

# The Sovereign King of Everything

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     excuse me, or how many sermons. We have been working through the book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament. We will not be in Ecclesiastes today, however.
- I finished up, excuse me, man. I finished up Ecclesiastes 9 last Sunday, and I don't know, I think I probably preached maybe five messages out of Ecclesiastes 9.
- We were humming along, and we hit 9, and I just put the brakes on. And out of my own study, it was just a beautiful, beautiful time for us to come together and hear about the way that God has built, built, if you will, worth into our existence as human beings through our relationship with Jesus Christ and our understanding of truth based on his holy word.
- So I want to draw your attention this morning to a different part of scripture. I'm going to take just a brief break today. My plan is to be back in Ecclesiastes next Sunday.
- But I want to bring you a message bragging on the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, we see the Messiah, and we see plenty of truth in Ecclesiastes.
- [ 1 : 2 2 ]     But, you know, I can only go so long not speaking directly about the Lord before I have to just say, OK, we're in the Old Testament. I get it. It's all about him.
- Now let's really talk about it. Let's just really center on him and be reminded what life really is all about. Because the remainder of Ecclesiastes, before we get to 12, Solomon is going to be saying all of these different things to try to get finally to the last few verses in the book and say, here's what it's all about.
- But before we get there, it's going to be tough, really tough stuff. So we're going to talk about Jesus today in some very specific ways. The title of my message is The Sovereign King of Everything.
- Jesus Christ is the Sovereign King of Everything. And we're going to be in the book of Colossians. This is one of my favorite, excuse me, books in the Bible.
- I often turn to Colossians and read through. We are currently in a program of memorizing the entire book of Colossians together as a church family. So there's much to do.
- [ 2 : 3 3 ]     I want to put something up here on the screen for you. It's from the great theologian, Augustine. Augustine was a theologian, I think, if we have it.
- Do we have it up there, Michelle? Looking for it? Well, Augustine lived during the latter part of the 4th century and the early 5th century B.C.
- And he said something very interesting. He said a lot of interesting things, but particularly for what I want to deal with today. Here's what he said. I'll just read it off to you.
- It's in Latin. I'll translate for you. I'm not a Latin scholar, but I'll translate for you. One more time.
- One more time. One more time. Think Italian. The beginning of knowledge is to know oneself to be a sinner.
- [ 3 : 4 0 ]     The beginning of knowledge is to know oneself to be a sinner. And I thought that was very interesting when I came across that this week in some of my own study.

I want to ask you a couple of questions before we actually read the text for today. Would your life look much different if you were not a Christian?

I'm going to probe a little bit with you. Would your life be, let me put it this way, dramatically different if you did not believe in Jesus?

Now, what I'm challenging here isn't just your thoughts.

I'm challenging your lifestyle. I'm going to poke around on your lifestyle because I want to ask you to evaluate today. Is Jesus truly your Lord and Savior?

[ 4 : 50 ] Because if Jesus is the Lord of your life, there ought to be a radical nature to how you live. And I don't mean that you sell everything and move overseas and live in abject poverty and all that kind of...

That's not the radical I'm talking about. I'm talking about the radical nature of living for Jesus Christ every single day in a faithful life of changing diapers or cooking meals or in all things, doing all things for the glory of God in Christ with thankfulness in your hearts.

That's a radical life. Right? Did you ever find that slide? No? Still not there? Well, we're going to read the passage and move on from there.

So, Colossians chapter 1. Now, we're going to be looking at verses 15 down through 19, but just for the sake of context, let me start up in verse 13. Colossians 1 verse 13.

For He rescued us, that is God, rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.

[ 6 : 01 ] And it is in that beloved Son, He says in verse 14, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. So in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have redemption.

That is freedom. Because God has forgiven us in Christ for our sins. And then in verse 15, we're going to get this wonderful display or declaration of this marvelous Son who has forgiven our sins and offered us freedom in Himself.

Paul says, He, Jesus, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 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.

He is before all things, and in Him, all things hold together. 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. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him.

[ 7 : 32 ] And I'll finish out in verse 20. And through Him, to reconcile, then, 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.

Now, I'd like you to just take quick note of all of the times, at least in the New American Standard Translation that I'm reading from and preaching from, take note of the times where Paul uses He is.

You see He is at the beginning of verse 15. And then in verse 17, He is. And then in verse 18, He is. And again, in the middle of that verse, He is.

All of those are referring to Jesus. So this is a description of who Jesus is and what Jesus does.

So the first point that I want to bring to you in the message today, He is sovereign as the image of God. That'll come right out of the text for us.

[ 8 : 38 ] He is sovereign as the image of God. You'll see that up on the screen. And that's verse 15. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Image was a big deal in ancient times. Images were everywhere. Now, you can't pick up a history book and read about the ancient world without seeing all kinds of depictions of statues and all kinds of different things, right?

And we know those things as images or we have studied enough in Scripture to call them what? Begins with an I. Idols. Or icons.

Right? They are representations of. Images of. And that's the word that's being used here. In Greek, it would be akon. Akon or akon.

And it means likeness. Likeness. It's where we get our English word icon. So this idea of Jesus as the image of God, the image of the invisible God, is that of likeness.

[ 9 : 54 ] Now, stay with me so that we can see what this means. Creation reflects. Hear me now. Creation reflects on God's character. It reflects on His creativity.

Right? You see so much variety in the animal world and across our planet and plants and different things like that. Right? It also displays God's power, His wisdom.

It displays His divinity. But it does that to a limited degree. Creation, all that we see out in our world, reflects God to a limited degree.

Now, you've probably been somewhere before where you recently got back from Colorado. Did you guys do the mountains? Yeah, the mountains, the Rocky Mountains are majestic, aren't they?

I remember when I, I'm from Georgia and I remember when we left the West after I was living out there for a while and came back to Georgia and people around up northern Georgia were talking about mountains.

[ 10 : 56 ] I just come from the Rockies. Okay? Georgia doesn't have any mountains. It's got some pretty neat hills. The places around here, they got some pretty neat hills up in Crozet and along the Blue Ridge.

Those are nice hills. You want to see some mountains? Go to the Rockies and they're beautiful. Maybe you guys are going to be heading that way, right? To see those. Make sure you do. Make sure you stop and do some mountains.

To a limited degree, you've seen those kinds of things. You've seen the sunset and you might marvel and if you're like me, those kinds of things inspire you to praise.

To praise what? The sun? The creator of the sun. The maker of those mountains. If you're a Christian, you can't see those kinds of things without your heart welling up, I would think, in this wonderful awe of the God who stands behind the making of all those things.

Creation reflects our God but only reflects God and to a very limited degree. It reflects aspects of his character, that is his being or his person, but creation falls short of showing us God himself.

[ 12 : 11 ] This is very important. Nor does creation bring God to us. So I don't know since I've been a Christian that I've ever been in a place because I love the mountains where I go up on the mountains and I climb up and I get to a certain place and I'm looking at the blue sky or the sun or the wonderful trees or whatever the vistas are below me and say to myself, boy, this is God.

I don't think I've ever done that. but I've let it point me toward God. But what it hasn't done is bring God to me.

It's never, creation's never brought God to me. Paul's declaration that Jesus is the image of the invisible God is to say that Jesus is divine. I want to help you see that.

He is God. He is God. He is fully what creation only reflects. You with me?

Jesus is fully what creation can't be and wasn't designed to be. Now, one of the reasons this is very important for us to deal with in our relationship with Christ is because of all of the nonsense that's going on out there in false religions.

[ 13 : 34 ] This is all through Disney movies. Parents, be careful. All right? I won't even, I'm tempted to just give you some illustration because we raised our kids on Disney movies too and there were a couple of times when I'm like, okay, that's kind of the end.

Push the button. All right, what are we going to do now and try to distract them because in The Little Mermaid, she gets everything she wants by trashing everybody and she still gets what she wants and I'm like, yeah, that's how much real life is in that.

You trash everybody in real life, you alienate everyone from your life and you turn into a miserable person. You may get what you want but you get it in loneliness.

Jesus Christ is fully what creation only reflects. So to see Jesus is to see God. The Father. Jesus doesn't simply reflect God, He is God and if He's not, we're in deep trouble and Christianity is nothing more than a myth.

Now, I want to show this to you very quickly. We'll just do a couple of cross references real fast together. In John chapter 10, Jesus Himself speaks to this very reality.

[ 14 : 51 ] John 10 verse 30. Jesus says very clearly, I and the Father are one.

Okay? I and the Father are one. Then if you turn over to John chapter 14. In verse 7.

Jesus is speaking to His disciples and He says, If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. From now on you know Him and have seen Him.

You have that? If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. From now on you know Him and have seen Him. And Philip asked the question, Lord, show us the Father and that would be enough for us.

Show us God and we're good. And Jesus said in verse 9, Have I been so long with you and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip?

[ 15 : 58 ] He who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me?

So what we derive from that is Jesus is God in human form. Now you understand the cults don't teach that. Mormons don't teach that.

You understand that. Jehovah witnesses don't teach that. Jesus is God in human form fully God. Not part of God.

Not a reflection of God. Jesus is God beloved. He is God. Jesus Christ was not created.

The cults run to certain verses. You'll see one in a minute and suggest that Jesus was created by God. He was a created being. He was not. But he himself was the agent of creation.

[ 17 : 00 ] The text tells us that Jesus was the firstborn. Do you see that at the end of verse 15? He was the firstborn of all creation.

Firstborn is the Greek word prototokos. And it means first in position. First in rank. First in order.

So Jesus is of the highest rank. It's another way of saying he is preeminent. He is supreme. He is above all others.

He is privileged in that way and he is sovereign over everything that exists. It's interesting to me that that's where Paul begins right on the heels of telling us that God by his great grace has taken us from the domain of darkness, deadness and sin, and transferred us over to the kingdom of his beloved son.

So we have been through faith reconstituted into a new realm kingdom. With a new identity.

[ 18 : 15 ] We have been taken from having a master who was Satan as we were dead in our sins, dead to God, and been transferred by the power of God through his son into a new kingdom, a different kingdom, an altogether different kingdom with a new identity.

We are new creatures, new beings. I'm going to tell you we're a new humanity, and it's nothing short of that. That's what Paul is dealing with right at the beginning, right on the heels of coming off of that declaration.

He says, Jesus Christ then, that one who's done that work of redemption and forgiveness for us, he is God. He is God.

If he weren't God, he couldn't do what he just said he did for us. Folks, that's what's at stake. I will never forget when I was a baby Christian, I had just come to know the Lord.

I was at my house, I don't even remember what I was doing, and two very nice young ladies showed up at my house knocking on the door in the early afternoon, and one of them had a baby.

[ 19 : 37 ] And I thought, Land's in, did they have a flat tire? Can I go out and fix your tire for? I didn't know. And they said, we want to talk to you about God. Can we come in? Well, I just came to know the Lord. So I'm like, yes, come in.

I'll tell you what just happened to me. And off we went. An hour and a half later, I was in tears, running from my house, running as fast as I could run up to the church, which was a few blocks away from my house, banging on my pastor's door and busting into his office and saying, I don't want to believe a lie.

I thought this was real. Those two Jehovah witnesses dismantled everything I thought I believed in as a little baby Christian and left me doubting everything that I thought I knew about Jesus.

And it wasn't much. I just knew he was God and he saved me and I needed him to save me because I was a terrible sinner. And they told me he's not God.

That's what's at stake. That's what's at stake. Fortunately, I had a great pastor who came over and sat by me and put his arms around me and loved on me and let me blubber for a minute.

[ 20 : 57 ] And then he said, now let's go see what the Bible does say. I'll never forget that because that was like a call to arms.

I'm like, that's never going to happen to me again. I never want to be there again. That was an awful feeling. Well, Jesus is preeminent over everything, sovereign over everything.

That's what verse 16 helps us understand about Jesus. Look at verse 16 for by him. all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible thrones, dominions, rulers, authorities.

All things have been created through him and for him. All things were created. We ask the question then, how inclusive is the word all in that phrase?

Does it really mean all? Everything? Well, if you read on in the verse, it answers the question for itself, both in the heavens, on the earth, visible.

[ 22 : 06 ] And I don't know about you, but there are visible things in my life and there are invisible things in my life and that pretty much covers it. Right? That's the gamut. Whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things have been created by him and all things have been created for him.

Do you understand that everything about life on this planet culminates, centers in Jesus Christ? Is it any wonder then why people's lives fall apart who don't have Jesus?

Because Jesus Christ is the foundation of everything that is real in this world. If it's true, it's in him.

This is why preachers ought to make a big deal about Jesus. This is why you ought to make a big deal, beloved, about Jesus. Jesus is why we're here.

We never want to miss that reality. Jesus Christ, then, the image of the invisible God, enjoys the authority, the power, the rule, and the control over all creation because he made it all.

[ 23 : 23 ] And that's my second point. He is, Jesus is, sovereign as the creator God. He is sovereign as the creator God.

Verse 16. Now, this is really critical for us to understand that Jesus Christ enjoys the authority, the power, the rule, the control over all creation because he made it all.

It's critical for us to understand that because, hear me now, sin's tendency, the sin of your life, the sin in my life, sin's tendency in us, is to draw our hearts or to focus the loyalty of our hearts on what Jesus made and what Jesus provides rather than on Jesus himself.

In other words, beloved, Jesus is the treasure. Jesus is the prize. Not what Jesus gives. not even what Jesus does, but Jesus himself is the prize and treasure of your life.

[ 24 : 45 ] So is it possible then as a Christian for you to live your life as a believer, missing the joy and peace and reality of growing in a relationship with Jesus?

Is that possible for a believer to do? Well, let me ask you this question. As a believer, have you ever felt sad, down, lonely, depressed, alienated, isolated?

You ever struggled with a lack of joy? Have you ever worried or been anxious? Well, beloved, where's Jesus in those moments?

Where did he go? Nowhere. Did he stop being Jesus? Did he stop holding all things together? Did everything that was made by him and for him just kind of shatter?

And now that's not true anymore? No. No. Here's what happens. Every single time you and I sin, a fundamental reality is going on at the core of who we are.

[ 26 : 00 ] We have just transferred worship and loyalty from Jesus to some aspect of his creation. Because loyalty and worship to Jesus keeps you centered and focused.

Christ. But when you and I sin, when you and I sin, when we are doing the wrong against our creator, what have we done with our creator?

We've become disloyal toward him. In some way, in some manner, you and I are no longer fixed on, I will worship you from a thankful heart, Lord.

I will bring you honor and glory in my life from an attitude of gratitude, a thankfulness welling up within me and offer you in this moment, in this time, the worship of my life.

I will seek to please you in this thing, whatever it is, in this circumstance, right? In my life. Well, when I sin, it sure isn't about pleasing him, is it?

[ 27 : 13 ] In that moment. Do you see the disloyalty that comes into your life in that moment? Do you understand that in that moment, you're not seeking to please God?

In that moment, it's more about you than it is about him. Now, he hasn't gone anywhere. He's still on the throne.

You're just not acknowledging that in that moment. So there is some aspect of the creation that you've now put your worship on, your focus on, instead of worshipping the creator.

You with me? And that focus might be just simply on you and what you want. So you're worshipping you. Or it may be looking towards someone else in your life to bring you and be for you what only God can bring and be.

But in some way, worship has gone awry in your life. We are not called on to worship what God has made. We're called to worship the maker.

[ 28 : 21 ] So we need to be reminded that Jesus is sovereign over creation. That is, Jesus is fully God rules, reigns over all that he's made.

He stands above his creation. We don't want to denigrate. We do not want to diminish the reality of the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ by equating him with his creation.

Let me throw this up on the screen for you to see. Theologians refer to God's distinctiveness apart from creation as his transcendence. This is a good word for you to know.

It means that creation is not God and that God is greater than what he's made and that God is independent of what he has made. OK.

Now, listen, how many movies have you seen that want to make God. God. We hear it in a flower or in a tree or we hear it in things like this mother nature.

[ 29 : 26 ] Right. And so we put we put God on an equal level with what he's made. And we say that we can see we can see and know God in the trees, in the forest, in crystals, in rocks, in gems.

In things we fashion with our hands. And the Bible says no. Which is one of the reasons that we have this.

Rule in scripture that tells us don't make these images of God and put them up around the place. I want you to look behind me. What do you see? Now, do you see anybody hanging on this thing?

Do you know why we don't have a depiction of Jesus hanging on this thing? Because he's not there anymore. Where is he? At the right hand of the father.

That's right. And we don't know what Jesus look like. Right. We don't know what God looks like. So we don't fashion anything.

[ 30 : 39 ] Put it up and bow down to it in here. I didn't ask you when you stood up to sing. Now, everybody look up here at the picture of Jesus and focus on that.

We didn't ask you to do that and we never will. Jesus Christ, God, the father is above and stands apart from what he's made.

So beloved, Jesus is not in the flowers. He's not. God does not reside in what he's made. With one exception.

Believers. Which is a miracle. What? The big old God of the cosmos lives inside of me. Can you see him?

No. But he's there. That comes back to my question. How do we know he's there? What would your life look like if you weren't a believer?

[ 31 : 37 ] Would it look much different than it does now? Has the radical God of the universe come to live in you? And is he then in a radical way showing himself to be who he is in your life?

And again, folks, please don't hear your pastor saying that your life ought to look like some weird thing that, you know, you.

I just keep coming back to this where you sell everything that you have and you run off to the mission field somewhere and go into the jungles. And that's your proof that you're living a radical life for Jesus.

You can live a radical life for Jesus right here in Williamsburg. Being a mom. Being a dad. Being a husband. Being a wife. Being kids who are faithful to your parents.

Holding down your jobs. Paying your taxes. And doing it all for Jesus Christ. Well, since Paul has established that Jesus is fully God, Jesus can't be both created and creator.

[ 32 : 47 ] If Jesus is created, then he is below God because God stands above his creation. Any religion, any teaching that makes Jesus equal with creation or below God or less than God contradicts the teaching of the Bible that Jesus is fully God.

And I think Paul's made the case. Now we might. I don't know. Well, let me ask it this way. Why? Why might this be important for us to nail down?

I think one reason is. As I've mentioned, every single false teaching from every false system or false religion in the world at some level makes Jesus Christ either equal to creation, irrelevant to creation.

That is, he didn't do anything. Or a part of creation. And all of these rob Jesus of his divine nature and his sovereignty over all that he's made.

So Jesus is God. God. And he is creator God standing, standing sovereign and above all that he's made. All of creation on the earth and in the heavens answers to Jesus.

[ 33 : 59 ] And owes its existence to Jesus. That's the point of transcendence. His position above all that he's made. And we have to be careful to guard against the dangers then of seeing God as being removed from, aloof from, or disconnected from all that he's made.

And that's where verse 17 comes in. So let me make sure we're on the same page. On one part of this, Paul has made the very clear distinction that God, Christ, stands above what he's made.

He stands as the authority and creator, right? But then over here, we're going to say, well, if God is that far off and stands above all that he's made, what hope is there for us to know him?

He's always going to be way off. Right? So now what? What does that mean for us? What does that mean for creation? So Paul's going to be very, very careful here.

And this brings up my third point up on the screen. He is sovereign as the sustainer God. Verse 17, he is sovereign as the sustainer God.

[ 35 : 11 ] Notice in the Bible, in your text there, he is before all things and in him, all things hold together.

Not some things, not a few things, all things to include your life, friends. Jesus is before all things in creation in the same sense that he's the firstborn of all creation.

That is, Jesus outranks creation. There's never been a time when Jesus was not. Creation had a beginning and Jesus gave it that beginning.

Jesus was the source and origin of creation. He was before it in time. He is before it or preeminent over it as its sovereign maker. But now take careful notice of what the remainder of verse 17 says.

And a very important linking word. And in him, Jesus, all things hold together. Now that little word and links to vital doctrines about God's eternal power and divine nature as seen in the Lord Jesus Christ, a son who is both creator.

[ 36 : 30 ] And sustainer. Now, why is that good news for you? Why is it good news to know God made you? And what else does he do?

He sustains you in life. God gave you life. He made you. He fashioned you before he ever made the world.

God knew he would make you because he's a big old God. But he didn't stop there in giving you physical life.

God continues to sustain you in that life. Now, how many of you know you don't have to raise your hands. Just think rhetorically, how many of you know people who don't have any belief in God or faith in God?



They're not Christians. They don't want to have anything to do with their life. Maybe they're, quote unquote, nice people, but they're not believers. They're not. How many of you know people like that going about their lives every single day?

[ 37 : 35 ] You all know people like that? Yeah, I know people like that as well. Those people are still living in life.

Where'd they get the life? According to the Bible, who gave them that life? God. The difference between you and them, I think, is that you're living for that God who gave you life and they aren't.

Do you think that should look different? Yes. And do you know why? Do you know what the greatest single motive for that looking different is?

You can't get over this God who gave you life at the cost of the life of his son. And so from love.

From deep gratitude. You live your life back to him. That's the difference. The difference between you and them isn't you're better, smarter.

[ 38 : 43 ] You keep the rules better. You show up at church. You read your Bible. You tell other people that God will save them. That's not the difference. The difference is.

You love him. And you want to live your life for him, whatever cost. And you live out of that love. And that love for him compels you to love other people.

And that's the two greatest commandments in the Bible, isn't it? To love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and to love your as yourself. So, yeah, it's kind of a circle of life.

And who's at the center of that life? Jesus is. God. He is before all things and in him all things hold together.

What an important little word. Jesus is before, superior to, distinct from all that he's made. And in Jesus, all creation is held together.

[ 39 : 57 ] If we want to know why it is that Christians are not worried about the world falling apart. We're not worried about the world nuking itself out of existence.

We're not worried about global warming. Whatever that is. We're not worried about anything else. Why? You know why we're not worried about that? We can pray about it.

We can be concerned about it. We can be good stewards in it, which we are called to do because it's God's earth. And we've been called to be managers of it. Yes, all that is true. But do you know why we're not freaking out about all these things?

Because Jesus Christ holds all things together. None of it's going to have anything happen to it that isn't Jesus Christ's will for it to happen.

Right? We live there in peace. Because we know ultimately who is in charge. And thank the Lord it isn't us.

[ 41 : 00 ] Jesus is involved with, Jesus is vitally connected with all of creation. So much so that Jesus is continuously, constantly holding it together and keeping it functioning as it should.

Let me throw this up here on the slide thing for you to see. Theologians refer to God's ongoing vital relationship with his creation as God's imminence.

So we have transcendence and we have imminence. Great doctrines. We can get excited about these because they speak to the reality of what God's doing in his world and in us.

Jesus is above his creation, his creator. Yes. Yes. And Jesus is near his creation because he sustains it in its life and functionality.

Now, why all of this specific teaching from Paul regarding these truths about Jesus Christ? Well, you've come in contact with all kinds of isms in your life.

[ 42 : 02 ] Isms. Especially if you've gone on to higher education. You'll get this in philosophy class. You'll get it in psychology class. You'll get it in a history of the world class.

Ism. Like materialism. All right. All right. Materialism as it's taught philosophically has the idea that what we can see and interact with and relate to and know as the stuff of this world is all there is.

And all that has ever been is what we can. So that chair is what is. I get that because I can see it and relate to it. And all this tangible stuff around.

That's materialism. We can speak of materialism being something that is bad or an idol when we think in terms of I worship the stuff.

Right? Instead of the sustainer. You with me? So materialism says what we can see and interact with and know, that's what, that's all there is.

[ 43 : 08 ] And that's all that's ever been. Well, here's the problem with materialism in terms of what we've been studying so far. Here it is. If God didn't make the universe, he didn't make you. So no God making you.

No God to look to for hope. Or anything else. Here's another ism. How about this one? Pantheism. Pantheism.

Pantheism says that there is a God, but he is in all of nature. He's in it. He's contained in nature itself.

So we can watch a movie like Pocahontas. And we can see in Pocahontas from Disney that she's going to go to Mother Tree or whatever. I've never seen it.

I've just heard it. And so we're going to talk to Mother Tree because Mother Tree is going to tell us we can watch Avatar. I did watch that one. We can watch Avatar. And everything in Avatar is connected by this great big tree that's got things going out underneath the ground everywhere and all that nonsense.

[ 44 : 13 ] And so it's all one big connection. All right. Well, we'll go as far as saying that, you know what, maybe it is all connected, but it's all connected in one person.

And it's all connected in one person for reasons of his own glory. It's all reflecting the glory of Jesus Christ, who's at the center of all of it and holding it all together.

And nothing's going to happen to it that Jesus doesn't say this will happen. It's by his will that the world functions as it functions.

And then finally, well, let me tell you what's wrong with that. If God is in everything and everything is God, you're just as well off than looking to a flower or a tree to help you with the problems of sin and evil and bad and wrong and troubles and trials in your life.

So, Rob, next time you have a problem, I want you to see Rob running out into the middle of his yard and picking a flower and sitting there in the front yard with a flower, contemplating that flower for help through his trouble.

[ 45 : 18 ] You laugh because you see there's no way on God's green earth that's going to. And you would call me. You better call me if that happens. Call me, Jeff. Get over here quick.

All right. And then one other deism. Deism. Deism is basically the idea. And many, many of our of our founding fathers, unfortunately, I think Ben Franklin was one of them, was a deist.

A deist says, yes, there is a God. And yes, God did make everything. But what he did was he was very considerate. He made everything. And then so as not to mar or mess with our free will, he backed out of everything that he made, including our lives.

And he's kind of just sitting up there watching it all happen, going, huh. All right. That's deism. A lot of times they use the idea or the analogy of a clock.

God is the great clock maker. So he made the clock and he wound it up and then he backed out and he just lets it tick along doing its thing. That's deism. Now, is that what you just saw Paul say in Colossians one?

[ 46 : 26 ] That's right. That's right. If God isn't involved in sustaining his creation and he's taking a hands off approach to what he's made, then he isn't sustaining you.

And so you will be left adrift in a whimsical world. Do you hear Ecclesiastes in that? So nowhere in all of creation is it Jesus plus nothing, right?

Jesus' sovereignty and superiority is seen more clearly and powerfully than in his relationship to anything else except one thing on the face of the earth.

What Paul is teaching in this, it is Jesus plus nothing. Do you understand God doesn't need us and he doesn't need anything that he's made?

He was before us and anything else. So God is big enough, Emma. God is big enough that he stands on his own in himself. All by himself.

[ 47 : 34 ] And he's fine with that. He doesn't get lonely or depressed or sad. And he made us for his glory.

Right? Now listen. In all of what I've been saying, there is no more powerful demonstration of Jesus being superior with, over and against, as well as involved with, connected to, sustaining his creation than in what we see next.

Let me put it up here on the screen for you. This is the final one. He is sovereign as the head of the church. This is where Paul brings the climax of his point right into our lives.

Jesus is the head of the church. In verse 18. He is also head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he himself will come to have first place in everything.

He is also. That connects us to the main idea. He is also.

[ 48 : 54 ] Connection to the main idea of the previous verses. It tells us that just as Jesus is sovereign, sovereign as the very image of God, creator God, sustainer God, Jesus is also sovereign as God or head or authority over the church.

So head and body and church. Those are terms, terms that are new to Paul's discussion about Jesus as creator, sustainer. Do you know why? Because this is unique on the face of the planet.

What we are today gathered here. This is unique. Set apart from any other aspect of creation.

On the whole earth. That's not supposed to puff us up. It's supposed to humble us. He doesn't use these terms to describe any other aspect of creation.

Head and body and church. He chooses to use certain words to emphasize what we understand is an organic relationship.

[ 50 : 06 ] Between the sovereign Lord, his body, his church. It's very deliberate and it's very important. Head and body emphasize life and relationship.

This is the difference in Christianity from any other religion in the world. We speak about a personal relationship with a sovereign, saving God.

And we tell people that God will come to live in you. You see why you can only do this by faith? Do you understand? This is why the Greeks said, that's stupid.

That's foolishness. And then you see right back why Paul said yes. And you also consider the cross foolish. But God says that you considering the cross foolish is foolish.

1 Corinthians 1. Right. Jesus is the head. It's his body. Who do you belong to?

[ 51 : 16 ] You belong to Jesus. Jesus. He's the head. What does the head do? If I ask Alonzo to jump up here and grab me by the nose and turn my head to the right, what do you think my body would do?

To the right. To the left. The head. The head takes the body. Wherever my head goes, my body's got to follow or I'm going to lose my head. Right?

Jesus as the head is the life of the body. Who's the body? The church. We're the body of Jesus. He's the head.

Now as you look at me doing what I'm doing up here, am I the head? Is Greg the head? We're just like you. We're part of the body. I'm just doing my part right now.

But I don't do all the other parts. I know what I'm doing this morning, but that's different. I have to do all this up here this morning because that's just the way it is. But everybody has their part in the body.

[ 52 : 21 ] And we're all looking to the same head. He's the head. He's giving life to the body. Jesus is the creator and life of the church.

A body needs a head or there's no life. Now the word for the church is gathered ones or the assembled ones. All right? Here it applies to all those people gathered together, assembled together by God as his saints.

So just as Jesus is life for the entire created universe, he is also life for all whom he has newly created. Now this is where it gets really cool to me.

If you were to say newly created, that's weird. What other religion in the world talks about that?

Well, many of them do. But what does newly created mean in Christianity? It means this. It was always the plan to create within creation a new creation of human beings.

[ 53 : 26 ] You with me? Listen to it again. It has always been God's plan to create within creation a new creation. Always been the plan.

That's Ephesians 1, 3 through 14. For time constraints, I won't read it, but there's your reference. The church was always God's plan. You are the church.

If you look at Colossians 1, verse 12. Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in life.

That's those who are qualified by God to share in an inheritance reserved for saints. That is God's holy ones.

A saint is not saint something from the Catholic church. A saint is the holy ones of God. The chosen people of the Lord. Those who are looking to Jesus for forgiveness of sins are made holy and are called saints.

[ 54 : 39 ] It just simply is a way of saying you have been set apart by God to live for God. Now let me ask you folks.

Think with me. Before I start working toward a close here. Think with me. Was there a time in your life when you were not living for God? Can you remember what that was like?

What did that look like? See? There ought to be a radical difference. A major shift in what it looked like for you when you were not believing in Jesus and living for God.

And when you came to believe in Jesus and live for God. There should be a very big difference in lifestyle at that point. Because now God's come to live in you.

And your entire life is being sustained by God for His glory. To glorify God means that you begin to reflect the character of God in the way that you live and speak and behave.

[ 55 : 45 ] The way you relate to people. You take on more and more of the image of Jesus in your life. So the words that are coming out of your mouth are God-pleasing words.

Those Jesus-honoring words. The way you relate to people. Is a Jesus-pleasing way of relating to people. Does that sound different than before you came to know Christ?

If you're saying to yourself right now. My life doesn't look much different right now than it did before I said that I believed in Jesus. We have a big, big problem.

Now please hear me in my pastor's heart. I am not saying this to make you doubt your salvation. I want you to be confident in your salvation. But beloved, listen.

One of the great tragedies and realities of the Christian church is this. It ain't all Christian. There are people in the churches that are coming and sitting and reading their Bibles and showing up and getting very busy doing spiritual things.

[ 56 : 49 ] And they don't have a relationship with Jesus Christ. They don't. And they're looking to those things to make them right with God. That is a tragedy because that will get you a devil's help.

And a wasted life. You are not saved or born again because of something you did in your past. You are saved and born again because of something God did in the past.

He sent Jesus to be your substitute and pay your price for sin on the cross. If you put your faith and trust in Jesus as your substitute and the only way God has made for you to have forgiveness of sins, then you can be secure in that relationship with God.

Because only people being drawn by God will live that kind of life. All right. One of the reasons I wanted to preach this message to you today is to just pause and remind all of us that we exist for Jesus.

And it is always going to be like that. In verse 13 of Colossians 1, it tells us that we are delivered from that domain of darkness and transferred. To the kingdom of his son in verse 14, those who are delivered and transferred, they're redeemed or they're freed and forgiven.

[ 58 : 12 ] Consider what Paul told the Corinthians. He said this. I'll throw it up here on the screen. Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature.

Old things passed away. New things have come. Second Corinthians 5:17. That is the work of God. John 3:3. In John 3:3, Jesus told Nicodemus, a religious Pharisee, a religious leader of his day.

Listen, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Wow. If you if you just focus on the language there and think about being born again.

How absolutely miraculous and radical is that concept? To be born again. And of course, he's talking about a spiritual rebirth, isn't he?

A rebirth that happens to you spiritually. That's one of the problems with these isms. These isms do not focus on the spiritual aspect and reality of who we are as human beings.

[ 59 : 25 ] If they begin to talk about it, they go off into weirdness and mysticism and all kinds of things like that. Right? Humanism. Humanism.

Humanism. Humanism. The new ageism. So they may get spiritual, but it's it has nothing to do with Christ and him crucified and the life that he offers you.

To come and live inside of you and make you a new creature. A new person. And the appeal is for you to come to this person who is Jesus and know that life in him.

My friends, here it is. The church is us. We are the church. We are the gathered ones assembled to honor him. The church is all those who are like us around the world looking to God as creator and trusting Jesus as savior.

So the church look up here. The church then if we can put that slide up, Michelle, the church is a living organism. The church takes its life from its head.

[ 60 : 34 ] Jesus Christ. It's not a cold building. The church is not an institution or an organization as such. The church is unlike anything on the planet.

Jesus died for the church. Jesus makes intercession for the church. We are the most unique thing on the planet.

We have the best thing going on the planet. Don't you want to see more of Williamsburg come and sit and enjoy God as we worship him on Sunday mornings?

Yes, me too. Don't we want to point more and more people to this life-giving, life-sustaining Lord of all glory? Yes, of course we do.

Do you want your family and your friends and your co-workers to come to know the glories of Jesus Christ? The beauties of his person? Let me tell you why you won't care about that.

[ 61 : 42 ] You won't care about that if you don't care about Jesus and you don't care about holiness. Hear me again. If you don't care about Jesus and you don't care about holiness, you won't care about people coming to know Christ.

And coming to come here. To know more about Christ and be raised up in him. To be shown what the purpose of life really is. It's the church's special privilege to live in relationship to Jesus.

Verse 18 says that he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. Again, he's life. Firstborn from the dead establishes Jesus' superiority over all things.

It's the same thing I've been saying to you over and over throughout this message. And all of this is for us from our God and our Lord.

And the text says this, so that he himself might come to have first place in everything. You say, Jeff, why would God do all of this for us and make us this people and be the head and make us his body and sustain us in all of this?

[ 62 : 55 ] Why is God going to all of this? For us? Why would he do that? Here it is. Look into your text. So that he himself might come to have first place in everything.

That means your life. Here I am again. Back to the questions. What kind of a difference does Jesus make or is he making in your life?

How much different would your life look if you weren't a Christian? If you say not much, we got a problem. We need to talk about that. Verse 19, it was the father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in him.

Jesus Christ is all God's fullness. Creation couldn't make us the body of Christ. Christ and out of all of creation, only we, the body of Christ, the church, only we can show the world who Jesus really is.

That becomes the point of all of this. That he would have first place in everything and we would show the world who he really is. Paul said this.

[ 64 : 10 ] This is the last thing I'll put up here for you to see. Paul said this in Corinthians. I am afraid lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

Second Corinthians 11. Paul doesn't want any of that in Colossae. So he calls the people to love Jesus and to love him supremely.

Jesus is sovereign Lord of our universe. And he alone is sufficient for our life being filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

So that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord to please him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

That's Colossians 1, 9 and 10. I began the message with these questions. Would your life look much different if you weren't a Christian? Would your life be dramatically different if you didn't believe in Jesus?

[ 65 : 14 ] I want to end with this question. Please hear me. Is who he is making the difference in who you are?

Is who he is, this is who he is, making the difference in who you are? Are. Please, beloved.

If you have to answer that question before God as not really, will you come talk to me? Will you find a Christian you trust and talk to them about that reality?

Talk about it. Let's explore it together. Don't do this. Don't go another day in your life. Not being absolutely certain that Jesus Christ is the greatest treasure of your life and that you're living like it.

Don't miss the point of what it means to be on the earth. And to be made by this creator and sustained by him. All right. Thank you for being here this morning.

[ 66 : 26 ] Thank you for allowing us to be part of what you're doing in your life. Thank you for coming and visiting with us. Being part of our worship service. Let's pray together before we sing and.

And are dismissed. Well, father, these are beautiful, treasured and heavy things. We offer them to you because you are God and you are king.

You are the Lord of glory. And we exalt you and we worship you because you are our creator and our sustainer. And we take our life blood from you.

So as we father, as we anticipate Lord willing that we will continue to work through the remainder of Ecclesiastes together. As we look hard at.

Solomon's counsel about what it means to live a life that is God honoring and not wasted. I pray that you would help us to take to heart that at the center of all of our lives is our relationship with Jesus Christ.

[ 67 : 36 ] And that it is him that we are seeking to live for and to please. And to do well for. And it is you that we will stand before. And offer an account.

For how we've lived this life, whether. Treasuring him or not. So change us, Lord, change our hearts and. Keep us from the false worship of worshiping ourselves or worshiping creation.

Or some aspect of it in any given moment of our lives. And if we do. Help us to be sensitive to the sin in our lives so that we can bring it to you. And trust you and confess it.

And find in you forgiveness and restoration. And healing and hope. Help us to live the Christian life, Lord. We are weak people. We're battered by life.

We're battered by our sins. And we have a hard time sometimes. Staying focused on all of this. We know that you know because you're our great high priest who has suffered for us.

[ 68 : 36 ] And like us. And yet without sin. So we look to you. You are our hope and our treasure, Father. We thank you for all that you're doing in our lives by grace through faith.

It's in Jesus' precious name that we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen, beloved. I hope you're encouraged.