

THE SUPREMECY OF CHRIST

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 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. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

The word preeminence means: superior to other things. In this case, Jesus is superior to the people that He dwelled on earth with. This is not JUST because He was a better person than they were, but because in His nature He was fully God. What does this mean?

1. It means that all of creation is **by Him**. The whole created existence that we see, taste and enjoy all come from the creative hand of the Creator.
2. It means that all of creation is **for Him**. The world does not exist to accomplish a set of goals; creation exists to bring glory to the Creator.
3. It means that all of creation is **through Him**. The world does not run on scientific equations and proven facts. The world operates because it is upheld by an active, loving Creator.

This is the God-man who lived in the Middle East 2000 years ago. Not just a great teacher, powerful miracle worker, or gracious man. HE WAS GOD INCARNATE. In the flesh.

1. He lived His life in a world that He had made, but that had been damaged by sin.
2. He lived His life amongst people who were created to worship Him, yet worshipped themselves.
3. He lived His life in a world that He was simultaneously orchestrating.

Jesus was not subject to His creation. He was not a helpless victim. He could have at any moment opened up the door to heaven and let the wrath of God pour out on this sinful broken world. BUT HE DIDN'T. Instead, *though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant (Philippians 2.6-7a).*

THIS IS A NIGHT TO REMIND US WHO WAS ON THAT CROSS.

THE SCANDAL OF THE CROSS

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. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Something had to be done...the beautiful world that God had created was broken. And it was not just fractured or hampered; it was fatally flawed to the core. This brokenness caused a deep separation between God and His creation: *the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth*, waiting eagerly for redemption. The world needed to be fixed.

But no matter how hard people tried, there was no way to fix the problem. Every attempt just dug deeper and deeper. It became evident that the answer was not in some grand rescue plan at the hands of creation; God Himself would have to intervene. God would have to initiate. AND HE DID.

Jesus came to earth with a purpose. *He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2.8)*. His death was not like any death that had ever happened before. His death was a sacrifice. The perfect, spotless, sinless Lamb of God was offered up as a payment for the sins of His people. His death overcame the great separation that had overtaken His creation. It created a way for His people:

1. to be reconciled to Him.
2. to be adopted as sons and daughters of the King of Glory.
3. to be brought themselves from death to life.

THIS IS A NIGHT TO REMIND US OF WHAT WAS DONE ON THAT CROSS.

THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE GOSPEL

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.

The death of Jesus Christ changes everything. This was not just a change of trajectory, or a deviation of course. The cross of Jesus Christ was a bombshell that changed His people forever.

Jesus' people had been alienated from Him. His own people hated Him, mocked Him, acted in hostility toward Him, and eventually they killed Him. There are no good people in this story but Jesus. Even His own disciples. They denied Him, they betrayed Him, they deserted Him. But let's not point fingers; we aren't exempt from this. We may not have been present at the murder, but we are just as responsible for His death. Our sin was what made His death necessary. Jesus Christ went to the cross to:

1. pay the debt for our sin. To take on the penalty for us. But also to...
2. transfer His righteousness to us. To make us new.

This is what makes this Friday GOOD! Jesus did more than just give us a chance at reconciliation...HE HAS DONE IT. As He breathed His last breaths, Jesus cried out two things. The first was:

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Matthew 27.46

Jesus describes the agony of taking the sins of the world upon Himself. He, the son of God, divine, was experiencing a separation from the Father that we will never understand. He was experiencing the results of your sin. He was doing it so that you could be presented Holy and Blameless before Him.

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5.21)

The last thing that Jesus exclaimed was:

IT IS FINISHED! (John 19.30b)

This was true of His life, but much more of His mission. When Jesus proclaims: it is finished; He is declaring an end to the reign of sin. He is declaring that for His people, even death no longer has a sting. Where there had been fear and condemnation, there is now peace and joy. This does not mean that every day of your life will be free from trial, but that there is joy because we know that what Jesus accomplished was a once and forever victory. We can rest in the arms of our savior.

THIS IS A NIGHT TO REMIND US OF THE FINALITY OF THE CROSS.

COMMUNION

The night that He was arrested, Jesus Christ celebrated the Passover meal with His disciples. As he did this, He instituted a new sacrament, a practice of remembering. This sign, The Lord's Supper, or Communion, exists for us to come back, time and time again to the truth of Jesus Death.

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, 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." 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." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11.23-26

This is the meal that Jesus gave us! We come to the table to be revived; to eat and drink of the only thing that will ever satisfy: the body and blood of our savior. This is not a magical time of ingesting something that will save you, it is a time in which those who have already given their lives over to Jesus, to identify with their new life; with their SAVIOR. And there is a warning here:

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. 1 Corinthians 11.27-29

So examine yourself before you partake tonight. Examine your heart. If you find it to be full of sin, then this meal IS for you. Jesus did not come for the self-righteous, He came for the weak. He came for those who understand their absolute dependence on Him. Jesus invites us: *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

Matthew 11.28