



Series: Stand Alone Sermon

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Speaker: Brett Boudlin

Text: Colossians 1:15-23

Title: This is Jesus

INTRO

How's everyone doing?

Well good morning/good afternoon, my name is Brett and I'm Student's Director here at Mercy. I am really excited to be talking with you today. This week we're going to be taking a week off from the Song of Solomon series, so you can take a sigh of relief... I'm not going to be talking about spicy picnics or clusters or Hebrew kissing...Praise God. Thankfully, our lead team made the wise decision of not letting the students guy get up on stage to try and tackle such a large assignment—they said was too touchy of a subject. Alright there it is, that's my one joke about Song of Solomon. Don't ask for more.

you, you?

For me, if you're really going to know who I am, then you need to know a few things:

But in all seriousness, can I just say...as thankful as I am that I don't have to stand up here and preach about all the tough things we've been talking about in the SOS series, I am even more thankful that we have a Pastor who doesn't shy away from those hard topics. Pastor Spence Shelton has labored really, really hard over these past 8 weeks to help our church understand what God says about love ... and in having conversations with him, I can just hear his heart for you as the church body. He cares so deeply about you, and he cares so deeply about glorifying our King Jesus by faithfully teaching you, His word. So, can we just thank God together for Pastor Spence?

Alright, if you would, please turn over to the book of Colossians. We are going to be looking at Colossians chapter 1 today.

But I want to start our time by asking you a question: If there is one thing that someone needs to know about you to really know who you are, what is that thing? In other words, what makes

You need to know that I am the third of four children and that I grew up in Indian Trail, North Carolina. For those of you who are into this, you need to know that I am an enneagram type 4, wing 3, which apparently means that I don't think anyone understands me and I feel validated by the amount of stuff





that I get done in a week – which is not always a good thing. You need to know that I drink a pour-over coffee every day – and I drink it black because I believe that’s the only way you should drink coffee. You need to know that I am married to Marlee and she’s my best friend in the entire world. You need to know that I love Jesus and have a deep desire to make him known to people – which is why I’m standing here today.

These are some of the things that get down to the foundational level of who I am and what makes Brett Bouldin, Brett Bouldin.

What are those things for you?

So, now it’s your turn... here’s what I want you to do. Since I just told you all of those things about myself, I want you to turn to your neighbor and give your very best shot of in one sentence, tell them what makes you you. One sentence. Got it? Ok, go.

Alright let’s bring it back it – You guys crushed it. I’m sure that was really easy. If you used, “I love Jesus” as your answer then good answer, but you took the easy way out.

Here’s why I wanted to do that exercise -- In the text we are going to be looking at today, the Apostle Paul is describing to

the church of Colossae **who Jesus is** at the most foundational level. He’s revealing to them “What makes Jesus Jesus”

And the reason he’s doing this because there had been false teachers who had come into this church and they were spreading a message that was contrary to the Gospel, and what it was resulting in was that this church was becoming confused and stripped of the hope that they had.

And so, Paul writes to them. And his message in the passage that we’re going to look at is this: **“This is Jesus and this why you can hope in him.”**

You see, when we tell others about who we are, we learn things and are able to grow into deeper relationships, and it’s great. And we should do that. But when we look at the person of Jesus and learn about who He is – something different happens. Something happens deep within us. When look at who Jesus is... we see someone who we can place our entire hope in. Even more than that, we see someone who we were created to place our entire hope in.

And so that’s my aim for us today as we look at this passage of scripture – I want to show you who Jesus is, and why you can hope in him today.

Specifically, I want to speak to two people:



For the non-believer in the room, first I want to say welcome. We are so glad that you are here joining us today. I don't know what brings you to church – maybe you're here because a friend said they wanted to get breakfast with you and then they tricked you into coming to church. Or maybe you're here because you're seeking and trying to understand more about what you believe. Whatever the reason, I believe that God has you here today so that you can see who Jesus is and so that you would place your hope in him.

For the believer in the room, I want to speak to you as well. Ya'll, I know that there are so many things in this world that try to strip us of our hope in Jesus. Maybe you have just been having some doubts about God, maybe it's a wayward family member and it's caused a deep struggle within you, maybe it's been a hard season of life that you're in, maybe it's unanswered prayers. Whatever the case may be for you, my prayer is that as you hear and are reminded about who Jesus is – you would decide again today to place your hope in him and not waver in your belief.

So, what I am going to do is I am going to take you through this text, and I am going to show you three things that we see about who Jesus is, and why that gives us hope.

That's where we're going, so let me pray for us.

Alright we're going to be looking at Colossians 1:15-23, here's what the text says:

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. **16** For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. **17** And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18** And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. **19** For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, **20** and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, **22** 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, **23** if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

1. The first thing we see about Jesus is this: JESUS IS GOD



Paul lays this out really clearly in verses 15 through 17. He starts by writing:

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

So, the first thing we see Paul saying is that Jesus is the image of the invisible God.

Later on, in verse 19 of this passage, Paul is going to write that “...In him all of the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.”

Ya’ll, we could spend the entire time talking about this one point – but I want to boil it down very simply for you. What Paul is saying here is that if you want to know what God looks like, look no further than the person of Jesus Christ.

This word “image” that he uses is the Greek word, “eikon”, which is where we get the word icon from in English. And it means likeness or representation.

So what Paul is saying that Jesus is the very likeness of God because He is God!

Ya’ll, this is incredible news for us because it means we don’t have to guess what God is like. We have a crystal-clear picture of who God is in Jesus.

Paul takes this a step further.

He writes, “He is the image of the invisible God, **the firstborn of all creation.**”

What in the world does Paul mean here? What does he mean when he says that Jesus is the firstborn of all creation?

What Paul is **not saying** here is that Jesus is the first born among human beings. How do we know that? Well, if you remember from the creation account in Genesis 1, we see that the first two human beings created were Adam and Eve. And Paul is very aware of that. After all, Paul was a Jew among Jews who was well acquainted with the Old Testament.

And so, rather than talking about Jesus being a literal firstborn, what Paul is referring to is a term of sovereignty. **Psalm 89:27, says this, “And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.”**

In this Psalm, the writer is talking about a Messiah from the line of David who would one day come and be the highest king over all the earth, and Paul is writing to the Colossian church – this king is Jesus!

He’s the king over all the earth because he is God.



And Paul keeps going...

In verse 16, he says: **16 For by^[a] 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.**

How else do we see that Jesus is God? We see it in the fact that by Him all things were created. That's what Paul is saying here.

Ya'll, do you remember the very first verse of the Bible? Here's what it says:

It says – **"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."** (Genesis 1:1)

Paul is not mincing words here. He is saying that Jesus is the creator of everything – things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created by Jesus.

Why? Because Jesus is God.

Furthermore, Paul writes that all things were created for him. He's not only the creator, but he's the purpose of all creation.

Jesus Himself speaks of this when he says in Revelation 22:13, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

He's the creator – the beginning. And he's and the purpose of creation – the end.

Lastly, Paul writes in verse 17:

17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Paul is talking about the pre-existence of Jesus. He's saying Jesus was there before everything else.

The Apostle John writes about this in in John chapter 1

He writes:

1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God (John 1:1-2)

As you go on in that passage, you find out that the word became flesh and dwelt among us...John was talking about Jesus. In the beginning was the word. In the beginning was Jesus.



Jesus is before all things, because Jesus is God.

And not only is he before all things, but Paul writes that “...in him all things hold together”

What Paul is saying here is that it is literally by the very power of Jesus that all things hold together. Jesus is the divine glue that holds our existence together!¹

Alright, let me stop there because we’ve covered a lot of ground.

Here’s a quick summary of what we have seen so far – Paul writes that Jesus is God because he is the image of God, he is the firstborn or the king over all creation, he is the creator and the purpose of creation, he’s before all things, and he holds all things together.

So, what does this practically mean for us? How does this give us hope?

Here’s why the reality of Jesus being God gives us hope.

¹ David Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Colossians/Philemon*, 89.

This gives us hope because it shows us that God relates to us on a personal level. Just like I said, because of Jesus we don’t have to wonder what God is like! He’s not just some ethereal God who sits in heavens and rules over everything and is disconnected from us.

No! In Jesus, we see that God took on human flesh... the same human flesh that we have. He understands temptation and suffering because He himself went through it. He knows what it means to be criticized and wrongly accused. He knows what it means to hurt. He knows what it means to lose a loved one and to mourn over them. He knows what it means to have a crazy, chaotic schedule and to simply be tired. He knows what it means to experience hunger and thirst. He even knows what death feels like. He relates to us and has gone so far as to die on a criminal’s cross to prove that to us.

God, the King of the universe, the creator and purpose of all creation, the one who holds all things together – relates to us.

He relates to us and that gives us hope.

What hope we have in Jesus!



2. The next thing that we see about Jesus in our passage is this: **JESUS IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH**

Verses 18 says this:

18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

So, we see in the beginning of this verse that Paul says “Jesus is the head of the body, the church...”

And throughout a lot of Paul’s writing, he talks about the church as a body. Now when I say church, I don’t mean this building that we’re in, but I mean the people of God...Those who have committed their lives to Jesus. This is what Paul meant.

And he likens followers of Jesus to the body of Christ – each having their own gifts from the Spirit that are to be used for the building up of the body. This means that some of us are elbows and some of us are shoulders, and we need to use those gifts that God has given us within the church... I like to

think that I’m a strong bicep. But in all actuality, I’m probably an eyebrow or something.

But the point that Paul makes is that we are the body, but Christ is the head. He is reigning over and is the ruler of the church. And not only this, but since he’s the head, he’s the churches very source of life. And as the head, Christ directs and governs the body.²

At Mercy Church, we have a really simple way of saying this -- we say that we are Jesus ruled, elder led, and congregationally accountable.

We say this because this is us together affirming that Jesus is the head of **our** church.

Paul goes on, and in verse 18 he writes, “...He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.”

So, we’ve talked about this word firstborn already – we talked about how Paul used the word to show the sovereignty of Jesus, being the firstborn of creation. But here he uses it a little differently because he says that Jesus is the firstborn from the dead.

²Ibid., 91.



And this goes right along with Jesus being the head of the church.

Because what Paul is saying here is that Jesus is the first or the inaugurator of God's new creation. When Jesus rose from the dead, he defeated sin and death once for all and became the forerunner of the church in the sense that when he rose, he didn't die again. He rose from the grave and conquered death, and then he ascended to the Father in Acts chapter 1. And what we believe is that as followers of Jesus, **we** have become a new creation, and that we too will live because Jesus lives (John 14:19). We see a picture of this new creation in Jesus because he is the firstborn from the dead.

Jesus says in Revelation 1:17-18, "...I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades."

Jesus says, I am alive...and I am alive forevermore...I will never die again. This is what Paul means when he says he is the firstborn from the dead.

Paul goes on in verses 19 and 20 and writes:

19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, **20** and through him to reconcile to himself all things,

whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

We talked about verse 19 already and how that points to the reality that Jesus is God. But look at verse 20 – it says through Jesus, God has reconciled to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

This point is clear – we as God's people – the church -- were at one moment separated from him, but Jesus made peace by dying for us on the cross. We deserved death because of sin, but Christ made a way for us to have life by shedding his blood for us. Because of his death, there is a church. This is a redeemed people of God!

We're going to get into that point more in just a second, but what I'm trying to show you is that very simply, Jesus is the head of the church. He's the head of the church and he shows that by being at the head of the body, by being the inaugurator of a new creation through his resurrection, and by making peace through shedding his blood on the cross.

Here's why the reality of Jesus being the head of the church gives us hope.

Because He is the head of the church, it means that God's plan for the church will not be thwarted. It means that followers of



Jesus can have assurance that God is going to continue to build us up and ultimately one day bring us to himself. We have a representative in Jesus who has gone before us, and who was raised from the dead and conquered sin and the grave once and for all. And so, no matter what suffering or what persecution the church may face, we are fighting a battle from a place of victory because of the one who is at the helm!

When we sing “Victory belongs to Jesus” in our church, it’s because victory belongs to Jesus!

Jesus says to Peter in Matthew 16 – “...I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Because Jesus is the head of the church, we as the church have victory over sin and death.

What hope we have in Jesus.

3. Here’s the final thing that we see about Jesus in our passage: JESUS IS THE SACRIFICIAL PEACE OFFERING FOR OUR SIN

The last three verses of our passage say this:

21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, **22** 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, **23** if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

In verses 21 and 22, Paul simply lays out the Gospel.

He says to the Colossian church – because of sin, you were once alienated and separated from God. This is the reality of every soul because of the fall that happened in Genesis 3.

Adam and Eve ate from the fruit that God forbid them from eating, they followed Satan’s advice rather than God’s command and sin entered into the world because of that and broke it. And now, like a virus, sin has spread to every single person throughout all of history. Sin has broken our bodies, it has broken our relationships with each other, and it has broken our relationship with God. And what this church deserved and what we deserve because of sin is death apart from God. We deserve Hell.

But our God, Jesus Christ, came to us in the form of a man. He lived a perfect and sinless life because He is God. No one else



could do that. And, undeservingly, in the greatest act of love that has ever happened in all of history, God laid down his life and took on death for undeserving sinners. Jesus went to the cross for us.

In Old Testament, you see that God's people had to kill an animal and shed blood in order to atone for their sins – it was a peace offering that made them right with God until they would inevitably sin again, and then the process would repeat. And because we continually sin, ultimately what our sin was going to cost us was our own blood. But Jesus stepped in and became our sacrificial peace offering by pouring out **His blood** for us on the cross.

That's what Paul says in verses 21 and 22.

And you see at the end of verse 22 that one day, because Jesus is our sacrificial peace offering, we who have placed our faith in Jesus will be presented to God as holy and blameless and above reproach before him.

We see a beautiful glimpse of this in Revelation 21. This is what Revelation 21:1-5 says:

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. **2** And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming

down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. **4** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” **5** And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new...” Revelation 22:1-5

Jesus is the sacrificial peace offering for our sin.

If you're not already seeing it, here's why this gives us hope:

This gives us hope, because it means that the God who we've been talking about, the one who is the King of the universe, the one who holds all things together, the one who is mighty and is strong, the one who is the head of the church and who reigns and rules over us – This God loves us.

We don't deserve it, but God loves us.

Romans 5:8 says, ⁸but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.



What God is like this? What God looks on his creation with favor and love, to the point that He would lay his life down his life for all of his people? I know only one. His name is Jesus.

What hope we have in Jesus.

CONCLUSION

In verse 23 Paul writes, “if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.”

Ya’ll, Paul is using a bit of rhetoric here. He is saying that based on everything he’s just said about Jesus – He is sure that the Colossian church will continue to place their hope solely in Him.³ How could they not? This is such good news that it only makes sense that they would keep placing their hope in Christ.

But while he means it as rhetoric, he also means it as a plea and a warning to this church. He is saying, “I am sure that you will continue in the faith. But also, please continue in the faith

because Jesus is the only true hope that you have! Everything else will lead to death.”⁴

You see brothers and sisters, life gets hard. There are moments when our faith may waiver and where we may be tempted to place our hope in something other than Jesus. In those moments, we have to be reminded of the truth of the Gospel and come back to God’s word and to look at who Jesus is and to see what He’s done for us.

And when we do that, we will see that there is nothing in this world that even comes close to giving us the hope that Christ gives us. He is our one true hope because He is the only one who can offer us life – and so my plea for you, brothers and sisters, is this – continue in the faith, stable and steadfast. Don’t shift from the hope of the Gospel. Place your hope in Jesus today.

And if you’ve never placed in hope in Jesus – He’s offering you an invitation. And all you have to do to receive this invitation is believe in who he is and what’s he’s done for you. He’s God, He’s the head of the church, and He is the sacrificial peace offering for your sin. He loves you and wants to be in a relationship with you.

³ Douglas Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 144.

⁴ Ibid.



There's a song that we sometimes sing here at Mercy called "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" – It was a hymn written in the early 1900s by a woman named Helen Lemmel. What I want to do as we close our time is I just want to read over you the refrain from the song, because it speaks to what we've been talking about today.

And so, I want to invite the band up. As their coming up, I want to ask if you would close your eyes. I'm just going to read these lyrics over you and then I'll pray for you.

Let these words sink in as you reflect on everything that we just learned about who Jesus is. Let these words sink in as you place your hope in Jesus today.

Here's what the song says:

"Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in his wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace"⁵

Pray.

⁵ https://hymnary.org/text/o_soul_are_you_weary_and_troubled