# He is Sovereign Over Creation

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Last Sunday morning, as I was preaching on Colossians 1, on the person of Christ, I had a number of people from our church who had tuned in to where I was preaching last Sunday morning who said to me, would you consider preaching that here?

And then on Wednesday, I had the chance to go in with our youth service on Wednesday night to be part of their evening service and did about 50 minutes of Bible Q&A with our teenagers.
And then I stayed for about an hour and 15 minutes afterwards because the teenagers just kept wanting to ask Bible question after Bible question. Such an amazing group of students.
And one of the themes that came up as I met with our students after the service, just talking about their questions, dealt with evangelism, dealt with helping people know who Christ is and the exclusivity of the gospel through Christ.
And so, I just feel it might be helpful for us to not really stop our study through Mark, but really just expand it just a bit.
[1:22] Because where we left off last Sunday, or two weeks ago when I was here in Mark chapter 8, it's where in verse 34 it says that Jesus called the crowd to him with his disciples and he said to them, And we spent a couple of weeks on those few verses considering the call of God.

And so, we spent a lot of months on those days of Jesus for people to follow him. Specifically to take up their cross. As Luke 9 adds, take up your cross daily and follow Christ. And so, it reminds us that there are some things that we just can't afford to get wrong.
We cannot afford to be wrong on Jesus. We have to know precisely who Jesus is. And why is it that you should be willing to deny yourself and take up your cross and follow him?
I mean, Jesus' words in Mark 8 that we've just spent a couple of weeks studying are very clear. They're not that hard to understand. He is saying, you must be willing to risk it all and to lose it all for my sake.
Which begs the question, why would we do that? Why is it that if you're given just a few short years to live and life is short, why would you be willing to risk it all?
[3:07] You only get one life on this earth. Why would people be willing to deny themselves and take up their cross? Why would they be willing to lose their life? What is it about Christ that makes him so worthy of such a call?

And then, not only that, but we live in a world where people freely speak of Jesus. But we have to be clear, when somebody speaks of Jesus, who we're talking about?
We must make sure we're talking about the biblical Jesus. Because there are all kinds of people into spirituality and all kinds of false religions who they themselves will speak of Jesus.
But the Jesus of which they speak is far different from the person revealed to us in the pages of Scripture. So I think for us to understand who Jesus truly is, and why he's worthy for us to abandon all things and to follow him, it will help us to just spend a couple of Sundays here considering this question of who Jesus truly is.
why he is worthy of whatever sacrifice may be asked of you. Whatever it may mean in your life to take up your cross and follow Christ, why he's worth it all.
[4:42] So with this background of Mark 8 in mind that we've been studying, and with these words of Christ that I've already read to you in the forefront of our thoughts this morning, let me invite you to turn with me to Colossians chapter 1.

Colossians chapter 1 verses 15 to 20 specifically is really the high point of Christology in the New Testament. Showing us the greatness of Christ and the preeminence of Christ above all things.

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Now for us to fully understand what the Holy Spirit is inspiring the Apostle Paul to write here, we do need to understand a little bit of the background and the context of Colossians.
Understand that when we read the Bible, it's Holy Spirit inspired, but the words, the authors are writing real words to real people in a real context about real situations.
And in the context of the book of Colossians, it's what we would refer to today as the Colossian heresy. What you had in that day was this mixture of Greek mysticism and Jewish legalism, and these two things combined to form what we would refer to today as Gnosticism.
[6:10] And this mistaken understanding in theology came to be known as the Colossian heresy. In part, what it taught was that God was good, but matter was evil.

And so if God is good, but the physical world is evil, what they held was that God could not directly create the world, couldn't directly create the universe, because in their mind, God's good, physical matter is evil, and so God could not have directly created the world.
Instead, what they held was that God would send out these emanations from him, and these sort of sub-gods from him, and that's how the world was created.
And eventually there was an emanation that came out from God so far down the line that that one emanation didn't really even know God, and that's how the world was created.
And you say, that sounds really strange. Well, it is. But it's also people who would have spoken of Jesus. And that's why we have to be careful. Because even false teachers will use biblical language.
[7:31] Now, to add to that, in the Colossian heresy and the view of Gnosticism, they would hold that Christ himself was one of these emanations from God without a true physical body, which means they were completely wrong on the deity of Christ and completely wrong on the humanity of Christ, though they would speak of Jesus, but not the biblical Jesus.

They would speak of Jesus as being prominent, but not speak of Christ as being preeminent above all things. So that's the background of what's going on, and that's why the Holy Spirit is inspiring the Apostle Paul to write these words where he speaks of the preeminence of Christ.
This letter is a refutation of that heresy and an exaltation of the marvelous nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let me read it to you.
Colossians 1, starting in verse 15. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
For by him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.
Whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
[9:06] And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.
So as we walk through this text for at least the next two Sundays, let me give you a couple of headings, and we'll get through a part of this today and pick back up next week.
And I think hopefully will help us in a couple weeks when we jump back to Mark 9, to have a more clear understanding of truly who Christ is and why when he calls on people to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him, why he's worthy of it all.
First, make note of this. Christ's sovereignty is demonstrated in his authority over all creation.
[10:28] Christ's sovereignty is demonstrated in his authority over all creation.

Go back to verse 15 with me. He is the image of the invisible God. The word image here, it's the word icon.
It means a representation, or if a representation is true enough and pure enough, a manifestation. Jesus is the manifestation of God.
We see this in Hebrews 1 verse 3, speaking of Jesus. He is the radiance of his glory and the exact representation of his nature and upholds all things by the word of his power.
In the marvelous beginning of the gospel of John, John chapter 1 verse 14, speaking of Jesus, says, and the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory.
[11:30] Glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. Jesus himself said in John 14 verse 9, anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.

He is the image of the invisible God. You need to understand, when we talk about Jesus, we're talking about God.

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And if you're wrong on who Jesus is, you can use his name, and you can sing of him.
But if you're wrong on who Jesus is, you cannot know salvation. And so, to a people that were wrong on the deity of Christ and the humanity of Christ, Paul starts in this great praise of the Lord Jesus Christ by saying he himself is the image of the invisible God.
And the end of verse 15, he adds to that, he is the firstborn of all creation. Now, at this point, we need to dig just a little bit because this brings up an issue where many false religions go astray in understanding who Jesus is.
[12:53] He is the firstborn of all creation. Language matters. The word here is prototokos. That's important. The word prototokos can be used a couple of different ways.

It can be used in a temporal sense, in an earthly sense, to relate to birth order. Who was born first? Who was born second? Who was born third? Or the same word prototokos can be used in a sense of hierarchy.
Who's got the special status? Who has the preeminence in a situation? So, we see that in the Bible. In Luke 2 verse 7, it speaks of Christ as the prototokos, the firstborn in his family.
He's the firstborn of his siblings. He's the oldest. He was born first, humanly speaking. But, we also see the same word used to refer to position, or elevated rank, or authority, or status.
We see that in the Old Testament, in Exodus 4. We see it in Jeremiah 31. We see it in Psalm 89. The usage of prototokos in both ways, as first chronologically, or first in status or preeminence, was normative both in Jewish cultures and Greek cultures, which explains why this word would be used in Colossians chapter 1.
[14:27] And so, he is the firstborn. He is the context. The context is what helps us to understand what is being meant here. We know it's not saying that Christ himself was created, because the very next phrase, verse 16, clarifies, for by him all things were created.

So, Christ is not created. He's the firstborn of creation, meaning he's the preeminent one. He has the highest authority. He has the highest status. In other words, you could say it this way, he is over all of creation.
But you've got to be careful to know what the Bible says about Jesus, because if you have an unbiblical Jesus, what you have is less than true salvation.
He turned, he hangs in the balance of what you know about who Christ is. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.
And just to make sure you don't miss this, John chapter 1 verse 3, says the exact same thing. All things were made through him, and without him, nothing was made that was made.
[15:40] So again, this is where you need to remember the context of Colossians. And by the way, anytime you read the Bible, anytime you study the Bible, you've got to always spend time knowing the context.

Otherwise, what you get are people who don't know the Bible, who don't study the Bible properly, who will take a verse, lift it out of its context, and lead you astray. Context is so important.
That's why those who teach in the church must be careful to study. That's why each of us as believers, as we read the Bible, 2 Timothy should study to show ourselves approved, so that we are clear, and that we are biblically right on who Jesus really is.
So as I mentioned a few moments ago, the Gnostics, it's a name that basically meant the intellectual ones. They thought they knew better than everybody else, and kind of just created their own thoughts out of nowhere, believing, again, that matter was evil.
Only the spiritual things are good. Therefore, creation, matter, was to them evil. So what does Paul say? Verse 16, By Him, all things were created.
[16:58] He is confronting and clarifying how wrong they are on who Jesus Christ is. They did not believe the world was God's world, and so Paul says, By Him, all things were created.

Incidentally, they also denied the humanity of Christ. So if you just flip over to verse 22, you see Paul says, He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death.
Now you read that, and you say, Well, we get that. That makes sense. Of course He had a body of flesh. But the Gnostics, to which Paul was writing, denied that. In other words, Paul is going face to face with the very things of which they were completely wrong about Jesus.
Why? Because you cannot afford to be wrong on who Jesus is. We must be clear on this. So He is above all things.

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He's created all things. He's above all things. Verse 16 continues, By Him, all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. [18:17] This is a reference to various ranks of angels of the angelic realm. But while I've read volumes and volumes on men who try to delineate what these specific terms mean, and that's fine, just don't miss the point here.

The point is not delineating what all of these different categories are. The point Paul is making is that Christ is over all of them. He's superior to all of them.
He's higher than anything that's been created because He Himself is the Creator. He's higher than all the angelic realm. He's higher than any category of the spiritual forces that exist in this world. Jesus is not one of the angels. He created them. He's not one of the emanations from God that the Gnostics held to.
He's the one who created all things and the one who rules all things. All things were made through Him. That is to say, Christ is the source of all things and He's the purpose for all things. [19:27] Where do we get that? Verse 17. All things were created through Him. He's the source. And for Him, He's the purpose. Friends, do not miss this.

When Jesus says in Mark 8 that we've been studying together as a congregation, you must deny yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow Me.
Here's why you do that. Because He is the source and the purpose of all things. He created you. He is the right to tell you what to do. He created you.
He is the right to tell you how to live. He created you. It's worth it to follow Him. He's the creator. He is the source. He is the preeminent one.
He is the one that will get glory over all things. That's why we take up our cross and follow Him. Romans 11.36 says it this way, For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. [20:36] To Him be glory forever. forever. Everything in this universe has been created for the purpose of bringing glory to Christ.

And the Lord will be magnified. We talked about this with our teenagers Wednesday night in our Bible Q&A.
When a person goes to hell, the justice of God is magnified. Why? Because they have sinned against Him. They have trampled on the eternal glory of the eternal God.
And if you understood what that means to see God as holy as He is, you would understand that eternal judgment is justice when you've trampled on the eternal glory of the eternal God.
So when those that are judged, they receive justice. For those who believe in Christ, those who have been forgiven and redeemed by His blood, they receive mercy.
[21:38] So those in heaven are there only because of the mercy of God. So what you see displayed for all eternity is both the justice of God and the mercy of God.

What you never see is injustice with God. Justice in judgment, mercy in redemption. Justice, mercy. mercy. Never injustice. So in the end of all things, all things will bring glory to His name. But I assure you, it matters to me a lot whether my life glorifies Him through justice or through mercy. As it certainly should for you. So, we've got to be clear on who Jesus is. We've got to be clear that when He says, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me, that we understand the reason we do that is because He is the source and the authority over all things and the only one worthy to be glorified.
God, so I just ask you this morning, are you living that way? Are you living for the glory of Christ? [23:03] Is that the purpose of your life? Do you make decisions based on how could I best bring glory to the Lord? Do you serve in your family through the lens of how can I best bring glory to the Lord?

Do you handle conflict in your marriage, conflict in the church, conflict at the work environment through the lens of how can I best bring glory to Christ? Do you receive blessings through the lens of how can I best receive this blessing in a way that gives glory to Christ?
That is where true joy is found. That's where true purpose is found, is aligning your life under the authority for which you've been created, namely, created by Him through Him and for Him.
And if we don't understand that, we will spend our entire lives chasing after something less than that for which you've been created.
And I don't want that for you and I don't want that for me. I don't want that for our church. I don't want our church to be involved in a thousand good things but miss the best thing.

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[24:13] I don't want our church to busy ourselves doing all kinds of things that may be noble and kind but are less than being clear on the gospel because it is the church of Jesus Christ alone that has this to offer to the world, namely, the story of the gospel that Jesus Christ in His body, through His grace, by His blood, saves those who call upon His name.

We cannot afford to be wrong on that. So ask yourself today, is that how you're living? Are you submitting yourself to Him?
If you say, well, who is Jesus to call me to deny myself and take up my cross and follow Him? Paul tells you here's who He is to say that because verse 16, by Him all things were created.
Listen, if I come to you and I tell you to deny yourself and take up your cross and follow me, run! Because I'm not worthy of it. Because I'm not the creator. And I'm not the redeemer. And I didn't live a sinless life.
[25:35] And I didn't die in your place. And I am not the one that verse 18 says is the head of the body, the church, that is Christ and Christ alone.

But, when the one who created all things, when the one who did lay down His life for you, when the one who did rise back from the grave, rise back to life, when He tells you to take up your cross and follow Him, do it.
He's worthy of it all. And we see His sovereignty displayed and demonstrated in His authority over all of creation.
Over all of creation. He says in verse 17, and He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.
In Him all things hold together. He's the only reason you're breathing right now. You know that. Christian, the reason why you're still alive today is because He has a purpose for your life.
[27:00] The reason why He has saved you and redeemed you and left you here is that you would display and magnify His glory by making disciples of all nations and baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

There's a purpose for your life. And the purpose for your life will never be measured by a paycheck. And the purpose of your life could never be measured by by a resume.
The purpose of your life has found that you have followed the one who created you and you have brought glory to Christ, the one who is above all things.
But unbeliever, let me speak to you too. Verse 17 says, He's before all things and in Him all things hold together.
can I say to you unbeliever, the only thing separating you from this moment and eternal judgment is the common grace of the Lord Jesus Christ who this day gave you breath and holds you together.
[28:12] If not for His kindness and mercy, mercy, you would have never seen this day. Nor did He owe it to you to give it to you.

You are being upheld this moment right now by one thing, the common grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.
And I beg you this day do not misinterpret His patience and His kindness as His indifference to your rejection of Him.
That would be a tragic mistake to say to yourself I have heard the gospel and I've rejected the gospel, I've heard the things of Christ, I have ignored the things of Christ, and I'm doing just fine. I'm living my life, jobs going well, families going just fine, income seems to be just fine, why would I deny myself, take up my cross and follow Jesus?
[29:32] I'm not doing any of that and I'm doing just fine, thank you very much. And the only reason that's true is because Jesus in His goodness continues to hold you together.

if for one moment He were to remove His hand of sustaining power over your life, you could not take one more breath, not one.
Do not misinterpret His patience as indifference. The Bible teaches us it's the kindness of God that leads us to repentance.
And you say, where's the evidence of His kindness? This is a hard world, it is. This can be a cruel world, for sure.
And maybe you're here today and you say, if it's the kindness of the Lord that leads us to repentance, where's the kindness? My life's a mess. Where's the kindness? My family's a disaster.
[30:53] Where's the kindness? My body is broken. Where's the kindness? I can't find a job.

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My relationships are strained. Where's the kindness? Here it is. on this day, in this moment, you have come face to face with the truth that Jesus Christ, the one who is above all things, laid down His life so that sinners could be saved.
saved. And that all who would call upon the name of the Lord would be saved. Even those who spent days rejecting Him, even those who spent years mocking Him, even those who may have spent a lifetime cursing Him.
Here's the kindness of God. God, He didn't judge you in the moment that you betrayed Him, and He could have. He didn't condemn you every single time you rejected the gospel, and He could have. And instead, in His kindness, He has brought you here. and on this day, you have heard the truth that the Lord Jesus Christ, who created all things and rules over all things, who is greater than everything and holds all things together, invites you to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Him.
[33:04] You need not improve yourself first. You need not build a spiritual resume first. You need to just come right as you are.

And in your heart, you confess your sin, and you acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, and you say, would you be merciful to me.
God, I'm a sinner, but I believe from your word you're a Savior. And this day, I deny myself, I'll take up my cross, whatever you call me to do, and I will follow you.
Why? Because He is worthy of it all. Don't be wrong on Jesus.
Lord, we thank You today for Your Word. I pray that Your Holy Spirit would come and accompany the preaching of Your Word with power and understanding. Lord, for any in this sanctuary right now who may not know You as Savior, that even this moment, they would call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.
[34:24] We ask that in Jesus' name. Amen. If we can help you, would you please take that connection card? Let us know how we can pray for you.

Let us know your need. We would love to meet with you, spend as much time as necessary to walk with you, and to help you to understand what it means to follow and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.
At this time, let me direct your attention to our video screens as we present to you the class.
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