

Christ, the Sustainer

1. Over the last few weeks we have looked at the nature and character of Jesus and the inheritance that is ours as His servants.
 - a. We saw that He is our rescuer and redeemer
 - b. We saw that He blesses and gifts us abundantly... we are the recipients of a rich inheritance.
 - c. We saw that this was all a part of an eternal and detailed plan
 - d. We saw the character and depth of His love for us and His deep desire for fellowship and intimacy with us
 - e. We reflected upon the fullness of His deity and coequality with God the Father
 - f. We had a glimpse of His majesty... a supremacy before which we cannot stand
 - g. We began to look at His sufficiency... a sufficiency rooted in:
 - i. His deity
 - ii. His authority
 - iii. His dominion
 - iv. His sacrificial love
2. Brings us to our text today, “Col 1:17 *“He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”* This morning we will look at Jesus as “Sustainer”; which also supports His sufficiency.
 - a. *“He is before all things”* We saw last week...
 - i. Jesus is the author of creation; all things made through Him
 1. Could refer to time, for Jesus was “before all things” in time
 2. Could refer to position; authority
 - a. As we saw last week with “firstborn” speaking to preeminence
 - ii. He is the head over all creation. In that role, He is also...
 - b. the Sustainer of physical creation. *“in Him all things hold together.”*
 - i. **συνίστημι**
 1. idea of maintaining order, setting in place
 - a. TDNT; “to place together, to set in the same place, to bring or band together”, “to put together, unite parts into one whole”
 - b. If nothing else, it speaks to ongoing intervention and involvement
 - ii. Similar idea is found in Heb 1, which we touched upon last week.
 1. Heb 1:3 *“He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.”*

- iii. God, in forming the heavens and earth and their inhabitants, did not “set it and forget it”
 - 1. Ps 104 selected passages. Ps 104 speaks to god’s great creative works. But it goes on to speak of His ongoing, sustaining work.
 - a. Vs 10 *“He sends forth springs in the valleys;”*,
 - b. Vs 13 *“He waters the mountains from His upper chambers”*
 - c. Vs 14 *“He causes the grass to grow for the cattle”*
 - 2. We see the intimacy and detail of God’s ongoing involvement in vs 27-30 *“They all wait for You To give them their food in due season. 28 You give to them, they gather it up; You open Your hand, they are satisfied with good. 29 You hide Your face, they are dismayed; You take away their spirit, they expire And return to their dust. 30 You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the ground.”*
 - a. Jesus as God is involved in every aspect of His creation; provision, birth, death, renewal...
 - 3. Similar thought in Matt10:28ff. Jesus has been warning the disciples about what will befall them... persecution, hardship, betrayal, hatred, difficulty in testimony and thought. He addresses their fear by reminding them of God’s sustaining work, loving concern, and divine foreknowledge.
 - a. *“Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.”*
 - i. Speaks to God’s ongoing, intimate involvement in His creation.
- iv. We have been looking at God’s involvement... His sustaining work... at a “macro level”; His provision. But we can also look at it at a “micro” level
 - 1. Intricacy of cellular structure and replication
 - 2. Intricacy of DNA and genetic coding
 - 3. Intricacy of neural networks and communication
 - 4. Intricate interplay between body and soul

5. Acts 17:28 likely makes reference to this... *“for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His children.’”*

a. There is even better evidence that God involves Himself in the natural order... the physical realm...likely at a “cellular” level

i. Healing and “sickening”

1. Deut 28:15ff *“But it shall come about, if you do not [fn]obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you... “The LORD will smite you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors and with the scab and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed. 28 The LORD will smite you with madness and with blindness and with bewilderment of heart””*

2. Healing the blind and lame; the leprous

ii. God has the power, will, and desire to “invade” the world He created and affect change

v. Or we can look at atomic and subatomic levels

1. Who knows what a “gluon” is?

a. Wikipedia: “In technical terms, gluons are vector gauge bosons that mediate strong interactions of quarks in quantum chromodynamics”

b. Here is the non-technical definition “A gluon is an elementary particle that acts as the exchange particle (or gauge boson) for the strong force between quarks.” That’s helpful!

i. The subatomic particles which make up the atom have repulsive charge (strong force) that should cause them to break apart... and break apart violently (think nuclear explosion),

c. It is a particle or force postulated to explain the big bang theory

i. From Lehigh University in 2019 “The initial result of the Big Bang was an intensely hot and energetic liquid that existed for mere microseconds that was around 10

billion degrees Fahrenheit (5.5 billion Celsius). This liquid contained nothing less than the building blocks of all matter. As the universe cooled, the particles decayed or combined giving rise to... well, everything. Quark-gluon plasma (QGP) is the name for this mysterious substance so called because it was made up of quarks—the fundamental particles—and gluons, which physicist Rosi J. Reed describes as "what quarks use to talk to each other."

- ii. One of these postulated bosons, or particles, was labeled the "God particle"
- d. And we are told that the basis of OUR belief is blind faith! May I propose an alternate theory?... an alternate explanation? The explanation is not a "God particle", but rather, God Himself.
- 2. 2 Pet 3:7,10 *"by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men...But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up."*
 - a. This is a pretty good description of the removal of the binding force which holds all matter together. It would be the result of God removing His sustaining hand
 - b. Creation came into being by God saying "Let there be..." The day of the Lord will come with God saying "Let there be not"
- vi. We see God's sustaining work at a macro level, a micro level, a subatomic level... we can also see it on a societal level
 - 1. He sustains and upholds goodness and restrains evil
 - a. "Rom 1:24 *"Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity"* Rom 1:26 *"For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions"* Rom 1:28 *"God gave them over to a depraved mind"*
 - i. *Speaks to God's intervention and upholding work*
 - b. 2 Thess 2:3ff In speaking about the coming "man of lawlessness" leading to the day of judgment) *"Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy*

comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? 6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 Then that lawless one will be revealed”

- c. Beloved, why do we spend time on these things? These truths are laid out in scripture to enlarge and enhance our view and understanding of God. We see his visible hand in our provision and our protection as He goes before us. But we also are to see his unseen hand as He upholds and restrains invisible forces and forms.
 - i. How big is our understanding and thoughts of God?
- d. Before we leave our topic of study and reflection this morning, it would be good to look at another aspect of God’s direct sustaining work. Not only is He the Sustainer of His creation, He is the Sustainer and upholder of our spirit; our redemption and justification
 - i. Rom 8:26ff. *“In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; 27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. 28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 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; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified... 33 Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?... For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor*

powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- ii. John 10:27,28 *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.”*
- iii. Paul, writing his final words to his beloved brother Timothy...2 Tim 1:12 *“for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.”* I pray that we would come to know that also.

Let us pray