

First Place in Everything

Week 38: Sept 17-23 – *Ephesians 5, 6; Colossians 1*

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Helpful Resources

Map of Paul's Missionary Journeys (p.59)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

As we finished Paul's letter to the Ephesians and began his letter to the Colossians, there was a subtle connection that we need to acknowledge. In the opening chapter of *Colossians*, Paul described the incomparable Christ and His relationship to God, to creation, to the angels, and to the Church. Jesus is also the firstborn from the dead, the first to be resurrected and defeat death forever. As a result, Christ is worthy to "have first place in everything" (*Col. 1:18*).

But what does that mean to us, for Christ to have first place in everything? It means that we are to do what Paul said in last week's review, "to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which we've been called" (*Eph. 4:1*). It means that we do all things as unto the Lord. As we develop relationships, as we work, as we serve the church, as we do everything, Christ is the one we should have at the forefront of our mind. Honoring Him with our lives is to be our priority. So then, in this review, we will connect the dots from the incomparable Christ, who should have first place in everything, to the everyday tasks of our lives.

- Taking First Place
 1. **In Whom We Have Redemption** (*Col. 1:13, 20*): Christ took our place on the cross and gave His life to pay the penalty for our sins. As a result, He took our unrighteousness upon Himself in exchange for His righteousness (*2 Cor. 5:21*). Now, we are clean in the Father's eyes, forgiven of our sins, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb (*Rom. 8:1, 2*).
 2. **The Image of the Invisible God** (*Col. 1:15, 19*): Since God is spirit, then He is invisible to the human eye. Thus, Jesus is God in human form, God in the flesh (*John 1:1-14; 14:9*). In this form, He was able to dwell among us and relate to us.
 3. **The Firstborn of Creation** (*Col. 1:15-17*): Jesus is not part of creation, but above it. He is the Creator of the world. The term *firstborn* is to signify a high-ranking position. Jesus is superior to creation, ruling over it. "He is before all things" (v.17). Not only were all things created through Him, but all things were created for Him (v.16).
 4. **He Is Before All Things** (*Col. 1:17*): Jesus existed before everything else came into being. Therefore, the Lord is eternal. He has no beginning and no end.
 5. **In Him All Things Hold Together** (*Col. 1:17*): Not only were all things made through Christ, but "in Him all things hold together." He is the Sustainer of creation. Without Him, all things would dissolve into chaos. Because of Him, we have order, beauty, and life.
 6. **Above the Angels** (*Col. 1:16*): Angels are created beings and, thus, are under the rule of God. They serve to glorify Him. Therefore, Christ is above the angels, which includes Satan and his demons. Even they are under Christ's authority.

7. **The Head of the Church** (*Col. 1:18*): The Church (redeemed sinners) exists because of Him. Therefore, the Church exists for Him (as His Bride). It should operate as He intends. We worship Him, obey His Word, and follow His lead.
 8. **He Is the Beginning, the Firstborn from the Dead** (*Col. 1:18*): Again, the word *firstborn* indicates high-ranking position. Death has no hold on Christ. He was not only resurrected, but He also defeated death. As a result, He can give us eternal life.
- Having First Place

What does it look like for Christ to have first place in our lives? Paul wrote, "Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord" (*Col. 1:10; Eph. 4:1*). Here are some examples.

"Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord..." (*Eph. 5:22*).

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church..." (*Eph. 5:25*).

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord..." (*Eph. 6:1*).

"Fathers (parents), do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (*Eph. 6:4*).

"Slaves (employees), be obedient to your masters... in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ, not by way of eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ" (*Eph. 6:5, 6*).

"Masters (employers)..., give up threatening, knowing that your Master is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him" (*Eph. 6:9*).

"Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might..." (*Eph. 6:10*).

"Put on the full armor of God, so that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil" (*Eph. 6:11-18*).

Everything we do should be done as unto the Lord. Whether it's in marriage, in parenting, in the workplace, in the church, or in other relationships, we are to think, speak, and do that which is pleasing to the Lord. We strive to please God first, rather than ourselves or others.

The Bottom Line

Because Christ has come to have first place in everything, honoring Him is to be our priority in life.

Questions to Consider

1. Why does Christ deserve to be first place in your life? Is He?
2. What does it look like to give Christ first place in your marriage? Are you?
3. What does it look like to give Christ first place in your parenting? Are you?
4. What does it look like to give Christ first place in your work? Are you?
5. What does it look like to give Christ first place in your church? Are you?
6. What does it look like to give Christ first place in your relationships? Are you?
7. If Christ has first place in your life, where does that put you or others?
8. Is it easy to give Christ first place in your life? Why or why not?