

Christ Is Supreme

15 Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, 16 for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. 17 He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.

18 Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. 19 For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, 20 and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross. 21 This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. 22 Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault. 23 But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it.

Colossians 1:15-23 (NLT)

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- What does it mean to be the “head” of something? What do you expect from someone who is designated the “head”?
- Tell about a time in your life when you had a deep sense of God's closeness and felt Christ was first in your heart and life. What helped create this sense of closeness and connectedness to Jesus?

Observation (what does the text say?)

- What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?
- What do you learn about who Jesus IS in these verses (not what He did/does, but rather who He is)?
- What do you learn about what Jesus DID/DOES in these verses?

Other verses to consider looking at (there are many) include: Daniel 7:13-14, John 1:18, Eph. 1:10, Heb. 1:1-4, Jude 25, Rev. 1:8,

Interpretation (what does it mean?)

- How would you sum up what these verses reveal about Jesus in 1 sentence?
- It's common in today's culture to hear things like “all paths lead to God.” How can these verses help you explain why Jesus is the only way to God?
- V.17 says Jesus “holds all creation together;” how do you reconcile that with events like the earthquake in Haiti?
- What does it mean that Christ is the “head of the church, which is his body”(v.18)? Why is this essential? How is this practically done at Riverside? How could we make this more of a reality?
- What is/was the effect of our sin (v.21), what did God do to address this/what did it cost (v.22), what is the result of God's intervention through Jesus (v.22b), how should we now respond (v.23)?

Application (what does it mean to me/us?)

- What difficulties do you have in relating to an invisible God (v.15)? How does Jesus help you overcome those difficulties (v.15) in practical everyday kind of ways?
- What implication does the centrality and supremacy of Christ have for your home, family, work, volunteer, friend, church life?
- What emotions do the words “reconciled,” holy and blameless,” “without a single fault” (v.22-23) evoke in you? How might these words appeal to some unspoken needs of friends you want to introduce to Jesus? How do they affect your determination to continue firm in your faith in Christ?
- What are 1 or 2 ways in which your life is different since you were changed from being alienated from God to being reconciled through Christ's death (v.21-22)?
- How did some of your most recent choices you make about time &/or money reflect Christ's place in your life?

Recommended Follow-up:

- **Pray:** Pray that you would see the invisible God more clearly through Jesus this week. Take time to pray as a group and lift up Jesus, praise Him for 1) what He has done in the past and our past, 2) what His is doing to sustain, guide, and form us today, and 3) celebrate what lies ahead for us and for Riverside in terms of tomorrow, this month, this year, and for all eternity.
- **Respond:** Practice your personal testimony (v. 21-22), pray and seek God on who you are to share this great message about Jesus with.
- **Read:** Next week's sermon (1/24/2010) will focus on Colossians 1:24 – 2:6. Take time prior to next Sunday to read & study the passage, pray through the passage, meditate on the passage, etc.

* As discussed in Riverside's HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid “go through this guide word-for-word.” There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time. These guides rely heavily upon James Reapsome's &/or N.T. Wright's study guides on Colossians & Philemon (ISBN 9780830830145 & 9780830821921), as well as Ryan Roeder's 2005 discussion guides on Colossians & Philemon.