

The Prison Epistles 06 Glorious Person of Christ

by David Clifford

The Prison Epistles emphasize the importance of giving Christ His rightful place as the preeminent one in our lives and the significance of our heavenly calling and future with God.

Duration: 50:29

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Colossians 1:15 - 2:4, Colossians 4:7-18

Topics: "Christology", "Church Life"

Description

The video is a sermon on the book of Colossians, focusing on the introduction, the Christ, the church, and the conclusion. The introduction includes the salutation, thanksgiving, and prayer. The Christ section explores the Christological passages in the New Testament. The church section covers chapters two to four, discussing the believer's standing, spiritual state, and balanced service. The conclusion includes salutations and emphasizes the preeminence and fullness of Christ. The sermon aims to inspire and teach from the Word of God.

Transcript

Well, I say amen to that sermon we've already had this morning. On Disneyland. And if you'd only kept on another two or three minutes, I needn't have preached at all.

Well, now, I'm feeling all right. But that's what you say. We ought to have a vote on that, I should imagine.

Anyway, don't worry about me, I'm all right. I feel like ten men this morning, nine dead and one dying. But I'll be all right by tonight.

Now, let us read together from the Word, the Holy Scriptures, from Colossians, chapter 1. One preacher was arriving at a certain town, trying to find his way around to where he was staying. And there was a boy he inquired of. The boy said, I'll take you, it's across this field.

And as they were going across the field, the preacher thought he'd put a word in for the Lord. He said, do you go to Sunday school, my son? He said, yes, sir. And he said, can you remember what you learn at Sunday school? He said, yes, sir.

He said, well, what did you have last week? He said, we had the story of Jacob, sir. Well, that's very good. And he said, what did you have the week before that? Well, the other minute, he said, oh, we had the story of Abraham.

Well, he said, that's very good. He said, do you ever have the story of Jesus? He said, oh, no, sir, that's at the other end of the book. Let's hope he got to the other end of the book sometime rather soon.

But I think we get the most benefit when we get straight at the glorious person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Preaching Christ is the greatest means of building the saints of God and converting sinners of the Gentiles. Now, Colossians chapter 1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus, our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, which are Colossae.

So they were both in Christ and in Colossae. It must have been, meant a lot to them that they were in Christ. And let's hope it meant a lot to Christ that they were in Colossae.

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you. Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which is come unto you as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it and knew the grace of God in truth.

As ye also learned of Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ, who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit, for this cause we also, since the day we heard of it, we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness, giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. For in him were all things created, that are in heaven, that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

And he is the head of the church, he is the head of the body of the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell, and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself. By him I say whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.

And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. Alienation is judicial, it is a dismissal from God. In the body of his flesh through death he hath reconciled you, to present you holy and unblameable and unapprovable in his sight.

If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven, whereof I, Paul, am made a minister." Verse 28, Christ, the hope of glory, whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. May the Lord impress this beautiful portion of his word upon our hearts and minds this morning. Now the Apostle Paul, while he was

there in prison in Rome, received a very special guest in his, I would imagine, one room apartment.

And this man had travelled by foot nine hundred and fifty miles except a short part of that, a few miles when he probably came over the straits by boat to the southern part of Italy. And he'd come all the way from Colossae in Phrygia, the district of Phrygia in Asia Minor, Turkey as it is today. There was just there a triangle of three New Testament churches, Laodicea, Hierapolis and Colossae.

And the Apostle Paul had never been just exactly into that area, although he had been around that area and fairly near to Ephesus for some time. And while he was at Ephesus preaching, he had met one or two people from Colossae and had led them to Christ, among them a very fine nobleman of Colossae that we hope to be talking about tomorrow, either morning or evening. I haven't decided which yet when we speak on the letter to Philemon.

May probably both, but we'll wait and see how the Lord leads about that. But this man from Colossae was called Epaphras. Not to be confused with Epaphroditus, who was the young man who came from Philippi with that love offering we were talking about last night, you remember.

Now Epaphras had a burden on his heart for the church from which he came. And there was error beginning to creep into the church at Colossae. He was most concerned about it because he had evidently founded the church at Colossae.

He had been used by God in evangelism and in pastoral care afterwards as an elder in the church to build up the church. But now it seems there was one man, and I agree with Harold St. John here, my late beloved friend of beautiful memory, Harold St. John. I agree with him here that there was probably one man who was now in the church at Colossae who was spreading error in the ways that we shall mention as we go along.

And to prove the point you can see from chapter 2 and in verse 4 he says, This I say, lest any man beguile you. And in verse 8, beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit. Verse 16, let no man therefore judge you.

And verse 18, let no man beguile you. So it does seem that there was one man. But the error was there and it was inclined to spread and spread rapidly because of the traditions that most of these Christians had been brought up in and Epaphras was very concerned about it and he came all the way to Colossae to tell Paul about it and about him and to ask Paul to pray.

Well, now Paul not only prayed for these Christians, he did that immediately. He didn't know them in the flesh, although I think he knew one of the leaders, Philemon, he led him to Christ. But he was very concerned for them and you'll see that his prayer is in verse 9. For this course, since the day we heard it, this is from Epaphras who's just come, we do not cease to pray for you, and this is the burden of my prayer for you, he says, that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Now he said, not only am I praying for you Colossians, but Epaphras, you know Epaphras well, look at chapter 4 and verse 12, he says, I'm sending you greetings from various people here and people that you know and Epaphras is one of you, verse 12. He's one of your city, that is, as you know he's a servant of Christ and he salutes you. He's always labouring fervently for you in prayer.

Now Epaphras, they knew, had laboured fervently for them in evangelism and had founded the church and now he's not with them for a time absent, he's still labouring fervently in prayer, he says he's praying for you. And the burden of his prayer is very similar to the burden of my prayer. My prayer is that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Because wisdom is the right outworking of knowledge. We want you to know his will and work it out rightly and Epaphras' prayer is that you might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. So both of us are praying that you might know God's will and be complete in God's will and in its outworking in your Christian lives and in your assembly.

Now the point is this, the Christians at Colossae or some of them were not giving to the Lord Jesus his rightful place. Christ with son, especially with this one man who was propagating this doctrinal error, Christ was not first, he was not the head, he was not the preeminent one. Now the apostle knew, Epaphras knew that there is no spiritual maturity, there is no completion in maturity unless the believer is in the will of God.

And nobody can be in the centre of the will of God unless he's giving to the Lord Jesus his rightful place as number one and preeminent. Well now you see this was the burden on the apostle's heart when he not only prayed for the Christians but when he decided to write to them after a while. And this is the letter he wrote as I'm quite sure he placed himself under the actual and deliberate control of the Holy Spirit so that his words as he wrote them or dictated them would be the words of God not only to the Christians at Colossae but to you and to me today.

It was most important that they should learn to give to the Lord Jesus the preeminence, the first place and it's very important that you and I should do that too. Therefore the key verse to the whole of this epistle is the first part or rather the last part of verse 18 of chapter 1, that in all things he might have the preeminence. And we shall see as we try to give you a little analysis now as it comes to my mind we'll see that this is the centre of the whole idea.

In chapter 1 you have the believer and his sovereign Lord. In chapter 2 you have the believer and his judicial standing. In chapter 3 you have the believer and his spiritual state.

And in chapter 4 you have the believer and his balanced service as seen in these chosen personalities that Paul sends greetings from and to as well as the exhortations at the beginning of that chapter. The believer and his balanced service in chapter 4. So if you want to analyse it a bit better than that you get the introduction and then the Christ and then the church and then the conclusion. The introduction is chapter 1 verses 1 to 14.

His salutation, his thanksgiving and his prayer. And then secondly the Christ. This is chapter 1 and verse 15 to 29.

One of the 3 or 4 or 5 great and mighty Christological passages in the New Testament. This is outstanding. The Christ chapter 1 verses 15 to 29.

And then the church thirdly chapter 2 to chapter 4 and verse 6. And then the conclusion chapter 4 verses 7 to 18 as I said salutations from chosen personalities. There are two key words in the letter preeminence and fullness. And that's a very interesting word in the Greek *pleroma*.

It means completeness that to which nothing can be added because it is full and complete in itself. And you'll see that this comes in so many times especially in relation to Christ but also in relation to Christians.

For in him dwelleth all the fullness the pleroma of the Godhead bodily.

And you are the pleroma, the fullness in him. Say unto, what's that man at the end of chapter 4? Say unto Archippus the ministry that thou hast received in the Lord, fulfil it. And there is the same word again as is used so many times in this beautiful letter.

But when we talk about the preeminence of course we're only talking about one. And that is the preeminence of the Lord Jesus because Paul was very anxious that they should give to Christ his rightful place. But he approaches the subject most delicately and graciously and diplomatically.

You see it heard from Epaphras that this man was propagating a traditional philosophy. And was suggesting in all probability that there were many more intermediaries between sinful men and Christ's holy God. Indeed that there were many angels, angelic beings through which we should come to God as well as through Christ.

And of course this was erroneous doctrine. And we shall see in this letter not only is Christ the preeminent one in creation and in conservance and in the church and in the resurrection and in the believer. But we see, that is in chapter 1. But in chapter 2 we see that Christ is the preeminent one as the true wisdom of God in the first few verses of chapter 2. And then Christ is seen as preeminent over traditional philosophy.

And Christ is seen as preeminent over Jewish legality as well. And then later on in chapter 2 Christ is seen as preeminent over modern mysticism of the day. And then Christ is preeminent over asceticism too.

And Christ is seen at the beginning of chapter 3 as preeminent as the very life of the believer. And the whole epistle and letter is about the Lord Jesus, the glory of his person as the preeminent one and the marvel of his work and his preeminence. Well now, I thought we ought to this morning with the time that is left to us start on the subject from the beginning of the chapter 1 and in all probability we shall leave the main theme, the preeminence of the Lord Jesus until this evening and try to make a sermon out of it.

When I say that I mean not just a study, it will be that I trust, but an inspirational sermon as well. Excuse me using the word sermon but it's the right word. And if you can stand anywhere in a pulpit or on a soapbox in the open air and give an address on any kind of a subject in the world, any secular subject.

But if you stand up in the name of God and open his word and preach his word and give a homily from which comes the word homiletics then that is to be correct in English, English, English. I'm not talking about American English now. The correct word is sermon.

Well now forgive me, that's one of my little asides. I have these little asides from time to time as they come into my mind. No point in it at all really, but just by way of explanation.

But you will notice here that the apostle is very carefully and diplomatically approaching the subject that he has in his mind. Now this remember was once the arrogant idealist and persecutor of the church, Saul of Tarsus. Now he in my opinion has grown in grace at a terrific rate and absolutely marvellously.

And he has become the most gracious, careful, diplomatic servant of Christ. Now you see, Epaphras came and told him about the trouble and he didn't immediately, before he started to pray about it, get out his pen and say this, Dear Brethren at Colossae, Epaphras has told me about the trouble in your church. I'm very concerned about it and now I'm writing to put you right.

Now listen to me. Nothing like that at all. He says, Brethren, I have heard from our dear brother Epaphras of your faith in Christ Jesus, verse 4, and the love that you have to all the saints, verse 4, and about the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.

He speaks of the three cardinal virtues which were there. And so he very graciously approaches the subject, in thanking God for them and for their faith and love and hope. And for the fact that they have not only heard the gospel, but they have received the gospel.

And that in them, verse 6, it was bringing forth fruit. Now the true gospel and the full gospel, and notice here the full gospel includes the preaching of the hope at the end of verse 5 and the beginning of verse 6. And the true and full gospel, which includes the preaching of the glorious hope we have in heaven, is always fruitful unto God. Remember that.

God's words shall not return unto him void, but shall prosper in the thing whereto he sent it. Now notice that the hope that they had was laid up for them in heaven. Now in this connection, I think I want to take a minute or two for a little further aside.

It's really to do with the subject. We are trying to, in an inspirational way, expound a few of these verses as we get to the main points and themes of the epistle. But you see, the hope is in heaven.

And I want you American Christians to understand, if you will, from the word of God, that you are not going to live at Park of the Palms for a thousand years during the millennium. I know you would like to. And America itself is a lovely place.

And it's most glorious. And I'm just waiting for some dear brother to take me in his car, my wife as well of course, right across America so that we can see it one of these days. Because we haven't seen much of it yet.

But they tell me it's a terrific country. And all these American, lots of these American Christians I've met, they want to live in America during the millennium and stay here. But you're not going to.

Your hope is in heaven. And heaven's a nice place. It's far better than America.

I know you can't believe that, but it's absolutely true. It has not yet entered into the heart of man what great things God has prepared for those that love him. Now even we can show it from this passage that this is so.

In verse 5, the hope which is laid up for you in heaven. We have a heavenly calling. We are a heavenly people.

Look at verse 12. God has already made us to meet, to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. And that of course is speaking of heaven, the saints in the glory.

And in 1 Peter 1, the inheritance is reserved for us in heaven. And in John 14, the Lord Jesus said, in my Father's home are many resting places. And I go there to prepare a place there for you, and I'll come again and take you there to be with me, that where I am there ye may be also.

And in Revelation 21, you know the New Jerusalem, the New Jerusalem has no sun and no night. Well now in the Jerusalem in the Middle East, when I was there they had both sun and night. Sun during the day and night during the night time.

And that will continue during the millennium. And, but there's another Jerusalem you know. A New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven but not to the earth, over the earth, we shall reign over the earth in Christ.

Just as I was talking the other day, you remember, about our complete union with Christ. Just as we are in Christ's death, and in Christ's life, and in Christ's exaltation, and in Christ's glorification, God sees us in Him completely, so also we are in Christ's reign, or we shall be. Yet to be revealed and made manifest and perfected.

And of course, as He shall reign over the earth, we shall reign in Him. We shall have power and authority in Christ, in His reign over the earth. And of course we're going to have glorified bodies.

This mortal shall put on immortality. This body of humiliation, don't call it a vile body, that's an unfortunate word. This body of humiliation shall change to give place to a body of glory like our glorified Lord.

And what do you think we're going to have glorified bodies for? To live in glory with of course. Heaven is our home and we're going to be with Him in heaven. Where Jesus is, it is heaven there.

So there'll be no sun in the New Jerusalem. The Lamb will be the light. There'll be no night there.

And of course in 1 Corinthians 15 it says we shall bear the image of the heavenly. Because we are going to heaven. And flesh and blood cannot inherit incorruptible, the incorruptible state.

So we're going to have glorified bodies. And although you may not believe it, that'll be a blessing to you. And the greatest blessing that can possibly come to a Christian is when he or she is ushered into the Lord's presence to live in heaven with Him forever.

Well I thought I ought to mention that in passing. I've taken far too long and we've robbed ourselves of some of the main theme of the epistle. Never mind, perhaps it's a little word for somebody.

So the hope that you have is in heaven. Well now you know there are thousands of books, reams and reams of pages written and printed and published on the Colossian era. And to my mind it's totally extreme and unscriptural.

You've probably noticed by now I just don't follow the usual trend. You look in anybody's theological library you'll find reams and reams, books and volumes on the Colossian era. And we have some suggestion as to what era this was.

But I want to show this, this morning briefly, that this era had not gripped the church wholly and totally and completely. It was not so serious as all these volumes make out. And there were suggestions of a more definite era that came about in the 2nd and 3rd centuries that certainly hadn't developed by this time in the 1st century AD 60, 62.

That always gives me a bit of a heart attack not being used to it this time in the morning. By about the last morning I should just be used to it. Now you see he is not only thanking them for their faith and love and hope or thanking God for it in them.

Notice in verse 2 he calls them saints and faithful brethren in Christ. So most of them generally must have been quite faithful to the Lord. It seems to me that only one man was propagating this era and he hadn't got very far with it.

But he perhaps saw the danger and asked the Apostle Paul's advice and prayer for this problem. Well now the Apostle says I want you to know God's will and work it out wisely with spiritual understanding. This is verse 9. So that you may walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing.

How could Jehovah be pleased and glorified through the walk of any Christian who has not given to Christ his rightful preeminent place. Now when we come to verse 13 the Apostle says God the Father has already delivered us from the power of darkness and has already translated us into the kingdom of his dear son. Maybe we were thinking that we had got to wait till the coming of the Lord to be ushered into his kingdom.

But if you are in Christ who is the king then you are in the kingdom. And of course it is quite true to say the kingdom is in you. It is not only among you it is in you if the king is in you.

And if you are a Christian then the king of the kingdom is in you. The king and the kingdom is in you. And so here the Apostle Paul begins his Christological passage by speaking of the kingship of the Lord Jesus and then his sonship and then his image of God and then his fullness.

This of course is the first section of this important passage. This first section is about his glorious person. The second section is about his wonderful passion.

And the third section is about his essential preeminence, his glorious person. You notice that there are three parties here that the Apostle has in his mind. Verse thirteen, his dear son.

Verse twenty-one, and you. And verse twenty-three, I Paul. Now in relation to the first, his dear son.

When the Apostle after his greetings and thanksgivings and salutations and prayers. When he suddenly mentions the phrase, he's translated us into the kingdom of his dear son. His dear son fills his mind and his heart and now he can think about nothing else and no one else but Christ.

And at great lengths he goes on to speak of the glory of his person, the wonder of his passion and his essential preeminence. And so he says first of all, something about his kingship. We have been translated into the kingdom of his dear son.

Now it goes without saying that we all know our Lord Jesus is a king. Well you say he's not reigning on earth now. Well no, in one sense he's not.

We must never get away from the fact that Christ is king. He was king, he is king, he will be king. He was born king of the Jews.

He was the rejected king, we will not have this man to reign over us. Over his head was his accusation written on the cross, this is Jesus the king of the Jews. And then when he died and rose again and ascended on high, the gates of heaven swung open wide and God the Father gave him honour and glory and made him king of glory.

This is seen very manifestly in Psalm 24 where it says the earth is the Lord's. Suddenly someone has become king over all the earth in this prophetic scripture in Psalm 24. And then the cry goes out, who is this one who is mighty in battle and become king over all the earth? He is the king of glory, he is the king of glory.

So the king of glory will eventually become king over all the earth. But in another sense, Christ is reigning on earth now. Now it isn't right and correct as I've heard some of our leading brethren in England say.

I must oppose this teaching from the world. It isn't right to say that the Lord Jesus is now king of kings and lord of lords over the earth. He's not.

He's not reigning on earth. It is his right to reign now on earth but not his time. One of these days it will be his time.

And the prophetic scriptures about his reign over the earth will be right and true and correct and fulfilled. Psalm 72 has one example. He shall reign from the river to the ends of the earth.

His enemies shall lick the dust. Kings and presidents shall bow before him and the glory of the Lord shall fill the earth. And at the end of that psalm David says Amen, Amen, the double Amen, meaning of course at the end of one of the books of the Psalms which is very significant here.

He says the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended. Nothing left to pray for. He's satisfied in his vision.

He's seen Christ reigning over all the earth and getting all the glory from all its creation. Satisfied. Nothing left to pray for.

Amen, Amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended. Now that is to come.

But now it isn't so. You know it isn't. America wouldn't be in such a mess as it is today if the Lord Jesus was reigning on earth.

And Britain wouldn't be such a pagan and immoral country as it is if the Lord Jesus was reigning on earth. But he is reigning in one sense. In the hearts of his own.

And that's how the kingdom of God is within you. Because the king is within you. King of my life I crown thee now.

Thine shall the glory be. Lest I forget thy thorn-crowned brow. Lead me to Calvary.

Well so much for his kingship. It's a big subject. But his sonship as well is mentioned here.

And that's even a bigger subject. I think we're going to pass over this very quickly. Only for the sake of time.

He has translated us into the kingdom of his dear son. Thank God that this platform stands for the eternity of our Lord Jesus Christ. I thank God this pulpit stands for the Lord Jesus being the son, the eternal word of God.

And when it ceases to do so, I hope the park of the palms will sink into oblivion. Because if Jesus be not the son of God, the eternal word, then our preaching is vain and there's no hope for mankind. For a saviour who is not quite God is a bridge broken at the Father in.

At his baptism the word was from heaven, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. On the mount of transfiguration this was the word from the Father, this is my beloved son, hear him. And that prophetic word in Psalm 45.

My heart is bubbling over, I'm speaking of the King. Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. Is fulfilled in Christ according to Hebrews chapter 1. This passage is cited there.

And unto the Son he saith, unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. So you see, he is not just one of the intermediaries. He is not just another angel between us and God.

There is one God and one mediator between man and God. The man Christ Jesus, for he is the God-man, the eternal word, his dear Son. And then of course in verse 15 we're still on the subject of his glorious person.

In verse 15, his image of God. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. Now 15a, the image of the invisible God.

Now in Britain they have recently gone metric as far as the coinage is concerned. And there are not now 240 pennies in a pound or pence in a pound, but there are just 100 pence in a pound. The pound has kept its value, except that, glad to say, we give ourselves a pat on the back.

It's about time we did as well, that the pound is going up a little bit in value these days. And, but there's still 100 pence in the pound, you see. Well now, on the side of these coins, you see, there's an image of the invisible Queen.

Well she's mostly invisible. I mean if you went over to Britain and stayed outside the railings of Buckingham Palace hoping to see the Queen, I doubted you'd see her. Possible chance.

But to most people she is the invisible Queen. But there's the image of the invisible Queen. And how do we know about God and the attributes of the divine? We see them in the divine Son.

All fullness, as Dr. Wayne, his translation puts it, with a capital F, all fullness was pleased to dwell in Him. He is the fullness of the Godhead bodily. God was in Christ.

He is the exact visible likeness and representation of the invisible God. And He hath declared the Father. Not only so, in verse 19 it speaks of Him as possessing the fullness.

Oh, I just mentioned that in another connection. It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell. He's not only the image of God, the visible representation of the invisible, but He's the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

The Lord Jesus said before Abraham was, I am. Now this verse 19 is confirmed again in chapter 2 and verse 9. In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Now you couldn't say that about an angel.

And this brother in this Colossian church couldn't say that about any of the angels. Not even about the archangel. But all the attributes of deity, everyone was found in Christ.

And by the way, everyone was found in Christ when He was here upon earth as well. And that's a very important doctrine which I cannot go into now, but this is where a lot of erroneous doctrine and modernist theology has come in at this point. Therefore it's necessary to emphasise it.

Now very quickly as I close this morning, I want to not only mention His glorious person, but His wonderful passion. The work that He did upon the cross of Calvary, Paul is taken up with this very much. And he is the pre-eminent one because of his person and because of his work.

He is number one because of who he is. And he is number one because of what he has done. And when the apostle speaks of his wonderful work and what he has done to make him the pre-eminent one, then of course he concentrates not on his life, not on his teachings, but as you might expect, on his passion, on his cross work.

You'll notice in verse 14, in whom we have redemption, through his blood. And then in verse 20, having made peace through the blood of his cross. And then in verse 22, in the body of his flesh, through death to present you holy.

And so, it all depends upon the blood of Christ. The work of Christ does our redemption, reconciliation and justification. You see, verse 14 is speaking of redemption through his blood.

And verse 20 is speaking of reconciliation through the blood of his cross. And verse 22 is speaking about justification through his death. And again, through the death of the cross.

So, whatever blessing a believer has in Christ, redemption, that is, he is brought back to God from the slave market of sin, or reconciliation, he is brought back to God into the blessings of relationship. That's the definition of reconciliation. Or justification, he's vindicated in the sight of God and accounted as though he'd never sinned at all.

Any blessing that the believer has in the sight of God, in his standing before God, it is through the blood of Christ, through the death of Christ. Now, to be absolutely theologically correct, I must remind you that the words in verse 14, through his blood, are not in the original text. But of course, we gather from the passages I've already referred to, that the meaning is correct.

So, it's not so erroneous to put it in there, because according to the context, the meaning is right. In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. And from the context, it is through the work of the cross.

So, we glory this morning in his glorious person. He is the only one, because he's the image of God. He's the Son of God.

He's God's King. And all the fullness of God is in him. And we glory in his wonderful work of the cross.

The blood of his cross is that which makes us knight of God, brings us every blessing, redemption, reconciliation and justification. And we want to confess before God this morning, that all we are and all we ever hope to be and possess, we owe to the Lord Jesus and all that he has done for us. Unworthy though we be, so we glory in his person and in his work.

And I trust that tonight, we shall respond and glory in his preeminence. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we worship thee now.

Thou our heads and our hearts and glorify thine name for the gift of thy Son. All that he is in himself and all that thou hast made him to be to us, who believe. We pray that thou reveal him and more of his glory and his work and the wonder of it to our souls as we go on day by day until we see his face.

And then the veil is taken away and we shall see him as he is. And indeed, we shall be like him and share his glory and share his reign. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/9/SID9969.mp3>

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