

Intro – apathy

- I have an American friend who tells me that one of the big differences between Australia and America is that on the whole, Australians are apathetic towards government...
- Americans' according to my friend are not Apathetic... and at least where he's from... have a passionate distrust of government... there are even elected officials that have this passionate distrust of the government that they are part of and they seek office to keep the government out of the affairs of the people as much as they can...
- This passionate distrust means also that when elections don't go their way, or when policies they don't like, people are far more likely to protest, or riot...
- Australians on the other hand might get a bit annoyed about government policies, they might even decide to vote out a government... but in the end... no matter which party wins the elections... Australians on the whole, won't worry too much about it...
- This rings true for me as an Australian...
- But I wonder if apathy can also creep into our approach to Christianity...
- Do you ever see that? Do you see it in yourself?

The preeminent Christ. 1:15-20

- Today we're starting a series on colossians... and we're looking this week at chapter 1
- and we are going to jump straight to chapter 1:15-20... which in many ways is absolutely central to the letter.
- ¹⁵The Son is **the image of the invisible God**, the firstborn over **all creation**. ¹⁶For in him **all things were created**: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; **all things** have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He is before **all things**, and in him **all things** hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that **in everything** he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹For God was pleased to have **all his fullness** dwell in him, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself **all things**, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Exalted Language

- and in this part of the passage... you really notice the language... it's high and exalted... it's poetic and dramatic... some people think it was a hymn that was around or a creed that had been formulated... some think Paul wrote it especially for his letter to the colossians...

but it's absolutely central to the things that Paul will say and is saying to the church of Colossae in this letter.

- He will lean on the themes and ideas and doctrines that he brings up here... time and time again.
- And this "hymn" doesn't hold back... it's almost gushing in it's description of Jesus...
- the phrase **all** is used... over and over...
- **Read highlighted bits.**
- he's the creator... the sustainer... the ruler... the reconciler of all things... not most things... not some things... but ALL THINGS... there is an absoluteness to what Paul is saying about Jesus...
- APPLICATION OVER YOU!!! – He is your ruler... he's your creator... he's your sustainer... he's your reconciler...
- But we want to delve a bit deeper... and we'll look at 3 things that this Hymn shows us...

The content

Godness

- First his Godness...
- Jesus is absolutely fully... GOD...
- We see that in vs 15...
- *The Son is **the image of the invisible God.***
- Have you looked in the mirror... and seen yourself... you are staring at the image of yourself... the exact representation...

- But in some senses... something that looks exactly the same could still be fake
- ILLUSTRATION
- **Baseball caps in primary school...** It was a big deal if they were fake...
- So If that's all the info we've got... then Jesus, the son, may just be a pretty good copy of the invisible God...
- So Paul goes on... in verse 16...
- ¹⁶*For in him **all things were created**: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; **all things** have been created through him and for him*
- and we see that not only is he the image of the invisible God... but in fact... he does the thing that the invisible God does... we've just spent 6 weeks on Genesis and I hope that you understood from that at least.... **THAT GOD IS THE CREATOR!!!!**
- And so we see now that Christ... is given that title... he was there... he was creating.... All things were created in him...(all things were created in reference to him). Through him...(he is responsible for it... he begins and carries out creation...) and for him... the purpose of creation is Christ as well... he is the goal of all creation... (we'll touch on this in a moment)

- The image of the invisible God... is also the one there and responsible for creation... Could it be that Christ is God... in all his glory?
- But in case you weren't sure here's verse 19...
- ¹⁹For God was pleased to have **all his fullness** dwell in him
- Christ... is not a shadow of divinity... he is not Godlike...
- He Is God... there is nothing lacking in Christ's godness
- And there is no other... He is God over all things... no one else is... Jesus... is God... The muslim God... the hindu gods, the Shinto gods... the heavenly mother... creation itself... or Kim Jong Un... or any other power or authority... are not God... Jesus is...
- He is your God...
- And seeing as though he is God... The second thing is that he has authority...
- This makes sense... but let's just look briefly at the extent of it...

Authority

- We've already seen that he is the creator... but verse 15 tells us that he is
- *the firstborn over* **all creation**
- Which means here that he has supreme authority over creation! All creation!!!
- Verse 18 tells us he has authority over the church...
- *And he is the head of the body, the church;*

- And also that he is the *firstborn from among the dead...* that is... he doesn't just have authority over all creation... but also over the new and coming creation...
- He will have all authority in heaven as well!
- *In everything he has the supremacy...*
- He is God...
- He has ultimate authority and supremacy
-

Reconciliation

- And third we're going to look at **reconciliation**
- (v 19-20) *.¹⁹For God was pleased to have **all his fullness** dwell in him,²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself **all things**, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*
- Genesis has told us about Sin... we know that there is a wedge between the creation... and the creator... that even though God is lord of all... not all of creation acknowledges that... and in fact all of creation... has been tainted by it...
- And so all of creation... things in heaven and on earth need to be brought back into alignment... under God's authority... and so God has acted to put things right...
- We think of Jesus death on the cross as simply bringing reconciliation between Humans and God and it does...

- Without Christ... we are stuck in our sins... yet because he died... and in his death paid what was owing because of our sin... we can be reconciled to God... we can have relationship with God... for all time...
- But this verse says that all things will be reconciled to God through Christ's death...
- The scope of his reconciliation is greater than just us...
- It brings ALL THINGS... the things he created... back in to line... under the authority of the INVISIBLE GOD...
- Whether willingly or not... as it says in Philippians EVERY KNEE WILL BOW AND EVERY TONGUE CONFESS THAT JESUS IS LORD TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER.

Summary

- And so in this incredible hymn we see the image of the invisible God... the one who God is pleased to let his fullness dwell!!!
- We see the one with ultimate authority over all things...
- We see the one who reconciles all things to God... even us undeserving sinners!
- We see that Christ is Supreme!!! In all things... he HAS THE SUPREMACY...

But why was Paul telling them that? - context...

- But why was Paul going on about this!!!

- Because... don't we see from the first half of the chapter... that they were people who had heard the gospel from Epaphras...
- And showed real faith love and hope...
- And had been rescued from the dominion of darkness... and been brought into the kingdom of the Supreme son... and had been given forgiveness from sin...
- Why spend this time talking SO MUCH about Jesus... like this?
- Because someone had been telling them that Christ was not enough...
- That they needed to do more and know more than Christ... to have a really truly full existence... and a really truly full spiritual life... that they needed to follow certain rules... in order to be really truly saved... that they needed to starve themselves or treat themselves harshly to really and truly understand God... to have visions... to get the special knowledge...
- Someone was telling them that Christ was not enough...
- But he is supreme over all... the fullness of God is in Christ... his death was enough for them to find full forgiveness...
- We'll look in more detail at what they were being told they needed more than Christ next week...

- But it's worth pausing... to think is he enough for you?
What are you tempted to chase after to find true satisfaction and fulfillment...
- Examples?
- Don't - Christ. Is. ALL. You. Need!

Application for Us...

- But I want to think about one simple implication of these verses we've looked at...
- Read the hymn again...
- ¹⁵The Son is **the image of the invisible God**, the firstborn over **all creation**. ¹⁶For in him **all things were created**: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; **all things** have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He is before **all things**, and in him **all things** hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that **in everything** he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹For God was pleased to have **all his fullness** dwell in him, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself **all things**, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.
- If this is true... that Christ, is the image of the invisible God... that the fullness of God dwells in him... if he is the

creator... if he is supreme over all things has authority over all things... ... if he is the one who brings reconciliation to all things... and brings reconciliation an relationship between the God of all creation... and you...

- If this is true... then it's not something you can be apathetic about...
- If it's not true... then we're wasting our time here.
- If you are trying to work out the truth about Jesus... and you are sure... that all of this is true... then it's not worth coming back...
- If it's not true... then I need to give up my job... I need to change my whole life... my ethical framework... my outlook on everything...
- (ditch the mic)...
- But if it is true...
- If he really is MY God....
- If he really is Supreme over everything... including me...
- If he really is the one who offers reconciliation to me... If he really is enough...
- then I can't be apathetic about this...
- He's more important than anything...
- Comfort... security... family...
- Career... possessions... holidays...
- Exams... future plans... relationships...
- I need to give everything to him...

