the Supreme Allied Commander, he still wasn’t really the boss
 - a. He still reported to someone
 - b. That someone was General George C. Marshall – he was chief of staff of the army
 - 2. And even George C. Marshall reported to someone – the President of the U.S., Franklin D. Roosevelt
 - a. The Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces
- F. We don’t like to think of a spiritual hierarchy
 - 1. We’d like to think of Jesus as our best bud, our pal, our old friend
 - a. And He certainly is, in a sense
 - 2. But until we recognize that **He is the supreme commander of anything and everything**, we will never have a sense of the authority and power invested in our mission

II. **Mobilizing the Mission**

- A. This is the third message in the series “Mobilizing the Mission”
 - 1. Focusing on the mission of The Village Church
 - a. **Building a community of forgiveness, purpose and hope in Jesus Christ**
- B. The first message examined the first part of the mission: building a community
 - 1. Entitled **“On Mission Together”**
 - a. We learned what working together on mission looks like for the church which is faithful to its mission
 - b. Understanding ourselves – humble, accurate appraisal of who we are in Christ

- c. Understanding the body – with all its varied gifts and qualities that God uses in His mission
 - d. Understanding love – what love looks like in a body which is on mission
- C. The second message focused on the core elements of our mission statement
 - 1. **“The Message of the Mission”**
 - a. **Forgiveness, purpose and hope**
 - 2. Forgiveness – how we deal with our past
 - a. How we come to know Christ as our Savior – by grace through faith alone
 - b. How we become reconciled, not only to God, but with others as well
 - 3. Purpose – how we deal with our present
 - a. What gets us up in the morning
 - b. And how our purpose is often redefined in our retirement when the things that gave us purpose in the past are in our rear view mirror
 - 4. Hope – how we look forward with expectation and anticipation to a glorious future in the presence of our God and Savior Jesus Christ
- D. Today we explore the final portion of our mission statement
 - 1. And you might think it’s no big deal
 - a. Just a prepositional phrase
 - b. **“In Jesus Christ”**
 - 2. But if you thought that meant it was unimportant, you would have missed the point of the mission altogether!
 - a. Because “in Jesus Christ” is the most important aspect of the mission statement of The Village Church
 - 3. Because Jesus is the Supreme Allied Commander of anything and everything
 - a. And without Him, there is no forgiveness
 - b. And no purpose
 - c. And no hope
 - d. And no community
 - 4. He alone brings the authority and power that can accomplish
 - a. Not only our mission at TVC
 - b. But the Great Commission which TVC embraces and pursues
- E. Jesus Christ is no corporal, no lieutenant, no captain
 - 1. No colonel
 - 2. No general
 - 3. Not even commander of the army
- F. Jesus Christ is Supreme over the entire creation
 - 1. Over every rank
 - a. Over every division of men and of angels
 - 2. And He is supreme over you and me

III. **The Supremacy of Christ**

- A. Text
1. **Colossians 1:13–23** (NASB95) —
 2. 13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
 3. 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
 4. 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.
 5. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.
 6. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.
 7. 19 For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.
 8. 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— 23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.
- B. A more powerful and concise statement of the supremacy of Christ can scarcely be found in scripture
1. Let’s begin by exploring our text as it lays out His supremacy
- C. **Colossians 1:15** (NASB95) — 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
1. One of those texts that can easily be misunderstood
 - a. “the image of the invisible God”
 - b. What does that mean?
 - c. After all, human beings are said to made in “the image of God”
 - d. Does it mean that Jesus just has God-like qualities – even as we do
 - e. Intelligence, emotions, creativity, self-awareness?
 2. And then, “the firstborn of all creation”
 - a. Does that mean he was just the first creature?
 - b. Were the Arians right when they denied the deity of Jesus?
 - c. There are plenty of present day Arians who deny the deity of Jesus in false religions
 3. Fortunately, Paul himself explains what he means
- D. **Colossians 1:16** (NASB95) — 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.
1. No!

- a. Jesus is not just a human being with some God-like qualities
 - b. He is not just the first creature
 - 2. He is, in fact, **the Creator**
 - a. He created all things
 - b. All things means – well– **all things!**
 - c. There is nothing made that has been made that He didn't make
 - 3. Not only did He create the things we see
 - a. He created the spiritual realm – the invisible, the angelic realm
 - b. Thrones, dominions, rulers, authorities
 - 4. He is the image of the invisible God because He is **God incarnate!**
 - a. He is the Creator God
 - b. Only God can create all things – visible and invisible
 - 5. And all things – did I say all things?
 - a. All things have been created through Him and for Him
 - 6. He is the what the entirety of creation was created for
 - a. Nothing in creation has any purpose whatsoever except in Jesus Christ
 - b. The whole of creation finds its meaning in Jesus Christ alone!
 - 7. If that's not supremacy, there is no such concept
- E. **Colossians 1:17** (NASB95) — 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.
 - 1. For those of you who are keeping score at home – this is the third and fourth times Paul has said “all things”
 - 2. He is before all things – before anything existed in the entire universe, there was the Son of God – Jesus Christ
 - 3. And in Him all things hold together
 - a. Hold together – are maintained, sustained
 - b. The existence of all things – land, sea, trees, animals, oxygen, planets, stars, moons, solar systems, galaxies – and you and me
 - c. We all continue to exist because Jesus holds it all together
- F. What a statement of supremacy!
 - 1. Echoed in Hebrews (maybe by Paul)
 - a. **Hebrews 1:3** (NASB95) — 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power...
 - 2. That's what Paul means by Jesus being the image of the invisible God
 - a. That's what Paul means by Jesus being the firstborn of all creation
 - b. He's God – the Creator!
- G. And in case you're wondering who decided there should be a mission
 - 1. And in case you're wondering if you ought to be a part of that mission
 - a. And in case you're weighing your options about committing to the mission
 - 2. Just remember this obscure, little fact
 - a. The mission is ordained by the Supreme commander of the universe
 - b. God-incarnate originated the mission

- c. God-incarnate drives the mission
 - d. God-incarnate is the authority behind the mission
 - 3. And so, we're building a community of forgiveness, purpose and hope *in Jesus Christ*
 - a. In the Supreme being in all the universe
- H. If you're a believer, and you can't embrace a mission driven by the One who created all things, for whom all things were created, who is before all things, and in Him all things hold together
 - 1. You don't have a mission
 - a. You don't even have a purpose

IV. Supreme in Forgiveness

- A. **Colossians 1:13–14** (NASB95) — 13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
 - 1. Do you realize how rich is this statement of what this Jesus has done for us?
 - 2. Rescued us from the domain of darkness
 - a. **Ephesians 2:1–3** (NASB95) — 1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.
 - b. We were not some morally neutral creatures who were capable of doing good things from time to time
 - c. No! We were dead in trespasses and sins
 - d. What do dead men do? Nothing!
 - e. There is nothing spiritually redeeming that we could do before God did something in us!
 - f. He rescued us from the domain of darkness
 - g. **Ephesians 2:4–5** (NASB95) — 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)...
 - h. He made us alive – regenerated us; made us born again!
 - 3. Transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son
 - a. We were slaves in the kingdom of darkness
 - b. He freed us and brought us into the kingdom of love and delight
 - c. The kingdom of the Son He loves
 - d. It is a kingdom of love!
 - 4. In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins
 - a. Only in this Jesus
 - b. Only in this supreme King of kings

- c. Only in the One who is without sin
 - d. Can we find forgiveness for ourselves
 - 5. We are building a community of forgiveness – in Jesus Christ
- B. **Colossians 1:21–22** (NASB95) — 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death...
 - 1. In Jesus Christ – we are reconciled with the Father
 - 2. Only in His body – through death – were we taken from the status of enemy to the status of friend
 - 3. Once again, an echo of the Ephesian text – formerly dead in trespasses and sins
 - a. He made us alive
 - b. Forgave us, reconciled us
 - c. All through His death on the cross
- C. Jesus is supreme
 - 1. And He is supreme in forgiveness
 - a. You and I don't have any forgiveness unless it is through Jesus Christ
 - 2. Do you trust in the supremacy of Jesus Christ to save you from the wrath of Almighty God?
 - a. And bring you into His kingdom of love and light?
- D. We are building a community of forgiveness – in Jesus Christ
 - 1. There is no other being who can do that

V. **Supreme in Purpose**

- A. **Colossians 1:18–20** (NASB95) — 18 He is also head of the body, the church...
 - 1. The head of the church – to supreme commander of the church
 - a. The church – the means by which God determines to reconcile the world to Himself
 - b. **2 Corinthians 5:19–20** (NASB95) — 19 ... God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us...
 - c. The church – to whom was entrusted the mission of God
 - d. God could have done it using other means
 - e. But He didn't – He determines to use the church!
- B. ... so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.
 - 1. Our mission is to make Christ supreme in everything
 - a. So that He would have first place – the supreme place
 - b. In everything!
 - c. Just in case you miss it – “in everything” is another way of saying “all things”
- C. 19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the

blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

1. This is one of the great statements of purpose in scripture
 2. This is what gets us up in the morning
 - a. We exist to proclaim the supremacy of Christ in all things
 - b. We exist to proclaim the reconciliation of God to all who will submit to Him – in Jesus Christ, through the blood of His cross
- D. We are building a community of purpose – in Jesus Christ
1. Because Jesus alone is supreme in purpose
 - a. Apart from Jesus there is no purpose
 - b. There is nothing to sustain us; nothing to drive us
 - c. Nothing to direct us
 - d. Nothing to empower us in the mission
 2. We are a people of purpose because of the supremacy of Christ

VI. **Supreme in Hope**

- A. **Colossians 1:21–23** (NASB95) — 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, **in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach**— 23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, **and not moved away from the hope of the gospel** that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.
- B. The hope of the gospel
1. Which is to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach
 2. Do you realize that is what will happen to you, believer?
 - a. That when you pass from this earth – I’m speaking to believers in Jesus now
 - b. When you pass from this earth, you will be transformed
 - c. You will be glorified
 - d. You will be like Him because you will see Him as He is!
 3. That is your glorious hope!
 - a. That is your astonishing expectation!
 - b. That is what your redeemed heart anticipates
 - c. That is what your soul longs for
 4. And it is only in Jesus Christ can you have this hope
 - a. Because Jesus is supreme in hope

VII. Conclusion

- A. **We are building a community – in Jesus Christ**
1. Only in Jesus – who is supreme in all things – can a community of faith be established and thrive
- B. **We are building a community of forgiveness – in Jesus Christ**
1. Only in Jesus do we have forgiveness

- a. Only in trusting in Christ alone for our salvation can we have forgiveness
 - b. Jesus is supreme in forgiveness
- C. **We are building a community of purpose – in Jesus Christ**
 - 1. Only in Jesus do we have purpose
 - a. Only in Jesus do we participate in God's grand redemptive plan
 - 2. Because Jesus is supreme in purpose
- D. **We are building a community of hope – in Jesus Christ**
 - 1. Only in Jesus can we have hope for an eternity in the presence of the holy One, the loving One
 - a. The One who secured our redemption
 - b. The One who decreed our redemption
 - c. The One who caused our redemption through the cross
 - d. And the One who applied our redemption in convicting us, drawing us, regenerating us
 - 2. Because Jesus Christ is supreme in hope
 - a. There is no hope apart from Jesus Christ

Benediction

Hebrews 13:20–21 (NASB95) —

20 Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord,

21 equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.