**THE SUPREMACY AND SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST**

Colossians 1:1-23 (Key verse 18,19)

*“And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him*,”

Our postmodern world is become more and more relativistic, denying absolutes, refusal of authority and even among believers, Jesus is not enough. There seems to be a need for something else, Jesus plus something else. I remember back someone very close to me saying though we believe in Jesus we still need to help ourselves through Sangomas. That God help those who help themselves. Also a lot of people are not fulfilled, feeling powerless over sin and lives hardships. In Colossae they seem to be not much different they were facing almost same things just in a different form, for example they were falling into the believe of worshiping angels and legalism as we shall see in future chapters. Though they believed in Jesus, the influence of the Greeks and Gnostics taught them that Jesus was not enough, they needed other knowledge plus Jesus in order to be holy and have fulfilled lives. The theme of this book is Christ Supremacy and sufficiency. This is why Paul wrote this letter to the Colossian believers. The first part of the message is really Paul’s thanksgiving encouraging the Colossians to live a life worthy of the Lord and the second part is about who Jesus is. I pray that God may bless our Colossians study, to be convicted of Christ Supremacy and sufficiency in everything including our lives and the Church.

**Part I: Live a life worthy of the Lord**

Paul had been imprisoned in Rome and was visited by Epaphras one of the founders of the Church in Colossae. It is clear that he gave a very good report about the Colossian believers however still he also came with concerns surrounding the Church and the influence of false teachings in the province. Colossae was not so far from Ephesus and as Paul spent some time in Ephesus people came from all over to hear his message. Epaphras became one the most Zealous persons from Colossae and later one established a Church there in Colossae. The Church was fairly young and in about 60-63 AD he had come to visit Paul prison mainly because of his concern for the Colossian believer’s faith. It believed that Paul had never been to Colossae or been to the Church in Colossae. So the book of Colossians is about Paul’s letter which he writes to the Colossian believers in response to the report from Epaphras. Thus we see in Chapter 4:12 Paul writes, “Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus sends greetings…” Based on the report from Epaphras and the situation in Colossae, let us now look at Paul’s greeting and introductions to the Colossian believers in this part.

Look at verse 1-2, “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.” Paul’s greeting begins with his very identity, that he is writing to them as “an apostle of Christ Jesus” not by his own choosing or human election, but by the will of God. Basically Paul is saying here that he is not writing his own human opinions, but that what he writes has the authority of God. He goes on to greet them, Grace and peace to you from our God our Father. This was a popular way of greeting the believers in those times. In this way Paul has set the tone of his letter and the authority of which he is writing.

Paul begins with giving thanks, from verse 3-5, Paul was thankful of their faith in Christ Jesus and love for one another. It was clear that they had hope in the kingdom of God that was brought about by the gospel truth. This newly found hope gave them faith in Jesus Christ and made them active members in loving one another [1-5]. Because of the gospel truth they had hope that is not dependent on the situation of this world, because of the gospel truth they heard they could have genuine faith in Jesus Christ. This is indeed an amazing work of God worthy of praise and thanksgiving. Imagine a gentile nation that knew nothing of God, but because of the gospel truth, could have hope in the coming kingdom of God through faith in Jesus Christ. From verse 6-8, Paul acknowledges that they had learned the gospel truth from Epaphras who is a fellow servant and faithful minister of Christ Jesus. Because of the very gospel truth taught by God’s servant, all over the world the gospel was bearing fruits and it is growing just as it has grown among them. This gave Apostle Paul and servants of God great encouragement and gratitude to keep praying for them. Look at verse 9-10, “For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,” Paul’s prayer was that they may be filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. This was not a prayer for them to have head knowledge of the word of God as they study the Bible, but so that they may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way. Their study of the Bible should result in them bearing fruit in every good work. Not only to study the Bible to do good work, but to bear fruit from that good work. Epaphras is a good example of this, after he learned the gospel truth from Apostle Paul, he went on and did a good work of spreading the gospel truth and establishing Churches of which one of them is in Colossae. The fruit he bore was those who started to accept the gospel truth and more importantly the genuine love he had for others. And that as they produce fruit in every good work, that they may grow in the knowledge of God.

Our knowledge of God will not only grow from studying the Bible but from also obeying what we learn, then as we produce fruit from good works, our knowledge of God will also grow. It was only when I started serving 1:1 Bible studies that I could understand better Jesus sacrificial love for me. Because back in the days I had a bible student who would not let me know that he cancelled our bible study, so after I shifted things around and my plans for the day for Bible study. I would borrow Shepherds Rebekha’s car to go have Bible studies at the student place of residence. After knocking many times at their door and making calls there would be no responses. This would happen a couple of times and I would become greatly upset with the student in my heart. However over times as I learn about the gospel truth through Sunday messages and Bible studies, I would realize how I myself am no different before Jesus. I fail Jesus many times yet he keeps embracing me as his child, His love for me is unconditional. This made me understand better Jesus love and compassion for me. So I too pray that our study of the Bible may fill us with the knowledge of God’s will in every way, so we may bear fruit in every good work and grow in the knowledge of God. May we live a life worthy of the knowledge of God.

**Part II: Who is Jesus?**

Though Paul was filed with much thanksgiving for the Colossian believers, he still knew of the false teachings and heresies that was beginning to influence the Colossian believers. There was growing new knowledge that was trying to impress and show itself to be supreme, teaching that Christ alone is not enough for our salvation. We will then learn who Jesus is in relation to God and all creation. Paul at this point does not focus on the false teachings but rather to make clear to the Colossian believers who is Jesus whom they have come to believe in. Let us now learn who is Jesus.

Firstly, Jesus is the image of the invisible God, look at verse 15a, “The Son is the image of the invisible God,” from Exodus 33:20 reads that no one can see the face of God and live, we also know from the ten commandments that no one should make for themselves any image of a god to worship it or to bow to it (Exodus 20:4-5). However, God has revealed himself through Jesus. Once Apostle Philip asked Jesus, "Show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered, "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" [John 14:8-9]. Only Jesus can say this because only Jesus is the image of the invisible God. Jesus in response to the Pharisees when been accused of claiming to be equal with God said, “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.” No prophet, angel, Bhuda or Mohamed can ever this of themselves. Jesus is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact representation of His being [Hebrews 1:3]. That is why we can never create our own versions of Jesus Christ, there is only one God and Jesus Christ is the very image of our invisible God. The two are one and Jesus came to our human level form, so that through him we can see God and experience God personally. God is not some high knowledge concept made up by man, we did experience God through the person of Jesus Christ. When we want t know the true God, we should come to Jesus.

Secondly, Jesus is the creator of all things, look at verse 15b-16 “…the firstborn over all creation. 16For in Him all things were created, things 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.” All things were created through Jesus and for Jesus. That is why in science we can never say, someone created something, science always discovers things, we can say someone invented this or that, but no one can ever create but God. That is why we are all governed by the third law of thermodynamics, that energy cannot be created but only changed from one form to another. However, through Jesus Christ all things were created, visible and invisible, things in heaven and on earth thrones and dominions, rulers or authorities. This means that, just as we cannot know God without Jesus, we also cannot know creation without Jesus. To also say Jesus is the firstborn over all creation means that Jesus is first over all creation, he stands supreme over all things. However what should this mean to the Colossian believers and to us? It means that apart from Jesus, we cannot find the answers to the fundamental questions of existence or life, such as "Who am I?" "Where did I come from?" "Where am I going?" "Why am I here?" But when we know that through Jesus all things were made, including ourselves, everything can become clear.

We can discover God’s will for our lives, that we are not simply living or surviving to find the next thing that can make us happy or give us pleasure. But that, Jesus is the reason that me and you exist. For since all creation was made through Jesus, it is because of Jesus that me and you exist. To find out who you are, or the meaning of your life? We should not go to any particular place or seek some magical knowledge from some person. We should come to Jesus Christ for all things were created through Him and that in Him all things hold together [17]. Because of the current pandemic we may be asking ourselves many questions, some of us are losing loved ones, some jobs are not guaranteed because of the regulations and some its been difficult finding a job. Probably difficult does not even begin to describe the hardship. We may find ourselves again and again asking ourselves what is the meaning of this life, what is my purpose or God’s will for my life. I pray that we may come to Jesus all the more through whom all things stands in creation.

Third, Jesus is the head of the church, look at verse 18, “And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and firstborn from among the dead, so that in all things He may have supremacy.” the church hear is not a building but a body of believers, we may have different denominations of Churches, however Jesus is head of all of us. The purpose and function of the church can only be received from Jesus, it should never be what we desire or what makes us happy. Jesus alone and no man or angel is the head of the Church. And because Jesus is the beginning and firstborn from among the dead, he has supremacy. This means that Jesus is supreme because he is the beginning and the first to be raised to eternal glory. Though some have been raised from the dead, only Jesus was raised to eternal glory no longer subject to death. Jesus rains over all things. Verse 19 says, “For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him” this means that Jesus Christ is sufficient. Jesus is the final, complete, perfect revelation of God. Jesus lacked nothing of God. This refuted the false teaching that Jesus was insufficient, that something else in addition to Jesus was needed. Paul proclaims that Jesus is sufficient for our salvation, for our spiritual growth, and for everything that we need. The Covid pandemic has impacted the Church, the body of believers all over the world, a number of believers are no longer meeting and having fellowship with one another. Our own ministry is also challenged because its not allowed to go on campus for gospel sharing and bible study invitation. However, I am thankful that Jesus is the head of the Church, he stands supreme over all things and is sufficient to make the church fulfil her calling and purpose in this world. Even for our individual lives, Jesus stands supreme and is sufficient to sustain us. Jesus said to the weary and burdened, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Let's come to Jesus by faith.

 Fourth, Jesus is the reconciler, look at verse 20, “and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through the blood of His cross.” Sin separates us from God, it kills the peace we have with God. Because of sin man’s relationship with one another is also broken. There is enmity, lust, hatred, jealousy, unfaithfulness, etc. No one can fix man’s heart or the world. However because Jesus laid down his life for us on the cross shedding his blood on the cross, taking the punishment we deserved upon himself. Jesus reconciled to Himself all things, he made peace through His blood. Because of His blood me and you are reconciled to God, no longer separated from God. Because of the blood of Jesus we can come to God in repentance, by the blood of Jesus we have the power to repent and be reconciled to God and live in the peace that comes from God. Only when we depend on the blood of Jesus is it possible to overcome our sinful problems. Because only Jesus can present us to God holy, unblemished and blameless in God’s presence [22]. We can live our Christian lives amidst this pandemic and live hardships when we continue in our faith, holding on to the hope held out in the gospel [23]. The blood of Jesus can take away all our transgressions and cleanse us from all our sins. This is the gospel that apostle Paul preached of which he had become a servant of. This is the very gospel we too preach today, because Jesus is the same yersterday today and forever.

**In conclusion**, in this passage we have learn about who Jesus is, Jesus is the image of the invisible God. Jesus is the creator or person through who all creation happened. Jesus is the Head of the church. Jesus is the Reconciler. Jesus is supreme over all things and is sufficient to fulfil all the purposes he has intended for your live and my life. In a word, Jesus is everything. We find everything we need in Jesus. We can be satisfied in Jesus alone. Let's come to Jesus, encounter Jesus, and live in Jesus in every area of our lives. Amen.