

1. Last week we looked at the nature and content of our inheritance
 - a. We have been brought out of darkness and released from its bondage
 - b. We have been transferred into the kingdom of His son, which:
 - i. Is a place of light... a place of abundance... a place of forgiveness and redemption... a place of wisdom and understanding... a place of purity and cleanness... a place of freedom and release... a place of joy and comfort... and a place of power for life and godliness and for the tearing down of strongholds.
2. In the next few weeks, we will be focusing on the incomparable nature, character, and work of Jesus, the Son of God and our Great Redeemer.
3. Let's continue in our text in Col 1: 12-23
 - a. *“giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. 13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. 19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— 23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.”*
 - b. In our time this morning, we will be focusing on the nature, character, and purposes of Jesus, the Son of God.
 - c. What was/is the world's opinion and thinking about Jesus?
 - i. This is not a new question. Jesus Himself asks it...
 1. Matt 16:13ff. *“Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son*

of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.”

ii. A prophet

1. Matt 21:10 *“When He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, “Who is this?” 11 And the crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.”*

iii. A teacher

1. “Luke 18:18 *“A ruler questioned Him, saying, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”*

iv. A good man

1. Luke 18:19 *“And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.”*

v. A leader/man of authority

1. Matt 7:28ff. *“When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; 29 for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.”*

vi. A heretic/blasphemer

1. Matt 26:63 *“And the high priest said to Him, “I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.” 64 Jesus *said to him, “You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.” 65 Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; 66 what do you think?” They answered, “He deserves death!”*

vii. The Messiah; the Christ

1. John 7:40 *“Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, “This certainly is the Prophet.” 41 Others were saying, “This is the Christ” (the awaited Messiah)*

viii. These opinions remain unto today.

d. Jesus continues His questioning in verse 15, and Peter’s famous reply...

- i. He *said to them, *“But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

4. In the Colossian church, there were those arguing that Jesus was not sufficient to redeem; to bring salvation. More was required. We see what as we read Paul’s warnings

a. Col 2:8ff *“See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. 9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, 10 and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;... Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day— 17 things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. 18 Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind”*

i. His rebuttal to these arguments is centered in verse 9

1. *“For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, 10 and in Him you have been made complete”*

ii. And this “defense” begins in our text this morning, where we find similar words and thoughts

5. Col 1:15,19 *“He is the image of the invisible God... For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,”*

a. God, by His immaterial nature, is invisible... cannot be seen.

i. John 1:18 *“No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him”*

1. Same truth; invisible, but made visible through Jesus

b. God, in the fullness of His glory, is unseeable, because He cannot be endured

i. (Moses wishing to have God’s full presence before the people; to give them confidence makes this request) Ex 33:18 *“Then Moses said, “I pray You, show me Your glory!” 19 And He said, “I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion.” 20 But He said, “You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!” 21 Then the LORD said, “Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; 22 and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. 23 Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen.”*

c. Phillip had a similar request as Moses, for similar reasons (confidence, assurance) in John 14:8. The back story starts in vs 1... Just after the Last Supper and Jesus’ telling them His time with them was nearing an end...

- i. John 14:1ff *“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And you know the way where I am going.” 5 Thomas *said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” 6 Jesus *said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. 7 If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.” 8 Philip *said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” 9 Jesus *said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me”*

1. This is after Jesus great pronouncement earlier in John 10, *“I and the Father are one.”* where it was apparent that Jesus claimed deity...equality with the Father.

6. Paul’s first counter argument, then, is that the fullness of God is found in Jesus. He is the very image of God; no different in essence, no different in power, no different in purpose, no different in knowledge... no different.

- a. As an aside, this is different than the image of God that exists in us
 - i. Complete vs partial; replica vs imprint

7. Brings us to Paul’s second counterargument to the assertion of Jesus insufficiency

- a. He is “the firstborn of all creation”.

- i. We miss the point if we see this as primarily an order in time. It is much more an order of position.

1. “firstborn” was the preeminent position among children
 - a. Chief share of inheritance
 - b. Chief recipient of title and bearer of the family name
 - c. Recipient of “the blessing” (Jacob and Esau)

- b. We clearly see that this idea is in Paul’s mind in the verses that follow...

- i. Col 1:16 *“For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.”*
 - 1. “For” tells us that he is explaining the previous thought
 - 2. He is not the first thing created; rather In/through/by Him were all things created; He is preeminent in creation
 - a. He is the agency in all of creation and stands in authority over all creation.
 - i. John 1:1-3 *“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. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being”*
 - b. He is the recipient and owner of all creation
 - i. “and for Him”
 - ii. Eph 1:21ff. *“He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things”*
 - c. Not only firstborn over creation but firstborn from the dead
 - i. *“He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.”*
 - a. “the dead” is the resurrected church; the dead in Christ. “Head of the body” and “firstborn from the dead” are parallel thoughts and descriptions.
 - i. Again, speaks His authority and position over all
 - 1. Eph 1 above, and Col 2:10 *“He is the head over all rule and authority”*
 - ii. Also speaks to our kinship; “joint heirs with Christ”
 - 1. Rom 8:29 *“For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of*

His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren

- a. But we are not equal heirs, He remains the firstborn; the head.

8. The author of Hebrews makes a similar argument for the sufficiency of Christ in Heb 1:1ff. *“God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they. 5 For to which of the angels did He ever say, “YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU”? And again, “I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME”? 6 And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, “AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM.” 7 And of the angels He says, “WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS, AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE.” 8 But of the Son He says, “YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM. 9 “YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS; THEREFORE GOD, YOUR GOD, HAS ANOINTED YOU WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE YOUR COMPANIONS.” 10 And, “YOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH, AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS; 11 THEY WILL PERISH, BUT YOU REMAIN; AND THEY ALL WILL BECOME OLD LIKE A GARMENT, 12 AND LIKE A MANTLE YOU WILL ROLL THEM UP; LIKE A GARMENT THEY WILL ALSO BE CHANGED. BUT YOU ARE THE SAME, AND YOUR YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END.”*

Beloved, where do we find insufficiency in Jesus, our Lord? I Rev 5, at the end of the age, a cry goes out and the question is raised “Who is worthy to make righteous judgment and redeem the God’s people?”

“I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?” 3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. 4 Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; 5 and one of the elders

*said to me, “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.”

6 And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, ... 7 And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. 8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they *sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”

Let us pray