



Message Transcript

Seeing the Invisible

Jeff Schwarzentraub

Well, thank you so much for choosing to worship with us today. Before we pray, before the message, I want to make a couple of quick announcements. One is, this Tuesday is the first Tuesday of the month, it's October 1st, and so we will be gathering here to seek the Lord from 6:30 to 8:00. I want to let you know, for somebody that want specific pastoral prayer, I'm here at 6:00. I mean, if you want somebody to pray over you as early as six o'clock, just come on in, there'll be an attitude of prayer here, and I'd be happy to pray for you, so will some of our other pastors and potentially elders. So just come early if you would like. From 5:30 to 6:30, dinner is served. At 6:30, we'll begin, and look forward to seeing all of you there.

Also, special note to the men. Men, we have our men's kickoff next Sunday immediately following this service. The idea when we planned it was that we would show the Broncos playing the Chargers, and we're still going to do that. You may not be excited to see that game, and that's okay, with the way that things are going. Even if you don't want to see the game, I'd encourage you to come from 1:00 to 2:20, just because we're going to be doing some things prior to it. We've got some pigs that were roasting and we got great food. We got a little bit of a program for you. We'll be talking about this series, Man Up, that we're going to be doing throughout the fall. So, even if you don't want to stay for the game, you want to be here if you're a guy in our church for that. So please plan on being here next week immediately following this service.

With that, let's go before the Lord and pray. Lord, we just finished singing There's Nobody Like You God, and that's exactly what our text points out this morning.

And so, Lord, we pray that we would have open hearts and receptive spirits to hear what your Word has to say to us, Lord, that you would have your way with us.

Because, Lord, we believe that every time your Word is open and faithfully proclaimed, Lord, that you speak directly to us. So our prayer now as a body is, speak Lord for we are ready to hear. And now all of God's people that are ready to believe what God's Word says about Himself, what His Word says about you, and that you're willing by faith put into practice the very things that Jesus shows you today agreed with me, agreed with me by very loudly saying the word amen.

Amen.

Amen. There's a story from a long time ago, it's kind of a mini parable, that talks about this village of people that had several blind men in this village. An elephant was brought into the village, and they never even knew what an elephant was. And so, they were making assessments to discern what this animal was. And so, one of the blind men went and touched the tusk of the elephant and said, "It's kind of like a snake, that's what an elephant's like." Another one grabbed a hold of one of its legs and said, "No, no, this animal is like a tree trunk." One while he was feeling the side of the elephant said, "No, no, no, it's nothing like any of that, it's like a wall." While one was feeling the tail and saying, "No, no, no, an elephant's kind of like a rope." And yet another one was feeling the tusk and said, "No, it's sharp like a spear, that's what an elephant's like."

The whole parable goes back to discerning that until you get the whole picture,

you don't understand what you're talking about. When it comes to our spiritual life, we don't get a full picture of who Jesus Christ is. We can't understand what we're saying when we say the word Jesus Christ. And this is such an important thing to discuss because when it comes to the person and work of Jesus, if we're going to say, "Jesus Christ saves." or "Jesus Christ is Lord," we better understand who we're talking about when we talk about Jesus, because depending upon where you go, it seems that everybody has their own ideas about who Jesus Christ is. That maybe He's a prophet. Maybe He's a teacher. Maybe He's a good man. Maybe He's a brother to the devil. Maybe He's really the archangel, Michael, that appeared. I mean, how can we really know?

If you ever wondered who Jesus Christ is, God has a word for you today. And when you get this picture of who Jesus is, it's going to cause you to glory in Him and to worship Him. I mean, when you get to really see something that you didn't understand before and you get to see it in all of its glory, your mouth drops. You're like, "Wow." I mean, being from the Midwest, I'd heard about the mountains, I'd seen pictures of the mountains, but it was very different than coming to the mountains and being on top of a mountain and seeing God's majestic landscape and saying, "Wow." Maybe you remember what it was like to see a picture of the ocean and what it looked like, but it's very different than being on an ocean line cruise or being out in the middle of an ocean and seeing how majestic it is and saying, "Wow."

I think there's a big difference between hearing about Jesus as a man or a teacher or a prophet and getting to see Him in all of His glory and dropping our jaw at

an eternal level, saying, "Wow.". And as Paul's writing to this church that he's never visited before in Colossi, he opens up in Colossians 1:15-20 and begins to give a picture of who Jesus Christ is. I encourage you today, open your Bible up to Colossians 1:15. If you don't have a copy of the scriptures, there's one under every other seat. Please take it, open it up, look at it because what you're going to see out of the entirety of God's Word, this section of scripture may be the most significant portion of who Jesus Christ is and who God wants us to understand Him as being.

What I'll do is I will read through these verses and then we'll talk about the worship and glory of Jesus Christ and who He is. Notice what he says. "He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation: for by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on the 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, 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."

Hearing those few verses, we hear Paul write this young church and talk about the significance of understanding who the person of Jesus Christ is. Because based upon your understanding of who Jesus Christ is, will change your entire eternity. And here's what he tells us. You'll see in your bulletin today, we talk about the worship of

Jesus Christ as every one of the points. You can put the glory of Jesus Christ as every one of the points because the reality is, when you see the glory of Jesus Christ and understand who He is, it will cause you to want to worship Him.

The first point that Paul is making, inspired by the Spirit of God, is that the worship or the glory of Jesus Christ is that Jesus Christ is God. The worship of Jesus Christ as God. Make no mistake about it, when Paul talks about Jesus Christ, He's talking about the deity of Jesus Christ. He's talking about the God-man Jesus Christ, that while He had flesh He's still God. Notice what the text says. He is the image of the invisible God. Image is where we get our English word icon. I mean, to see Jesus Christ, He is the visible representative or the personal manifestation of God. Okay?

The Bible reveals God as Trinity; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Here's what you need to know, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one. They are one in essence, okay? The Father is Spirit. The Holy Spirit by name is obviously Spirit. The only way you can see the invisible God is the person of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Now, when we talk about the Trinity, here's what we're talking about: that the Father is not the Son or the Spirit, and the Son is not the Father or the Spirit, and the Spirit is not the Father or the Son. They're all distinct persons. They're all unique. And yet, those three make up the one God-head. They're not three different Gods. We don't worship three different Gods. We worship God, God in three persons, the blessed Trinity.

Now, if you were to ask me, "Explain that to me. How does that work?" Here's what I would say, here's my explanation: "Glory."

Yes.

"Glory to God." That's what separates Him from any other God, the three in one. What we have in the person of Jesus, what the Spirit wants to let us know, is that to see Jesus is to have a visible representation or a personal manifestation of who God is. So, when you read through your New Testament and you see the person of Jesus and you ask questions like this, "What would God be like around people who are hurting?" and you see how Jesus answered, you're seeing exactly how God feels.

Amen.

When you wonder, "How does God feel about poor people? And how does God feel about rich people?" however you see Jesus respond is who God is. Would Jesus have mercy on this? Would Jesus have judgment on that? However, Jesus responds is who God is. To see Jesus is to see God, okay? That's what he's saying. He's the personal manifestation, the visible representative. Now, this isn't the only part in scripture where you see that. I'm going to have you write down a few verses, read them this week, study them this week, it's all over. The Bible doesn't want us to miss that Jesus Christ is God.

In John 1:1 it says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was?

God.

God. He was with God in the beginning. "And this Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us," John 1:14. So what you see in the person of Jesus is that He's always been God. There's never a time that Jesus Christ didn't exist. 2000 years ago, He put on flesh and He made His dwelling among us. But He didn't become a God, He wasn't created at that time, He'd always been God, which is why it was so important that He was born of a virgin. Joseph and Mary did not create Jesus, right? Jesus preexisted both of them. He created Joseph and Mary. He created His mom and dad. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin, Mary. That's who He is, because He's God.

And the scripture goes to great length to talk about how Mary and Joseph didn't even come together as a couple intimately until after Jesus Christ was born. Right? Because He is not created, okay? Notice what it says in John 1:18, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who was in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." In other words, when you see Jesus, you're seeing God. Hebrews 1 points this out as well. Hebrews 1:3 says this of Jesus, "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." To see Jesus, you're seeing the exact representation of God. He is God.

Now, it's really interesting because when Jesus rose from the dead, one of the stories that we see in our Bible in Luke 24 is Jesus on the road to Emmaus. He is taking a journey of about seven to 10 miles. He's walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, and He's with two of His disciples. And while He's going, the text tells us in Luke 24, that beginning with Moses, He began to explain the entire Old Testament and how

everything testified to Him. Now, if God, by His Holy Spirit, would've put anything else in the Bible, that's one of the places I wish He would've added. I wish He would've told us what that sermon was like. Can you imagine where Jesus teaches how the entire Old Testament is testifying about Him? I mean, He would've started at Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." He's like, "That was me, I did it all." Right? "I created everyone. I created everything."

And then when we get to Exodus and He's like, "You know how God is a deliverer, that was me. I am. I'm the one that delivered Israel from the hands of the Egyptians." And He would walk through the entire Old Testament, through the prophets, talking all the time like, "When the flood came, I sent the water. Hey, at Mount Carmel, I sent the fire." I mean, everything in the Old Testament was testifying about Him, which is why Jesus got so hacked off among religious people of His day. You remember when in John 5:39-40 talking to the religious leaders where He said, "You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life. Yet it is these that testify about me and you are unwilling to come to me so that you may have life."? What was He saying? He's like, "Hey, religious people, you're reading the scriptures because you think if you read the scriptures long enough you're going to learn how to have eternal life. But these very scriptures all testify about me. I wrote them. They're about me. They're for me. They're through me. I am the living embodiment of the scripture. And yet, you refuse to come to me to have life."

Which tells me this: you can read your Bible and get a PhD in it and still not know

Jesus.

Amen.

Right? I mean, He's the giver of life. I mean, He's the God in flesh. Right? I mean, this is why it is astounding that on the night that Jesus was betrayed and He's with His disciples and He says in John 14, "Hey, I'm going to prepare a place for you. And if it were not so, I wouldn't have told you. But I'm going to prepare a place for you and I'll come back and take you to the place that I am." And one of the disciples says, "Well, Lord, just show us the way to go." And He's like, "You already know the way. I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me." And then Philip pipes up and says, "Well, here's an idea, since we've never seen the invisible God, Lord, just show us the Father, and that will be enough."

Amen.

And what does Jesus answer Philip in John 14:9? Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you and yet you have not come to know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father.'?"

Praise God.

What was He saying? "What do you mean, 'Show us the Father.'? I've been with you three years. If you've seen me, you've seen my dad. We're one. We're the same. You've seen me, you've seen my dad." To see Jesus is to see God.

Amen.

He's more than just a teacher. He's more than just a prophet. He's more than just

a good guy. He's God. Am I being clear enough?

Amen.

I mean, you're getting point number one? He's God. It's who He is. I mean, that's the whole point that the scriptures are trying to make. I mean, some people you'll talk to be like, "He never claimed to be God. He never claimed to be God." Let me show you a couple scriptures where He did. In John 10:30, He said, "I and the Father are one. I and the Father are one. We're one in the same." It says this, "The Jews picked up stones again to stone them, and Jesus answered them, 'I've shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?' And here's the response: 'The Jews answered Him, 'For a good work we do not stone you, but for blasphemy and because you, being a man, make yourself out to be God.'"

Make no mistake about it, Jesus was killed because He was God, He claimed to be God. In Mark 14:62, when He's standing before the high priest, He's like, "Are you the Christ? Are you the Christ? Are you the Christ?" He didn't say no. If He would've said no, He would've never been crucified. He would've said, "No, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to cause all this ruckus." He says this: "I am, and you will see this Son of Man coming on the clouds in glory and power. I'm God." That's why He was killed. Okay?

To believe that Jesus is anything other than God is to have an insufficient belief on who Jesus Christ is.

Amen.

There's a lot of people that believe in Jesus. A lot of people believe Jesus came

to the earth. A lot of people believe Jesus was a historical figure, good teacher, moral man. But you know what? There's some other people who might say, "That guy was a good teacher. He was a moral man. He was a nice guy. He had a lot of good things to say." That's not what we're claiming about Him. Here's what we're claiming: when you see Jesus, you're seeing God in flesh, and all the scripture testifies about Him. It's who He is. He's God.

Now, let's look at the back half of this verse because here's where many cults will tell you that He's not God. As a matter of fact, if Jehovah Witnesses or Mormons come to your house, which they used to come to mine until I got blacklisted, this is where they'll take you. They will take you to the back half of Colossians 1:15, and here's what they'll say, "How can Jesus be God?" Because notice what it says, "He's the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." He's firstborn. So He can't be God because He was born. "He can't be God because He was born," that's what they'll tell you. They'll falsely tell you that. Don't even freak out. Just know this, anytime somebody tries to tell you a doctrine other than what the Bible teaches, just keep reading your Bible. I mean, usually right in the same context they're making up their error, you can usually refute it, which certainly you can in this context.

But firstborn here, you don't even have to know Greek, but if you do, it means prototokos. Firstborn, it can mean more than just chronologically born. It can also have this meaning: in Exodus 4:22 and following, God refers to Israel as His firstborn. Certainly, Israel wasn't born, but what's He talking about? He's talking about the significance that they play. He's talking about the inheritance that they're going to get.

And if you study the Old Testament, you see how firstborn had a special birthright. Here's what the scriptures are testifying when it says He's the firstborn over all creation, they're saying He's in rank, He's supreme, he has the inheritance over all creation, that all things are for Him. He is the prototokos of all creation. It's who He is. He is the supreme ruler God. That's who Jesus Christ is.

He has a special purpose. He's favored from the Father. This is why when Jesus came up out of the waters of baptism, the Father spoke, said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Because why? Because He's the prototokos, the firstborn of all creation. Here's how we know that that's true, because everything else in this text is going to point out that that's the significance of this word. Here's how we know because in Philippians 2:9-11, it says that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. In the very next verse, you're going to see how He created everything. So how could Jesus create everything if He Himself was created? It means He didn't even create Himself. If Jesus Himself was created, so He couldn't create everything. It means this: He's first, He's first place. He's first in rank. He's supreme. There is no other. There's no other gods. He's the way, the truth, and the life. It means He's God and there's no other way to the Father except through Him. That's exactly what the scriptures are crying out.

Paul is writing to this young church saying, "Don't get messed up and think that Jesus is just one little way and then you can add your other little gods to it or that you

can just believe He's a good teacher. Jesus is Lord. He's sufficient. He's supreme. He's all in all. Give your entirety to the Lord Jesus Christ. That's who He is." Right? And that's what he's talking about. Jesus Christ is to be celebrated and worshiped as God. It means this: you can go to church your whole life and not worship Jesus as God. You can read your Bible and not worship Jesus as God. You can pray and not worship Jesus as God. People do it all over the world. You say, "Well, Pastor Jeff, why are you talking to us like this in church?" Because there's some of you that come to our church that don't believe that Jesus Christ is God. There's some of you that come here and tell you, "He was good teacher. He's moral. I kind of like the music. I like the vibe. I like what I'm feeling."

I'm telling you, He's God, and He's the only God, and He's the only way to have life in the Father. And to miss that means you get to spend eternity without God. He's God. Right? That's why I'm telling you this. That's why Paul was so passionate about this, the glory and the worship of Jesus Christ as God.

Secondly is this, the worship and glory of Jesus Christ as creator and sustainer. Notice this verse, it says, "By Him, all things were created." How many things were created by Jesus?

All.

Say it really loud with me. How many things were created by Jesus?

All.

Okay, so He created all. So what didn't He create that's created? I mean, the

scripture's going to go on and tell us, "For all things were created by Him, both in the heavens and on the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things," there you see it again, "have been created through Him and for Him." You can't get any clearer than this. Everything that's been created, in the heavens or on the earth, everything that's been created, the things that are visible and invisible, whether we're talking thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, I mean the things that we don't even see, the ranks of angels and demons that we don't know, they were all created through Him and for Him. He created it all. That puts Him in a platform all by Himself. That puts Him in a platform all by Himself.

Now, why do we have such a hard time with this? The Bible screams that Jesus is the creator of all things. Now, just think about this, if you're creating all things, it means you have to be the designer of all things, the architect of all things. How long does it take just to design? Like if you're going to build a house, how long would it take just to design the house? Or if you're having some remodeling done on your house, how long would it take to design the remodel you need to get done in your house? And then how long would it take to take that model and then make it happen? And then, how many times do you create the design and have somebody come build it, and then once they get it done, you're like, "Oh, I wish I would've put the outlet over here. Why did we do it that way?"?

Here's what it says in the Bible, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." We see the same thing here, He created everything in the heavens and the earth. And then we read that He did that in six days, six literal days, and He rested on

the seven day. That's what He did. And when He finished it all, in Genesis, 1:31, He saw all that He created and said, "Wow, that's very good." He didn't say, "I need to make some changes." He didn't say, "Oops." He created it all. That puts Him in a class by Himself. Well, who was the one doing the creation? Here's what the scripture screams, it was Jesus Christ, First Sermon series. He spoke it into existence and, bam, there it was.

I mean, how powerful is this God? I mean, we're talking about the God that created thing. I mean, I think about some of you guys that are getting married, I mean, how long does it take to plan a wedding these days? My goodness, right? I mean, some of you take a year because you're spending four weeks on, I don't know, "Do we let butterflies go? Are we're going to do bubbles at the end? Rice?" I mean, I don't know. And you'll spend a year creating this wedding plan, and at the end of the year, I've officiated many things, they never go perfect. You can't control the weather. You can't control the photographer. You can't control family members. I mean, there's always something with your best plan. Jesus Christ created it, finished it, and said, "It's awesome. I did it all." All things were created by Him. All things.

Now, where do you see this? I told you, Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." You say, "Well, Pastor Jeff, that's just an allegory." It's not, it's the Word of God. If you don't believe me, you can go to the next book in your Bible, in Exodus 20:11. It says this, "For in six days, the Lord made... " What? "The heavens and the earth." Whatever the heavens and the earth are in Genesis 1:1 is the same thing that happens around here because you have the same

author. And how long did it take Him? Six days. Well, how do you know what day is a day? Because He said, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." How long is that day? It's a day, because that's what a day is. We'll talk about this in the coming weeks because we need to believe God's Word.

It says that He created it in six days the heavens in the earth and the sea and all that is in them and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. So, how did God create? He created the entire universe, everything you see and don't see, things in heaven and on the earth. And how did He do it? In six days and rested on the seventh. It's what He did. And that's why Paul's saying, "It's so important that you get this because Jesus is the creator." That's why when they asked Jesus about marriage, where does He go back? To the creation story. What was it? "From the beginning, it wasn't this way." "Well, when's the beginning? We don't know in the beginning." "Well, when Jesus said, 'Let there be,' bam, there it was." He created it all. Even says this about you. Psalm 1:39 says He created you. Your mom and dad did not create you. Jesus Christ created you in your mother's womb and you are fearfully and wonderfully made. That's what the Bible teaches.

He's the one who puts you together. You may have been a surprise to your parents, but you were no accident to God. He formed you. He fashioned you. He puts you together. And guess what? Because He's the creator of all things, He has authority of all things. That's why when we get to the Psalms, when we start reading the Psalmist talk about creation, they're screaming out saying, "God is so worthy of our

praise." I mean, here's just a couple of examples. Psalm 19:1-2, "The heavens are telling the glory of God, and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words. Their voice is not heard."

What is he saying? He says creation is so glorious there's not even words for it. I mean, it screams that there's a God behind all this stuff. Or how about Psalm 24:1-2, "The earth is the Lord's, and all that it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it. For He founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers."? You might ask, "Well, then how did God make all that?" Psalm 33 tells us. "By the Word of the Lord, the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth, all their hosts. He gathers the water of the sea together as a heap. He lays up the deep into storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord. Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him." Why? "For He spoke, and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast."

God created everything. Everything you see, He created. Everything you don't see, He created. Everything is under His feet, which means He has dominion and authority over all things. Which is why before He gives the great commission, what does He say? "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me." "Well, who are you to say that?" "Here's who I am. I'm the creator and sustainer of all things. I can say whatever I want. I'm God and flesh. I've risen from the dead. I'm here to validate the fact that I'm God. It's who I am." It's why when He comes back in Revelation 19, on a white horse, how's He coming back? In all authority to judge the nations. Why?

Because He's the creator of all things. There's nothing you see that God didn't create, right? That's who He is. And He's worthy of all of our worship, honor, and praise.

I mean, just think about this. I'm not an anatomy expert. I know enough about different parts of my body to know how they function, but I've never trained my body how to do certain things. I've never trained my kidneys how to function correctly. Right? I've never trained in my heart how to beat properly. I've never trained my lungs how to breathe properly. I've never trained myself to make sure that I blink once every six seconds so that I have enough moisture in my eye so that I can continue to see. I've never trained my retina how to take pictures. I've never trained any of it. We're just talking about the human body, I mean, just that. Go down to the cells, how do all these things work? Well, there's protons, electrons, neutrons, all this kind of stuff. I mean, we all study that in science, but who created all that? Here's the answer: Jesus did.

Amen.

Jesus created it all. He put it all together, and He's worthy of all glory and all honor and our praise, for all things were created by Him, through Him, and don't miss this one, for Him. Why would God go to lengths to create all of this? So that He would get more glory, honor, and praise. He didn't create us because He was needy and He needed more glory, honor, and praise. I mean, He was self-exalting. You say, "Well, that sounds kind of arrogant. I mean, why would Jesus exalt himself?" Because He's so awesome, why wouldn't He exalt Himself? He's not even arrogant when He exalts Himself because there's nothing wrong with Him. He's perfect in every way.

Keep it exalting yourself, and let us join you in yourself self-exaltation because you're so awesome and worthy of it. That's who He is. And humans were created to bring even more worship and glory and honor to Him. That's our purpose, that you're most satisfied when you're most centered on the worship and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, because He created you for that purpose. And if you don't worship Him, you will find something else that you give your allegiance to worship. If you don't worship Jesus, you'll find it in a bottle. You'll find it in a pill. You'll find it in a relationship. You'll find it in money. You'll find it in something else until you worship Jesus fully. And in Him, and Him alone, He's sufficient and He's supreme and He's satisfying.

Amen.

Give Him your best, He created you for that. That's who He is.

But not only is He creator, notice what it says, He's sustainer. Notice the next verse, verse 17, "He is before all things, and in Him, all things hold together." Notice what it says. It doesn't say He was before all things. What does it say? He is before all things. Remember when Jesus was walking around on the earth, probably just a little over 30 years old at the time, and people were giving Him a hard time because He was putting himself above Abraham, who was the Jewish father? He says, "How can you say you're greater than Abraham?" And remember Jesus' response? "Before Abraham was, I am. I created Abraham, created you. I hold the stars in place. I do it all. That's who I am. I'm God. And I'm the creator of all things." And notice what else He is, He's a sustainer, "In whom all things hold together."

Now, I did some reading this week. I am not a molecular biologist, nor a nuclear physicist, and that won't come as a surprise to any of you, but I started reading some things to see what do people say. And it's really interesting because when you get down to the cellular level, for those of you that know this better than I, I mean, nuclear energy comes from when the nucleus of the cell gets broken, when you're splitting atoms, when you're doing all that stuff. That's the most powerful energy in the world that we know of. Here's the question: what holds all that together? I'm trying to read different scientists to see what they say. One guy that proposed the big bang, here's what he said, he said, "Well, it's kind of Mother Nature's secret. We really don't know what holds all that together." So I wanted having some information this morning. It ain't Mother Nature's secret, it's the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yeah.

And here's the truth, if Jesus stopped being the sustainer, you would cease to exist. You'd blow apart in a million different ways. I mean, what is it that keeps all your cells together? How come your blood knows where to go? How come your fingernails grow this direction and not this direction? Why does your heart beat the way it does? Why? Because Jesus is not only the creator, He's sustaining all of it.

Amen.

You say, "Well, what's the big deal? What's the application?" Oh man, the application's myriad. I mean, think about this, what did Jesus create from? Nothing. I mean, we're talking about worshiping, you're talking about the God who can take

nothing and make it something. Why is that so important? Because guess what you and I are able to bring Jesus. Nothing. And guess what He can do with it. He can turn it into something that is so worshipful and honoring to Him.

"Yeah, yeah. Yeah, but you don't understand, Pastor Jeff. I mean, I'm in this job now, and I don't have the right connections." or "I'm trying to make this thing happen, and it's not working." God created everything out of nothing, He can handle whatever you're going through in your situation, and He can make good out of what seems hopeless. That's who our God is. Well, what does it mean that He's a sustainer. It means He's able to hold all things together and you don't need to worry. I mean, this week, I read the news too much. I got discouraged a little bit too much, until I started reading this verse. I'm like, "No, God, you're holding this whole thing together. When you decide that you've had enough, it's over. You're the one that holds all this together."

What does that mean for you? "Well, Pastor Jeff, my marriage is really struggling right now. I just don't know if I can hold it together." You may not be able to, but the Lord Jesus Christ can.

[inaudible 00:31:48].

"God, I'm going through this time in my life. It is exceptionally painful. I don't know that I can get through this." I would say you may not be able to get through it, but with the help of the Lord, He can sustain you through it. I mean, do you see the myriad of applications here? I mean, the application is God can create wonder and beauty out of

nothing, and He can sustain it and hold it all together. It's who our God is. It's who we're serving. He's the God of the universe. He's the creator and sustainer of all. It means take heart. I mean, there's nothing you can ask Him to do that's too hard for Him. He's all-powerful. He's all-knowing. He created it all. None of you are going to stump God with one of your questions. "God, I just don't know how we're going to handle that." You may not, I mean, He won't even sweat. He won't have to think about it. I mean, His problem-solving's instantaneous. He just says, "Come to me. I know what you need before you even ask." That's the God we serve.

Then He goes on to talk about this, the worship and glory of Jesus Christ as head of the church. Not only is He God and creator and sustainer and before all things, eternal, what is He? He is also the head of the body, the church, and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, there's that word we'll talk about again, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. What does it mean He's the head of the body? It means He's in charge of all of it. Well, what's the body. The body of Christ is the number one picture in the New Testament for the church. It means when you were saved you were placed into the family of God, and each one was given a gift. And you're unique to the body of Christ and that you were saved not only so you could go to heaven, you were saved so that you could worship God on this side of heaven and steward the best that you have for God's glory. Why? Because He's the head of the church.

And you say, "Well, Pastor Jeff, what's the big deal? I mean, I love Jesus, I believe He's God and creator and sustainer, what's the big deal about this whole

church thing?" Here's how big of a deal it was. Jesus told Peter that upon the testimony of Him being Lord, He would build His church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it. The local church is the visible representation of Christ's kingdom on Planet Earth. It is the most important institution anywhere. And to the extent that God's people are plugged into the local church, serving the local church with their highest and best, to that extent, God's glory gets extended in greater measures and greater capacities. Even beyond that, just let's talk about Jesus for a second, how much did He love the church? He loved the church so much He spilled His own blood for it. He gave His own life for it. He died for the church. He's coming back for His church. And guess what? If you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior as God, when He sees you, He will accept you, say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." He will present you faultless before His Father. But how are you going to be rewarded? What do rewards look like?

For how well you served His church. How well did you take what He put into your life and serve your church? The church is the vehicle and the only vehicle that God promises to bless to advance His kingdom on Planet Earth. There is no other vehicle. "Pastor Jeff, I'm a businessman. I know God's going to bring revival to the business world. Hey, can't God use you in the business world to share the gospel?" And God may choose to save a bunch of people through the business world, but His vehicle will always be and has always been the church of Jesus Christ to make that known. See, the problem is is when we have people that say they love Jesus but don't love who He died for, and don't love the institution of His church. Because one of the things He's

going to ask you is, "Hey, how well did you serve my vehicle, the church? I mean, I died for you. I saved you. I put you into that family. I gave you all sorts of gifts. How did you do with that?" That's where rewards come from, how well you serve Him.

He's the head of the church. There is no other. Notice what it goes on to say. It says, "He's the head of the body, the church, and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead." There's that word again, firstborn from the dead. This is another reason why we know prototokos is not chronological, because Jesus wasn't the first person to rise from the dead. Lazarus had the unfortunate experience of dying twice. Remember him? I mean, he was dead and they went and raised him, and he had to die all over again. I mean, Jesus was not the first person to be raised. Here's what Jesus was, He was the prototokos of the dead. He was the supreme riser from the dead. When Jesus Christ rose from the dead, He rose as eternal Son of God, never to ever die again. He's as alive as He's ever been. And by believing in His name, He said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Even though you die, if you believe in me, yet shall you live." Do you believe this? That's why He's the firstborn from the dead.

Amen.

Right. There may be stories of other people being raised from the dead, but Jesus Christ, and Him alone, raised Himself from the dead and never to die again.

Amen.

Amen.

That's why He is the head of the church, which means this, when you go to

church, when you assemble as church, because Jesus Christ is the head of the church, and it goes on to say in that verse, here's what it says, "So that He Himself will come to have first place in everything." It means there should be no doubt when you assemble who you're there to assemble for. I mean, there should be no doubt why you're gathering. I'm not gathering because of the pastor, I'm not gathering because of the worship team, I'm not gathering because of the good, small groups. I'm not gathering because of the good children's ministry. Why are you gathering? Because Jesus Christ is central to every reason that we gather. He is first place in all things. Which means God's going to raise up people like apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastors and teachers. He's going to gift you with unique gifts to serve His body so that you can serve Him, but not so what? So not that you take away any worship from Him.

Why do we need to talk about this? Because I'm afraid that today in our churches, there's too many people that worship pastors and worship leaders and gifted counselors and gifted people. They're not put on the planet to worship. To the extent that you've been blessed by a pastor or blessed by a worship leader or blessed by somebody that's discipling you, all you're seeing is some of God's refracted glory coming in and through them. That's all you're seeing. But don't worship them, worship the God that put that through them. He's the head of the church. He's coming to have first place in everything.

Now, think about this, did you ever grow up with person that was first place in everything? One of your friends? I mean, it was a person when you took a test in

school and they complained like, "Ah, I totally messed that one up," and then they got it back and like, "Oh 99." Do you remember that person? Or in sports, they were better than you no matter what they did on their worst day, or academically they were better than you. I mean, here's what Jesus is saying, "I'm first place in all things."

Amen.

In the kingdom, it's not like millennials, there's no participation awards, that there's the first place and then you get second, third, fourth, fifth. There's Jesus, and then we're here to serve Him. That's it. There's one ribbon given, the king of kings and the Lord of Lords, and everybody else will bow before Him in worship and say, "Yeah, you're that. I'm not. That's what church is, it's using all of our gifts and bleeding all of our gifts and pouring out all of our gifts so that Jesus Christ gets more central allegiance in our life than ever before.

Now, why is this so important? Because the Bible says Christ died once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. That's why Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount said, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you." Why is Paul telling this young church that Jesus Christ is so important? Here's why: because how you believe about Jesus will determine how you spend your eternity. I mean, Jesus is not only the head of the church and first place in all things and God and the creator and the sustainer and eternal, but notice this fourth element for why we should glory and worship the Lord Jesus Christ, we should worship Jesus Christ and glory in Him as Lord and Savior. This is why.

I mean, all these things point to the fact that Jesus came for a reason, and it says in verse 19, "For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him." This is not even the only place you see that in the book. In Colossians 2:9, it says, "For in Him, all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form." In other words, when you see Jesus, you see God. And He's the Lord overall. You say, "How do you know?" In verse 20, "And through Him," Jesus, "to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross." How did Jesus appease the wrath of God? If God is pouring out His wrath on mankind, what did Jesus Christ do? He died on a cross. It's His blood on His cross that makes all the difference.

There were a lot of people that died on a cross in the first century. Dying on a cross didn't do it. Jesus Christ shed blood on the cross that He was on. Did it. There is one way to God, and it's through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

There is no other way. You say, "Well, Pastor Jeff, that kind of eliminates a lot of people." It eliminates everyone who doesn't trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Amen.

But the offer is to the world.

That's right.

The world. "Well, Pastor Jeff, you got to realize Muslims believe that Jesus was a good man and a teacher and a prophet but that Muhammad was the real one. So won't they get in though because Jesus will say, 'I created Muhammad. He worships

me."?"

There you go.

"Or He'll be cast out of my presence." Right? Or what about the Jehovah Witnesses that come to your door? They'll come and they'll tell you stuff that's kind of crazy like this, that Jesus is really the archangel Michael and He never really rose from the dead, He's just a spiritual being."?

No, He's not. He's the king of kings and the Lord of Lords. He's the eternal Son of God that was born of the Virgin Mary. Or the Mormons will tell you that He's the devil's brother. Some people out there will call Him the Big man upstairs. Other people will call Him the enlightened one. It's not enough. And why is this so important? Because at some point in time, you're going to give an account for what you believe about Jesus Christ as the Lord of your life. I mean, this week I officiated a funeral, and I'm doing one, I think, this week as well. Every time I go to a funeral and see people's tears and their hurt because of someone that the Lord created whose life has been taken, it doesn't matter when it happens, it's tragic. And in both cases that I'm officiating, my understanding is that both people understood Jesus Christ as Lord, which gives great hope and comfort.

But you only get that on this side of heaven to answer, what are you going to do with Jesus Christ? Because when He comes or when you die, it's just too late. And here's what the message of the Bible is, that He's the Lord and Savior, that He came to make all things right in the world, that God the Father sent His Son, and that He

came into the world as the fully God-man, that when we see Him, we see Jesus. And why did He come? Because when He died on the cross, He was appeasing the wrath that His Father had for the world. He took it all. But He was also doing it because He wanted to demonstrate His love for us.

And sometimes when we think of John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life," we think about it with our earthly eyes. Like, "Yeah, Jesus came to earth." Have you ever thought what that would be like? You're God, and you're leaving all glory to put on flesh for all eternity, and you're coming to this sin-stained place? I mean, it would be easier for you to go find latrine and dive into it headfirst with all that you are than for Jesus to leave heaven and come to earth. Why would He go through all that? Because He's God. He was restoring glory to His Father, and He was showing us His love. See, Jesus came because of His great love that He had for you.

Now, some of you don't know me very well, know that I'm more of an avid indoor enthusiast than I'm an outdoor enthusiast. But God, by His grace, gave me a son that's an avid outdoor enthusiast. So we're part of this group now, and this week they had their first camping trip. Now, I've been camping before, but camping for me is like a friend that has an RV and cooks all the food. This was like camping. So, I'm calling his friend's dads and they're like, "Oh, don't worry about it, we got a tent. Don't worry about it, we got sleeping bags. Don't worry about it, we'll just bring stuff for you." I'm like, "Cool." So I'm driving with my son to this camping trip thinking, "I can't think of anything I'd rather do less right now. But I want to be with you."

And so, we go. Now, you may not know this, but Friday night, it rained and was 47 degrees, which makes a difference, apparently, when you camp. I was unprepared. If you wear a sweatshirt, it absorbs the water and makes you even colder, in case you want to know. That's free advice. Because two words came to mind, dry and warm, and I was neither one. At about 10 o'clock, we roll into this tent and the guy's like, "Yeah, you sleep on this side, I'll sleep on that side." Which sounded fine until I woke up at about 5:00 in the morning realizing my side of the tent had curled up, and all the water went rolling on top of me. I woke up soaked. I felt like a little kid. I was like, "Did I wet the bed?" No, I'm just drenched. And I was cold and I was freezing.

But my son woke the next day from his tent, he was giggling, smiling, cooking food. He's like, "Dad, it's the best time ever." So we're going again in three weeks. But why would I endure all those conditions and go through all that that I know I hate? Because I love my son. I'd do anything for him. Why would Jesus go through all that he went through? Why would Jesus come and die on a cross knowing that many people would never ever trust Him as their personal Lord and Savior? Why? Because He loved you that much that He wanted you to have the choice.

Amen.

He cares about you that much. And what Paul was writing to the Colossians is what I'm telling you today, that He's God, and He's the creator, and He's the sustainer. And when you see Him, you see God in flesh. And He's the head of His church, and He has first place in all things, but He's also Lord and Savior. Here's the question: is He

Lord of your life? Has there ever been a moment in time where you've taken your sin and said, "Jesus, you can have all that because I'm going to give you my sin and I'm going to take all of your life. I'm taking that. That's what I want."? Right? Or perhaps today you would say, "Yeah, I've confessed Jesus as my personal Lord and Savior. There's no doubt that I know Him. There's no doubt in my mind that He's worthy of all my worship and praised, but, Pastor Jeff, as you were talking about creation today, man, that just boggles my mind that He created it all. It just satisfies my faith to know He sustains it all. I mean, man, I was just reminded He's head of the church. And it's not about whether I like this church or that church or whatever church, but I need to be part of a church where I'm giving God my best."

What is the Lord been putting on your heart? Because I think it demands our response from Him. And so, as we pray here in a moment, I'm just going to give you the opportunity to respond however the Lord would have you respond. Maybe today, right here in this moment, that you would call upon the name of the Lord and make Jesus Christ the Lord of your life and respond to Him as God. Maybe this morning, you would say, "Lord, I believed certain things about the Bible, but when it came to creation, I never really believed you created all that. Lord, I want to be true to your Word in all things." Maybe it's that you need to believe He's sustainer, or maybe there's things God's prompted your heart for gifts He's given you to serve His church, whatever it is, let's just respond to the Lord before we sing today. Will you pray with me?

Lord Jesus, we give you all the glory, honor, and praise for who you are. We

come to you as the king of kings and the Lord of Lords who humbled yourself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. If you're here today and say, "I don't know if I'm assured that I have a relationship with God," here's how you can pray. Jesus, today I believe that you are the God of the universe. I believe you died on the cross from my sins and rose from the dead. Right now, I repent of my sin. I give that to you in exchange for your life. I confess that you are my personal Lord and Savior. For all those that pray that, I pray the Holy Spirit, as He comes into your life right now, would indwell you for all eternity.

But Lord, for some of us, we believe that. We need to hear this morning that you're the God of all creation, that things that we see and don't see you're in charge of, and that you hold it all together, and that you're eternal. That you're never-changing, that you're first place in all things, and that you're head of the church, and that you're worthy of our worship. Lord, whatever you stirred in our hearts this morning, would you just have your way with us? Would you just glorify yourself in and through us? And Lord, just have your way. We give you all the glory, all the honor, and all the praise. In Jesus' name. Amen and amen. Would you stand as we sing?