**HIS STORY 9 – COLOSSIANS - HOW BIG IS YOUR JESUS? – STRETCHING YOUR CHRISTOLOGY**

When reading through Colossians this week I thought I was reading the book of **Ephesians** all over again….and I was! **About 70% of Colossians is also found in Ephesians.** But when we look closely at the book there is one theme that comes through this book unmistakeably. Who is Jesus? It's called **Christology** and the purpose of my message today is to teach you about **s t r e t c h i n g** your Christology of just who Jesus is.

Colossae was a city where the new believers in Jesus were **mostly Gentiles** (non-Jews). Chapter 1 tells us about this Church –they were **seeing a response** to the gospel, **confident in their hope, and loving one another** – all this because they have **believed this new gospel message** about Jesus who had rescued, transferred, purchased and forgiven them. Colossians is a good story. But there was **something concerning** Paul that weighed heavily on him. There were travelling teachers who were moving around from Church to Church saying things **that were false about Jesus…and this new gospel.** That he was **not fully human** – he was more like an apparition. After all, God could not possibly ***lower*** himself to become one of his created beings! That would be unheard of! And this teaching was gaining **popularity** because it **appealed to the Greek mind.**

And I want you to think this morning – **why it was so important for Jesus to be fully human?** After all – does it matter really if God came and went from a human body from time to time, or does it matter if God only chose to reveal **limited parts of himself to mankind** and not show his full character and being? Couldn’t God have just revealed himself from heaven by **dreams or visions** to a selected few who **passed on the message** to others? And the answer is yes it does matter!

And here is one of the ***key differences*** between Christianity and any other religion. Every other religion is based on **revelation to a person**….usually the leader or founder….who tells everyone else what to think. Our faith is based on a **revelation of a person!** John said in his gospel…. “I have seen him, he walked among us, lived with us and showed us the Father”.

Our salvation is dependent upon a **demonstration that God can live inside** humans, and that **resurrection can happen** to humans, and therefore **hope is that we too can be raised to new life** and sent heavenward. So here is Colossians, its essential message – The Supremacy of Christ. **Colossians is like one of those multi-layered sandwiches**, that has filling and bread, then more filling and bread…the filling is the teaching the bread the application.

**The Jesus of 2000 years ago, born in a manger in Bethlehem was not the beginning of Jesus!** *He is Pre-existent for all eternity. Creator, Sustainer, Intercessor, High Priest, Conqueror, Coming King.*

1. Christ (Jesus) is **God** in human skin – invisible God made visible Col 1:15
2. Christ is **Pre-existent** and supreme over all creation – spiritual realms, it was all created through and for him. He is the **‘cosmic glue’** of creation!
3. Christ the **Head** of the Church – his body. Head of a Church that is **suffering as it proclaims his gospel**….**Christ, you are the hope** of glory!
4. Christ the **Fullness** of God – who reconciled us by the cross
5. Christ the **Wisdom** of God - so here is the antidote to the heresy and false teaching based on human reasoning and loose morals.

*Whenever you see a ‘therefore’ in the bible ask: – what is the ‘therefore’ - there for?*

***Therefore*** **Chapter 2** is the application of chapter one.

Do three things: ***Grow* deep roots** down into Christ. ***Build***on Christ. ***Declare*** that truth by baptism. And then chapter two builds on chapter one by declaring:

1. Christ the **Victor** – through the cross he defeated all powers
2. Christ the **Liberator** – from living by the rules of dos and don’ts
3. Christ the **Completer** – Sat down at the Father’s right hand – all authority is his. Sat down because it is **finished**! **The cry from the cross**, he has completed the work the Father gave him to do and now he wants to complete that work in you too.

***Therefore*** **Chapter 3** is the application of chapter 2.

***Practice*** a daily death to your old life. ***Put on*** your new life with its new ways of living. ***Teach,*** exhort and encourage each other. ***Live Godly relationships*** in the home and at work…as you speak, as you write emails, in your marriage.

**Why this message of Jesus’ Supremacy?** So why do you think Jesus is painted as being supreme? **Why** do we need to capture insight into Jesus’ humanity and subsequent resurrection which defeats all evil, and now sits while his enemies are defeated? What do you think was going to happen to these believers that they needed this revelation of the supremacy of Christ and the hope of future glory? Because t**hey were going to be severely tested in this life. Now here is the part of the message we probably don’t want to hear so much….** But it’s something we need to get a handle on. They were **not going to get** – healing, deliverance and glory here in this world. They needed to be reminded that **all this is promised in the next world.** Now I want to for a moment **debunk some teaching** which goes a bit like this….come to Jesus – he will **solve all your problems**, **heal all your sickness**, **multiply your finances**, solve your family **squabbles** and bring copious **amounts of glory** here and now to your life. After all, he did not say I have come to bring abundant life! So, your expectation should not be that in this life you get everything now – and one day you will step on up into heaven and the only difference there will be an absence of evil. This **problem-solving Jesus can be yours for just a simple prayer** of faith – all this can be yours!

You can have it all now was what these false teachers were saying. People were **placing their hope in experiences** that God never promised in this life. And Paul writes to say something very different. In this World, you will face **trials, difficulties and opposition**. In this World, you will be **misrepresented, maligned and many of you will suffer** for my name's sake! In this World, you will be **hated – but be of good cheer** I have overcome!!!

And Paul writes the book of Colossians to remind us all – have a high powerful and hopeful Christology of Jesus….you will need it to last the journey of faith. **CS Lewis** puts it this way in his book **‘Surprised by Joy’ -** *He spoke of unmet longings in this life and the need to keep strong hope for the next world and the party to come!* Let me put it this way – you will **never be totally free from the pull and power of evil** until you leave this world. Your desires will **never get fully satisfied** until that day also. There is to be a **longing inside us for heaven** and glory that is our hope. There will be a **struggle until the day we die** and we are part of that struggle here and now as we **battle the World, Flesh and Devil** to declare the kingdom coming in our lives.

**What God gives now is** **patience to endure** and **run this race to the end**. Yes, we know a measure of victory here and freedom but it is nothing compared to what will come to us in heaven. **What does this all mean for tomorrow morning?** We live in a world of evil….disintegration and brokenness all around. God wants you to understand who Jesus really is. Only then you can put ‘hope forward’. God wants you to be real about the struggle you live in. God wants you to understand why some things happen the way they do.

If this doesn’t make sense to you….the reason is we are not under the kind of persecution and **pressure that some believers are in this World.** The further we get through these books the more intense this issue becomes!So this book, simply put goes like this: Jesus + Nothing = Everythingas Jesus is supreme. Grow deeply and build strongly on Him.Jesus is an all-powerful conqueror liberator & coming King. Put on the new life – keep your hope metre in good shape!He is my hope of glory. In Him I trust

Where the Church comes under persecution it grows stronger, and what comes to the fore – is the teaching about hope! Where the Church is affluent like in the west it is weak and easily influenced by the spirit of the age, and people fall away because of disappointment that God did not do what they wanted! So what now do we do? **Remind each other**….all the more that we taste now what later is coming in full!! Did you get a taste of God’s presence? Imagine what heaven is going to be like? Did you get some healing? One day we are going to a place where there is no more sickness! Did you find some measure of freedom from your bondage and habits? One day you will know complete freedom! Did you find help from your struggle with depression? One day the hope is that you will be in a place where you no longer struggle. This supreme Jesus has defeated evil and is bringing his kingdom to earth through his very human imperfect and fragile church. And he invites you and me to be a part of that!

**Now in the final chapter**…… it’s like the end of a book where the writer writes the credits to all those who help him! **Onesimus,** a runaway slave who came back. **Aristarchus**, a prison inmate chained up with Paul. **Demas,** who later fell away from faith in love with the world.

**Nympha,** one of theHouse church leaders. **Archippus,** do it – “carry out what God asks you to do”….it’s possible this man was the leader of the Church in Laodicea about 12 miles away from Colossae.

**PEOPLE** Reminds us that Church – is all about people. Different people, people with stories, pasts and challenges. But all with something in common….they have **this great HOPE** – that one day his kingdom will come down here and his reign and rule will prevail. And all this is because of Jesus and who He is. Now how ***s t r e t c h e d*** is your Christology?