



Potomac Hills

Presbyterian Church, PCA



By Grace Alone ~ Through Faith Alone ~ In Christ Alone

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Colossians 1:15–20

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English Standard Version

“Firstborn of Creation???”

This is the 6th sermon in the series on Biblical Interpretation entitled,
The Most Misused & Misunderstood Verses of the Bible!

Colossians 1:15-20

*“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.”*

Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us the Scriptures and making us Your people. You have brought us to this amazing Book to learn more about Jesus. We ask You this morning to give us the grace to understand Your hard teaching here. It’s hard because we want to listen to our own hearts instead of Yours. Our hearts come to You this day in different conditions, some cold, some greedy, some wounded, some disinterested, some distracted, some apathetic, some empty, some under conviction, some in need of comfort, some in need of encouragement, some in need of instruction. Lord, we could go on, but You know us better than we know ourselves. By Your Spirit, minister Your Word to each of us in his or her own heart condition. Draw us to Yourself. Quench the spiritual thirst in each of us. We thank You for this Word, and we pray that You would, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, enable us to bow our hearts to its authority. We pray in Jesus’ name, Amen.

INTRODUCTION: *The Supreme Court Debate* ¹

We now have a new nominee for the United States Supreme Court, Judge Neil Gorsuch of Colorado. I'm not going to talk about the politics of his nomination, but I am going to talk about **the debate** around his nomination. And that debate is one of **How Best** to interpret the Constitution of the United States.

The first view of how best interpret the Constitution is called the **Living Constitution** (or **loose constructionism**) view. At the heart of this claim is the belief that the Constitution has a **dynamic meaning** in the sense that it **changes**. The idea is that contemporary society should be taken into account when interpreting key constitutional phrases. In brief, this view contends that the framers of the Constitution specifically wrote it in broad and flexible terms to create a dynamic, "living" document.

The primary alternative to the Living Constitution view is most commonly described as **originalism**. Now, the view that **originalism** is the best way to interpret the Constitution broadly holds that the Constitution has a **static meaning** in the sense that it's **fixed or stable** and doesn't change over time. Today, originalism is popular among political conservatives in the United States, and is most prominently associated with the late Justice Antonin Scalia and now, Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch. However, some liberals, such as the late Justice Hugo Black have also subscribed to the theory.

Originalists seek one of two alternative sources: **The Original Meaning Theory** is the view that interpretation of the Constitution should be based on what reasonable persons living at the time of its adoption would have understood the **ordinary meaning** of the text to be. It is this view with which most originalists, such as Justice Scalia, are associated. There is also **The Original Intent Theory**, which holds that interpretation should be consistent with what was meant by those who wrote it. These theories share the view that there is **an identifiable original intent or original meaning** which should govern its interpretation. That's the key sentence – **"There is an identifiable original intent or original meaning which should govern its interpretation."** Why is that key? And what does any of this have to do with **Colossians 1:15**?

Well, when it comes to the correct interpretation of the Scriptures, at least by Bible-believing evangelicals, we are **originalists**. **Or at least we should be.** And that means that **How We Interpret The Bible**, particularly in the teaching passages, like we have here in Colossians, **cannot mean less** than what was intended by the **original author**, in this case the Apostle Paul, and it cannot mean something that wouldn't have been understood by the **original audience**, in this case the Colossian Church. And that's important because, in the history of the church, **Colossians 1:15** is one of the **most misused and misunderstood** verses in the whole Bible. And its **misapplication** has had a devastating effect on the faith of lots and lots of people for a long, long time. Sadly, it's become ...

BACKGROUND: *The Heresy Prooftext* ²

Because Jesus is called **"the firstborn of all creation"** in **Colossians 1:15**, it has been argued that the Bible teaches that Jesus is not divine, but an exalted creature. And that has provoked great controversy in church history. Both the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons deny the deity of Christ by appealing to this verse. It's primarily because of their denial of the deity of

¹ The Introduction is adapted from the articles, "*Originalism*," "*Textualism*," and "*Living Constitution*" all found on Wikipedia. I got the idea from listening to Shane Morris. Complain to him.

² The background is adapted from *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith* by Dr. R.C. Sproul, pages 87-89.

Christ that these two groups are regarded by most evangelicals as sects or cults rather than legitimate Christian denominations.

The deity of Christ was a crucial issue in the fourth century when the heretic Arius denied the Trinity. Arius's chief argument against the deity of Christ anticipated the arguments of modern Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. Arius was condemned as a heretic at the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325. Arius argued that to be "*the firstborn of all creation*" suggests a supreme level of creatureliness, ranking higher than the angels, but it does not rise above the level of creature. To worship a creature is to commit idolatry. No angel or any other creature is worthy of worship. Arius saw attributing deity to Jesus as a blasphemous rejection of biblical monotheism. For Arius, God must be regarded as "one," both in being and in person. Of course, Christians view God as one being in three persons. The Nicene Creed reflects the church's response to the Arian heresy.

Some historians have faulted the Council of Nicea for engaging in special pleading or mental gymnastics to evade the plain and simple meaning of the phrase "*the firstborn of all creation*." The church, however, did not flee from the simple meaning of these terms in an arbitrary manner. **First**, the church was seeking to understand these terms **in the context** of the biblical teaching concerning the nature of Christ. Being persuaded that the New Testament clearly ascribes deity to Christ, the church was against setting one part of Scripture against another. **Second**, the phrase "*the firstborn of all creation*" must be understood from the background of first-century Jewish culture. From this vantage point we can see that the term *firstborn* refers to Christ's exalted status as the heir of the Father. Just as the firstborn son usually received the patriarchal inheritance, so Jesus as the divine Son receives the Father's kingdom as His inheritance. So, let's turn to our text this morning in Colossians 1, where we're going to learn a number of things about Jesus. And the first thing we learn is that ...

v. 15: HE IS THE IMAGE OF GOD ³

"He is the image of the invisible God..."

In the Gospel of John, chapter 1, we're told that no one has ever seen the invisible God. To do so would mean instant death due to our inherent sinfulness, as God said in **Exodus 33:20**, "*you cannot see My face, for man shall not see Me and live.*" But the good news is that God chose to reveal himself in a way that we could handle by becoming flesh and taking on human form, **John 1:14**, "*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*" His name is Jesus, and the consistent testimony of the New Testament is that He is fully God made known to us, for example, we see that in Philippians 2 and Hebrews 1.

I don't know about you, but I've always tried to imagine what the people of the first century saw when they met Jesus. As I've learned more about different parts of the world, I've noticed that each culture has its own conception of what Jesus looked like. Our missionaries to Japan report that over there, Jesus looked a lot like the Japanese. And that's true in parts of Africa and in the West as well. We conceptualize Jesus to look like us. I remember growing up

3 The Exposition of the text is adapted from the book, The Most Misused Verses in the Bible, by Dr. Eric Bargerhuff, pages 79-85. And the Sermon, "The Incomparable Christ, part 5" by Dr. J. Ligon Duncan, Chancellor of Reformed Theological Seminary, preached when Senior Minister of First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS, 9/29/96, www.fpcjackson.org.

in church looking at a picture of a very Caucasian-looking Jesus with long brown hair and blue eyes usually praying. But the fact is, Jesus was not black or white or Asian.

Jesus was a Jew from the Middle East. His skin would have most likely been an olive color, perhaps a tanned look. It's probable that he would have had a strong build and a rugged-looking appearance as a man who worked as a carpenter's son for most of his life. His hair was most likely short, his face covered with a beard. All of this would have been the common appearance of the majority of Jewish men of His day. Overall, it's fair to say that Jesus was probably an average-looking guy. Even when he was betrayed by Judas, Judas arranged to point Him out to the Roman soldiers by a kiss on the cheek. This may suggest that His appearance did not stand out from the rest, we don't really know, that's just a good guess. The bottom line is, the New Testament gives us little physical description of what Jesus looked like. And, to be honest, it wasn't really necessary for the apostles to tell us that kind of information. But **it was necessary** to verify that Jesus was God who came to earth as a man. His role in being our substitutionary sacrifice (taking our place) on the cross depends on this fact. So, the first thing we learn is that Jesus is the image of God. Second, we learn that ...

v. 15-17: HE IS THE FIRSTBORN ⁴

*“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.”*

The Apostle Paul wrote Colossians to battle a new heresy that was creeping into the church. It was called Gnosticism, and false teachers, such as the Gnostics, taught that all physical matter was evil and that only the spirit or nonmaterial things were good. Therefore, they asserted that Jesus may have only **“appeared”** to be human but he was actually a spirit. Others suggested he was perhaps some kind of celestial angel created by God.

This latter idea (that Jesus was some kind of created angel) is a doctrinal heresy that has been circulated since the days of the early church, but more recently alleged by the Jehovah's Witnesses. According to their false teachings, Jesus was nothing more than the first created angel, the archangel Michael, who was sent from heaven to earth and who became Jesus (a temporary man, and nothing more than a man). Though he may have been a man while here on earth, Jehovah's Witnesses' teach that upon his death his humanity was completely annihilated and that he was raised from the dead as “an immortal spirit who returned to heaven to once again become the archangel Michael.” Furthermore, it was through this created angel (Michael, who became Christ) that God or Jehovah created all other things in the universe. So, in their teachings, Jesus may be a “lesser god,” but he's not equal to almighty God or Jehovah himself, and he was certainly a created being long before he became a man.

This was the teaching of Charles Taze Russell, founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses, who also denied the deity of the Holy Spirit, and who advocated that Christ spiritually (not literally) returned to earth in 1914, and is now spiritually reigning through the absolute authority of Watchtower Society. And in order to prove their claims, the Jehovah's Witnesses misuse a verse, that on the surface, might seem to support their claim, but upon further investigation fails to uphold their assertions. As you've probably guessed by now, that verse is **Colossians 1:15**.

⁴ Parts of this section are adapted from So What's the Difference? A Look at 20 Worldviews, Faiths and Religions and How They Compare to Christianity by Fritz Ridenour, page 123; and Hard Sayings of the Bible, by Manfred Brauch, ed., pages 651-653.

The contention of the Jehovah's Witnesses is that the Apostle Paul is speaking of Christ as a created being. However, though it is true that *firstborn* usually means the first child born into a family, this is not what the word means in Colossians, and the context and surrounding verses make that clear.

But first, it's important to note that the word *firstborn* can be used in a very different sense. It may refer to the idea of position, rank, or prominence. Such was the case with King David in the Old Testament, who was **last** in the birth order of his family but anointed by God, who said, **Psalm 89:27**, "*And I will make him **the firstborn**, the highest of the kings of the earth.*" What is meant is that God symbolically adopts him and places him in the number one position in his family. "**Firstborn**" is the place of honor which the Davidic king is said to occupy.

That was also true for the nation of Israel, where we find another meaning of "**firstborn**" when God calls Israel His "**firstborn son.**" It's pretty obvious that Israel as a nation was not the first people ever born on the earth. Nevertheless, the Lord told Moses to tell Pharaoh King of Egypt, **Exodus 4:22**, "*Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, **Israel is my firstborn son.**'*" In other words, Israel held pride of place as the people whom God had chosen to receive prominence and the inheritance of the Promised Land, and thus became His "**heirs.**" This is taken up in **Jeremiah 31** where once again, God refers to Israel as His *firstborn*. In neither of these passages (nor anywhere else in the Old Testament) is there even a hint that God in some way gave birth to Israel. What He's saying is that this nation is His number one nation, the one closest to His heart. To injure this nation is to injure God and to feel the consequences. So, we see that a nation put in first place can also be called "**firstborn.**"

This same idea of prominence and rank was also true of Jacob and Esau, whereby Esau was born first, but nevertheless the promised inheritance went to the younger brother Jacob, who was deemed "**the firstborn.**" If you remember, in **Genesis 25**, Esau sells his birthright, his place as the *firstborn*, to Jacob, although this sale was not recognized by their father, for Jacob later has to trick Isaac into giving him Esau's blessing as the firstborn. A generation later, we read in **Genesis 37** that Jacob makes it clear that it is not the son born first (Reuben) whom he considers to have the rights of the *firstborn*, but Joseph, the one born to his favorite wife. In this case a younger son is designated as *firstborn*, arousing the jealousy of the others, especially when he tries to exercise leadership. Even later Joseph brings his own sons to Jacob in **Genesis 48**, who puts the one born second before the one born first. Again "**firstborn**" will not mean the one born first, but the one who will be the leader or the greatest. Even when talking about literal families, then, "**firstborn**" can indicate a favorite son rather than the one born first.

All these examples show it's not necessary to conclude that Jesus was a created being merely because He's given the title *firstborn*. Chronology is not what's in view. Furthermore, such an interpretation does not make sense due to the context. As Paul said in the first part of verse 15, Jesus "**is the image of the invisible God.**" Therefore, he was not "**made** in the image of God," but rather **He is the image of God**. In other words, He is the likeness of God, as we read in **Hebrews 1:3**, "*He is the radiance of the glory of God and **the exact imprint of His nature**, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power.*" In other words, none other than God Himself.

Additionally, in the next two verses Paul ascribes to Jesus the role of Creator, "*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.” If “***all things in heaven and earth***” were created by Jesus, then it makes no sense to say that Jesus Himself was a created being. Furthermore, the fact that Paul says Jesus was “***before all things***” means that Jesus existed before creation, so He has existed for all eternity. This immediate context refutes the interpretation of the Jehovah’s Witnesses that Jesus was a created being. Quite the opposite, Paul is arguing that Jesus is the God who created all things, and that all creation was created through Him and for Him, and is sustained by Him.

The Gospel of John also quickly refutes the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ claim that Jesus is a created being. In **John 1:3**, the apostle writes, “*All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.*” The Apostle John says, “***All things were made through Him.***” Therefore, Jesus, the second person in the Trinity, could not be regarded as something “*that was made,*” but instead **is the Maker Himself!**

So why does Paul use “***firstborn***” language? Generally, in the Old Testament, “***firstborn***” means the son who was born first (daughters weren’t counted if there was a son born after them, sorry ladies). That child had a leading place in the family and normally took over as head of the family upon his father’s death. However, even in the Old Testament **this is more a right conferred** by the father than a place in the birth order.

Now we see why a person steeped in the Old Testament might use the term “***firstborn.***” He was already thinking in terms of “heads” and “chief” or, in other words, of the number one place. Drawing on the language of **Psalm 89**, Paul points to Christ as the one who is number one in God’s family, God’s designated “heir” and the ruler next to God. So, Paul is using the language about a firstborn son metaphorically, as the Old Testament does. Jesus is not presented as a creation of God, but as the chief of God’s family, whether the old family of creation or the new family of redemption. He is before it. He is the cause of the family. He is the leader of the whole family. In every way, **He is first**. Yet He is not part of the creation, nor even one of the redeemed, for He is the image of God and the firstborn of all creation, and third ...

v. 18: HE IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

“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.”

Now, we see this phrase, “***He is the head of the body, the church.***” He is not only first over creation, Paul says, He’s first over the Church. He is the head of the body in the Church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. Notice what Paul stresses here. Christ is the head of the Church, He is the authority. He is the only head. He is the only Lord of the Church. And that, my friends, is the charter of freedom for you as a Christian, that you know that no other person can make up rules for your Christian faith which have not been ordained by the Lord. You are free to be who God intends you to be, and no man, however spiritual, may add to the commands of the Lord for what you are to be. That’s your charter of freedom.

So many people feel like they’re burdened under the load of having to obey the Bible. That’s so untrue. The Bible frees you from the foolish commands of men, for who has the authority to tell another’s servant how to serve. Who has the authority to tell Christ’s servants, even His brothers and sisters, how they are to live and serve? The answer is ... no one. He is the Lord over the Church, and when anyone claims to be the head of the Church, other than Christ, are committing blasphemy against Christ. And it doesn’t matter if that person’s a leader of a great church, because Christ is the Lord in His Church. He’s also the head of His Church in the

sense that He is the source of all spiritual life. Paul says He is the source, He's the head, He's the fountainhead of all spiritual life. If you have life as a believer, it's because you are united to Christ by faith. If you have life, it's evidence that **the head of the body of Christ is at work in you.**

Paul goes on, not only to say that He is the head, that He is the authority, that He's the source of the life of His people, he goes on in verse 18 to say that He is "*the firstborn from the dead.*" The term "*firstborn*" is flexible enough that it can also be used of Christ as *the firstborn from the dead*, for He's the first to rise to unending life (although He raised others from the dead during His ministry) and also the chief or leader of all those who will rise from the dead. This points to the resurrection of Christ, and Paul says that the resurrection of Christ is the ground of our hope. He's "*the firstborn from the dead.*" Because He's raised from the dead, we have the hope of the resurrection.

And it's precisely because of the truth, because of the reality of Christ's resurrection, that we expect, that we hope, in the fullest sense of that word, as a Christian, **that we hope** for our resurrection. And as the Apostle Paul says elsewhere, **1 Corinthians 15:17-19**, "*And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.*" We might as well eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. But Christ is raised, and Paul says that He is "*the firstborn from the dead,*" and because He's the head of the Church, and because He's "*the firstborn from the dead,*" because He's preceded us in resurrection, Paul says He has primacy in the Church. He has supremacy because He's the firstborn of all creation and He's the firstborn from the dead. And that's possible because ...

v. 19: HE IS THE FULLNESS OF GOD

So what? Here's Paul's answer to that question: verse 19, "*For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell ...*" Paul is arguing that because Christ is supreme, in creation and in redemption, therefore, He is sufficient. The person of Christ is sufficient for our redemption, and he uses this glorious, this mysterious phrase, "*For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell ...*" Now, how do we interpret that? That's a hard passage to interpret. A couple of things, real quick.

First of all, "*the fullness*" is a word that the false teachers of Gnosticism liked to use. They liked to talk about this fullness that people could attain if they would go through the mystic rituals. Isn't it interesting that the Apostle Paul fires back by saying, "No, Christ is the fullness. You don't look somewhere else other than Christ for the fullness. You look in Christ for the fullness. That fullness is all found in Him. That fullness belongs to Him alone." And the Apostle Paul is saying, 'You want the fullness?' You've got the fullness in Christ. Don't look somewhere else. If you're in Christ, you will reign with Him in glory. You will be exalted. You will be more than conquerors. "*For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell ...*" There's nothing of glory and honor and blessing of God which is to be found outside of Christ.

Image, Firstborn, Head, Fullness, and finally ...

v. 20: HE IS THE RECONCILER

"...and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross."

And then finally, the Apostle Paul, stresses that Christ is the Reconciler, the only Reconciler.

Not only does he stress the supremacy of Christ in creation, **not only does he stress** the supremacy in the Church, **not only does he stress** the sufficiency of Christ's person, **he stresses**

the sufficiency of Christ's work. He is the Reconciler ... *“through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross.”*

As Christ is the Creator, as Christ is the Redeemer, Paul says, He is also the Reconciler. As sin destroyed the relationship between creatures and the Creator, between man and God, so Christ restores that fellowship and relationship between man and God, and He does it through the death of His cross. We can never leave out the Cross, because the cross tells us that we were already at odds with God, and the cross tells us that God provided a way back into fellowship with Him, and there is no way back into fellowship with God **apart from that cross**. There is no way to get to Him. The Apostle Paul says that God has been reconciled to the world through **the death of Christ on the cross**.

This is Christianity. Christianity says that we have been estranged from God, and that we deserved to be judged, but through the atoning death of Christ, the wrath of God was satisfied **for all His people**. And as we embrace Christ by faith, as we repent of our sins, we turn to Him, we find in Him the blessing of all **the benefits of reconciliation** with God. Have you embraced Christ? Have you realized if you are apart from Christ, that you are at odds with God? Have you realized that there is no way that you can be indifferent to God? You're either for Him or against Him. You're either His or you're not. And if you're in Christ, have you recognized how sufficient He is? There's no need to go anyplace else, Paul says. He is the Creator. He is the Redeemer. He's the Reconciler. He's the Image. He's the Firstborn. He's the fullness. It's all here.

CONCLUSION: *Everyone has a problem with Jesus*

It seems to me, that everybody on this planet has one or another problem with Jesus. Some people doubt His supremacy. Others doubt His sufficiency. They may be non-Christians. They may be atheists. They may be religious. They may be members of another religion, but they doubt what Paul claims here about the supremacy of Christ. They may honor Christ as a great moral teacher or as a prophet, but they don't believe that He's the Lord over all as the Apostle Paul is claiming here in Colossians.

Others, perhaps within the Church, may acknowledge Christ's supremacy with their mouth, they may give assent to the idea that He's supreme, but they have questions as to whether He's sufficient. They continue to try and supplement their Christian experience with something other than Christ. They start with Christ, but they move on to other things. Sometimes they move to their own works, and they think that they can begin with Christ and yet if they are going to stay in fellowship with God, they must supplement it by earning God's favor with their obedience. Other times they think that there must be some deeper spiritual principle, or some special kind of knowledge. Sometimes they mix Christianity with other types of faith. They mix it with something crazy like astrology, or with something like some other form of religion, whether it may be a New Age teaching or they mix Christ with whatever is that latest secular teaching is on the market. But there are many Christians who doubt the sufficiency of Christ. They believe in Christ, they profess His name, and yet in their experience, and even in their belief, they think that in order to have fullness of life, they need to supplement what they have in Christ **with something else**. Paul is speaking precisely to those conditions today.

What does it all mean for us? We too have this temptation. There are people who still peddle this teaching, that it's Christ plus something else. The Apostle Paul is saying, 'if you have Christ, you have all the blessings that go with Christ. So don't look for Christ plus something else. Don't change the focus of Your original hope. Don't add to Christ, because to

add to Christ is to replace Christ. To add to Christ is to take away from His sufficiency. To suggest that there is something outside of Christ that we need is to mock the all sufficient provision of the Father who loves us.

For those who are looking for assurance this day, Paul is reminding you, don't look somewhere else for your assurance. Don't even look at your own good works. Look to Christ for your assurance. He is solely sufficient. Rest in Him. That's why Calvin calls Him "the mirror of God's election." Look into the face of Christ. Rest on Him for your assurance of salvation. And if you come apart from Christ this day, Paul is most assuredly saying to you that all the blessings that you could ever desire are found in Christ.

But if you are apart from Him, if you do not love Him, if you have not had faith in Him, if you are not walking in relationship with Him, you are not a party to the blessings which He will bring to all His people — what will you do about that? You flee to Christ. You cast your cares on Him. You trust in Him to save you from your sin which will otherwise most assuredly condemn you. And then you trust in His promises to give you the blessings which you so desperately need. And I promise you, on the authority of the Christ who is solely sufficient, that He will not cast you out. Come to Him, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and He will give you rest. Take His yoke upon you, and learn from Him, for He is gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

There's no need to go anyplace else, Paul says. He is the Creator. He is the Redeemer. He's the Reconciler. He's the Image. He's the Firstborn. He's the fullness. It's all here. Take that to heart ... You need to pray.

Take a moment to do that, and then I'll close.

Heavenly Father, we commit ourselves to You this day. Lord, Your Word is so much bigger than we are. We ask that You would show us the truth of who Your Son is, and as we see Him in all His glory, we would embrace Him willingly, and freely, with all our hearts. If there are those who have come here this morning not knowing who Jesus is, reveal Yourself to them through Your Word and by Your Spirit. Glorify Yourself in Your Word and in our hearts, and we give You all the praise and all the glory, for we ask it in Jesus name. Amen.

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Revelation 1:4b-6

#3Mverses

*"Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, **the firstborn of the dead**, and the ruler of kings on earth. To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."*