

## Colossians 1:15-20 “Don’t get Distracted”

CCH Sermon Sun 20<sup>th</sup> Sept 2020

### v 16b Do you ever get distracted?

- ▲ You remember you have an email to send, but when you open your inbox
  - there’s a reminder to renew your antivirus.
  - And then there’s a link to a blog that looks quite interesting,
  - and then there’s a document from your insurers
  - and it’s also the last day to get that online deal at a low price.
  - And an hour later it’s time to dash, but you’ve never sent the email.
- It happens all the time for
  - Toddlers at teatime
  - teens at tidy up time and
  - men and women supposedly working from home! DISTRACTION!
- **But the shocking thing is that you can get distracted from Jesus too.**
  - Sometimes it happens through what we might call **unspiritual things**.
    - a new man or woman in your life who takes such an interest in you, but isn’t interested in Jesus.
    - The busyness of life
    - Or just the sheer complexity of trying to figure out how to catch up with the relatives when you are only supposed to be 6 people.
      - It’s not your intention, but you start the term determined to read your bible or to make life group a priority, but “life happens” and you get distracted by so called “unspiritual things”.
  - But a massively helpful thing about Colossians is that it tells us that it’s possible to get distracted from Jesus by **spiritual things** too. (not just things outside the church community, but things inside the church community!)
    - Without knowing it,
      - that new regime to read the Bible, becomes an end in its own right
      - or that new Christian podcast series offering 10 techniques in prayer ends takes us from him.
      - Or that project for church that I’m working on for Jesus actually takes over my love for him
  - The Colossians were being tempted to think of Jesus as a great starting point, but now subtly having their focus on something else
    - They were being distracted away from Jesus by spiritual things.
    - And it may be that without realising it, right now,
      - you have become distracted too.
- So let’s listen in as Paul uses the absolute antidote to spiritual distraction, and that to blow their mind (and ours) with some amazing teaching about who Jesus is.
  - This is an incredibly rich passage
  - (and possibly with roots as a a hymn or creed)
  - (our whole passage today one sentence in the original)

- Let's look at this under two headings...

### **1) Jesus is supreme over all the creation. (v15-17)**

- let me read these verses again, and as I do so, see how they relate Jesus to EVERYTHING.
- **v15-17**
- You can't miss that Paul is talking about a cosmic Christ.
  - One who is absolutely awesome. Massive. Supreme. Number 1.
  - He's not Jesus one among many, he's not even Jesus the great, he's Jesus the only.
- He's the **Revealer, Ruler, Creator and Sustainer of all**.
- First he's **REVEALER**- v15 He's the image of the invisible God.
  - We live in a world where you can't see God.
  - Many people deny him, doubt him, reject him.
  - because they can't see him.
    - But if you were in Palestine, 2000 years ago, 2000 miles away, you could see God.
    - Jesus- the image of the invisible God.
    - Listen to him talk on the sermon on the mount, and you listen to God.
    - Watch him reach out to the outcast and the sinner, and you watch God reaching out to you.
    - See the kindness of Jesus as he dies on the cross in your place, and you watch God's kindness.
    - See it all replayed in the Bible, and you see the invisible God.
      - He makes God known. He's the revealer of all.
- he's the **RULER of all** too- v15b the firstborn over all creation.
  - The firstborn son back in the day was the one that inherited everything
    - This means that Jesus is the owner of all creation.
  - It all belongs to him!
    - Africa, America, Antarctica. It's Jesus's!
    - As one former European politician has put it *"there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ who is sovereign, does not cry Mine"* (Abraham Kuyper).
    - He is Lord and King, Messiah, Ruler. He is supreme.
  - [Just a PS: Firstborn doesn't refer to him being *born* in a stable,
    - NOR does it mean he had a beginning like us (as the JW's believe)- that would put him on the created side of the creator-creation line. No he's firstborn, because he's first in importance and authority]. He's the boss!
    - He's the ruler!
- He's the **CREATOR of all**. – v16
  - This verse is just mind-blowing (and we'll just pause on it for a moment).
  - All of creation came together IN him, THROUGH him, and FOR him.
  - Everything and everyone who was ever made! Created by Jesus and For Jesus!
  - And as Paul spells out, there are no exceptions.
  - v16.

- That list of 4 kinds of powers is important to the Colossians.
  - The Colossians lived in a time and place, where like in many parts of the world today, people believe that there are many spiritual forces and localised deities ruling the world.
- Emma and I watched a beautifully filmed but tragic 36min documentary
  - called the **last honey hunter**.
    - There's a link to it on the dig deeper sheet.
  - It's about a man in a Nepalese village in the Himalayas
    - who believed that he was chosen in a dream to follow in the local tradition
    - of harvesting a special hallucinogenic honey
    - only accessible by ladder in the crags of the mountains.
  - What's tragic is that this community is enslaved by fear to the spirit Rongkemi, a cruel god who you don't know may bless you with honey, or may curse you with death. Watch the film to find out for yourself what happens.
- Do you see how people can be enslaved to spiritual forces- thrones, powers, rulers, authorities? Whether linked to real demonic forces in the spiritual realms, or whether a figment of someone's imagination, they hold sway over people, like today's tarot cards, horoscopes and lottery numbers.
- But Paul is saying, whether visible or invisible, friendly or foe, there is no force, no spirit, no power, comes anywhere near Jesus let alone is on a par with Jesus.
  - He's the Creator of all. Deal with him and you are going to the top!
  - That's important if you've ever dabbled in dark powers or been fearful of spooky situations.
  - But it's bigger than that.
- It may not be the world of the honey bees of Kathmandu, or the spirit world that takes your eyes off Jesus.
  - But how many are hypnotised by a fear of Covid at the moment.
  - One article in the Times at the end of the summer speaks about "Covid's next torment", as if Covid has become a force or personality out to destroy us.
  - I don't want to minimise the seriousness of our current crisis, or suggest that we shouldn't be taking it very seriously.
  - But Covid is part of Creation, and Christ is the Creator.
  - He is so much bigger.
  - I loved Becca's advice at the very first livestream on Mother's Day. She resolved to do more talking about Christ than about coronavirus.
- But Covid aside, What really controls us? Jesus alone? Or Jesus plus.
  - Am I complete as a child of God in Christ,
    - Or do I also need the my friends at work or school to accept me?
  - Am I only happy with myself as a true man, or a kind mother, or a good bloke if
  -
- Does it ever feel like Jesus isn't enough?

- That I also need a new job or a new boyfriend or a new kitchen?
- Well does it put things in perspective that
  - These things are only possible because of Jesus.
  - HE made them!
- A couple of people had **birthdays** this week.
  - Imagine as their loved ones gave them the cake that they started worshipping the cake for being so amazing.
  - Now I love chocolate icing and delicious light fluffy cake (gluten free) like the next person
- But we all know that the person who made the cake is bigger and better and more precious than the cake itself.
  - How foolish to be distracted from Jesus by created things, whether spiritual or unspiritual.
  - **ALL THINGS WERE MADE IN, THROUGH, FOR JESUS!**

and last thing in v17, he keeps it going. He's the **SUSTAINER** of all things.

- He keeps everything going.
  - The only reason that the universe doesn't collapse is Jesus!
  - The reason you had your last breath or heart beat is because Jesus chose to give it to you! In him, all things hold together.
  - Dare I say it, the reason you haven't had Covid yet, is because Jesus has ruled it. That doesn't mean you don't ignore social distancing, but ultimately your life and death are in his hands.
  - Can I ask. **Is your Jesus big enough?**
    - It's one thing to nearly miss your bus, because you were distracted by thoughts of what you are going to have for dinner tonight.
    - But it would be rather sad if that happened when you are at the Grand Canyon.
  - The difference is, The Grand Canyon is massive, awe inspiring, huge, and not run of the mill and every day like a bus.
    - Well Jesus is not run of the mill and every day like a bus.
    - If he fills our view, we won't be distracted.
  - He towers like a spiritual giant over all of Creation. He made it.
  - He is its **revealer, ruler, creator and sustainer.**
- Let your view be filled with Jesus Christ.**

In the second half Paul moves from the creation, to the new Creation, from what Jesus has made, to what he is rescuing.

- But before we do, a few things that were made by Jesus! SONG!

## **2) Jesus- supreme over all the Church (v18-20).**

- Here's a picture our church! From the days before social distancing.
  - Not the building or the denomination- the people!
  - The amazing thing is that this King who is supreme over all creation, is actually interested in Christ Church Colossae, and Christ Church Huntingdon.
- You see this creation that he has made is (through our rebellion and sin) horribly broken. It needs mending.
  - And God is doing that in his project called the church.
  - And Jesus stands supreme as head over the church.

### **First he's HEAD. v18a**

- That again speaks of his supremacy and rule. A head rules the body.
- It also speaks of his life-giving power, because you can't have a very healthy body if it's severed off from the head.

### **He's the PIONEER v18b**

- in that the creator God came down into this broken world riddled with sin and cancer and covid, and led the charge through death and out beyond.
  - How can Jesus just be another item of luggage in already pretty full luggage department of life, alongside having a satisfying job, a decent house, 2.4 kids and some nice holidays.
  - He's not another piece of luggage. He's the whole car. He's the destination, the journey the whole adventure!
  - And he's driving the car out of death and darkness & into light and life (v12-13).

### **He's the FULNESS OF GOD.**

Look at verse 19.

- God was pleased (literally delighted) for all his fulness to tabernacle/dwell in Jesus.
- If I can put it reverently like this, there is no overflow of God to be found outside of Jesus. Fully God fully man.
- Why would you look for extra outside Christ?
- Why would your religion need a top up from rituals or rules or (as we will discover these Colossians).
- 2:9,10 "For in Christ all the fulness of the deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fulness".

but perhaps most wonderful of all. He's the **RECONCILER**.

- because Jesus is 100%man and 100%God only he can bring the two together.
- Slightly complicated but beautiful word.

▲ There's a film called the Straight Story. It's about an 73 man Alvin Straight who can no longer drive a car, but he can drive his sit on lawnmower and go at 5mph, so he takes the long journey thousands of miles on this lawnmower to visit his estranged brother before it's too late. How moving at the end when the brother sees the lengths Alvin has gone to to be reconciled with him. It's a beautiful moment.

- You and I and all of the creation is estranged cut off from our maker.
  - Not just humanity but the cosmos as well.
  - It's why there's Covid. The creation is out of sync with it's maker.
  - But this supreme Ruler, is the supreme servant, and he stepped into our world to mend the broken relationship.
  - He went to extreme lengths to have us back.
  - He made the go of it- it was his initiative, he didn't wait for us
  - And v20 he did it when his blood flowed physically from his body as he died historically on the cross 2000 years ago.
- He made peace. Like between Alvin and Henry (renamed Lyle in the film), he offers us and the whole broken cosmos a complete rescue, reconciliation, restoration, if we will reach out and receive it!

Do you see how big Jesus is? He didn't just make, us he rescues us!

- And in fact he is fixing the whole of creation and bringing it back to God. (v20)
  - He's not an extra topping to an otherwise happy life.
  - He's the life- created and spiritual.
- And if he creates and sustains the universe, then he is powerful enough to create and sustain spiritual life.

### **Is your Jesus big enough or are you adding to Christ?**

How do we subtly add something spiritual to Jesus?

- What is it that you feel you have to add to Jesus to make sure you are OK with God?
- The cross is great, but you might just feel a bit more secure with God if you've said your prayers or done your Bible reading. It's good to do your bible reading, but not as an addition to top up Christ's reconciling work, but to get to know this Christ better.
- Do you feel closer to God on a day when you've been to church and helped an elderly neighbour?
- Jesus did enough on the cross to reconcile the whole universe, you are not attempting to top up his work are you?
- You're not looking to some person, preacher, priest, philosophy, ceremony, ritual, church project, spirituality, or other "key" to top it up are you?
- Are you saying that Jesus hasn't done enough? Is he not big enough?

It's a crazy idea isn't it. If a bleach claims to kill 100% of all known germs, you don't need to add another liquid, whether it's fairy liquid or a bit of spit, or

- If you do that, you are implying that the bleach isn't enough.
- Jesus kills all sin, and perfectly reconciles us back to God.
- We don't need to top that up, we can rest in Him.
- Jesus has done all that is needed to reconcile the cosmos back to him.
- That doesn't mean that all will receive this reconciliation
- All who place their trust in Jesus are reconciled to Him- that's the wonderful gospel promise.

So don't move away from this gospel promise. And that's what we'll see next week. **Let's pray.**