

# Colossians

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[ 0 : 00 ] For attention to Paul's epistle to the Colossians, chapter 1, and the last clause of the 18th verse.

Paul's epistle to the Colossians, chapter 1, and the last clause of the 18th verse. That in all things he might have the preeminence.

The verse reads, and he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. That in all things he might have the preeminence.

When we are unconverted and know not the law, when there is no work of grace in our hearts, then he does not have the preeminence.

The Lord Jesus Christ, as here spoken of, means nothing to us. The preaching of the cross is foolishness to them that perish.

[ 1 : 22 ] And the Lord Jesus does not have the preeminence. But when the work of grace has begun in the heart of a dead sinner, when his eyes are open and his ears are open, when he enters that pathway spoken of in Scripture, and now we see, blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear, then there is a beginning of what is a long pathway of the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ to the sinner and to conform that sinner to the image of Christ.

And that work is not completed until we breathe our last breath. And that is the work that the Apostle is speaking of here, that he might have the preeminence.

It is not complete. The Apostle speaks in this chapter of increasing in the knowledge of God. A growth in grace.

There is no perfection here. But there is a growing in conformity to the image of Christ. And there is a place at the end of the journey when there is nothing between the soul and Christ.

When everything is in conformity with his mind and will. When we are brought to lay everything down here and to follow him and to obey him.

[ 3 : 31 ] When there are no affections that come between us and him. When there is no will that is at cross purposes with his will. When there is no conflict between us and him.

So often in the journey God's dear children are at variance with him. He does not have the preeminence in their affections.

He does not have the preeminence in obedience. They walk in known disobedience and rebellion.

They are his children. They do not seek first. They do not seek first. They do not seek first. The kingdom of God and his righteousness.

They seek first the things of this world. They cling to the things of this world. And they know they are doing it. God will have the preeminence.

[ 4 : 41 ] Jesus will have the preeminence. There are things in their hand which they are holding tightly and it is as it were that hand has to be opened. They have got to be dropped.

And it seems clear in the scriptures and in the experience of the pathway that the only things that make us drop those things to which we cling that are wrong are afflictions.

Fires furnaces tribulations are the only things that bring us to heavenly wisdom to see what is the way of true happiness.

What is the way to be delivered from the chastening hand of God for whom the Lord loveth. He chastens. What is he doing?

He is making us drop those things to which we are clinging. He is sending a storm into our life like he sent one into the life of Jonah that he might understand that he did not flee from the presence of the Lord and defy him and disobey him but that he obeyed him.

[ 5 : 56 ] And God will chase him to bring his dear church to this place where they obey. But first of all let us look in our chapter here this morning that we made those few opening remarks.

Let us look in our chapter first of all at the blessedness of the truth that is here. For the opening verses of this chapter make it quite clear that the same truth is manifested here regarding the Lord Jesus Christ.

By him all things consist. And he is before all things. And our God, the second person in the Trinity has the preeminent.

He is the firstborn of every creature. Everything in this world whether it be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.

He is the Alpha and Omega of it all. And so we read the opening glorious truth of the Lord Jesus Christ in the first verse of the Gospel of John where the Apostle gives to his beloved Lord whom he loved so well the preeminence in the beginning was the Word.

[ 7 : 16 ] Or what could give him more preeminence than that? And the Word was with God and the Word was God. And he goes on in that opening chapter without him was not anything made that was made in him was life and the life was the light of men.

And he shows how the Lord Jesus Christ was the firstborn every creature. And you know I believe this that when the Lord works in the heart of a sinner the first truth that he will learn his sovereignty divine sovereignty.

When the Lord worked in the heart of his dear servant Moses and Moses asked that he might see his glory he did reveal his glory on Simeon and in that glory he revealed a blessed truth.

For it wasn't any visible glory as he hid him in the cleft of the rock. What he revealed to him was the glory of his name. and he proclaimed his name.

And the opening of that proclamation is this the Lord the Lord God. And it is a truth which must be established in our hearts in its entirety at the very first commencement of the work of God in our soul.

[ 8 : 57 ] That we're not our own. that we have not a day to call our own. That we're in his hands. That he does as he will among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth that none can stay his hand or say unto him what doeth thou.

You know when God works in salvation there's going to be a coming down. proud nature has to be dealt with.

Ye are not your own. And this truth will be established in our hearts.

And we shall be brought beneath him. And it is the great hallmark of the work of God in the soul. That we come to the place where the apostle Paul came when he said Lord what will they have me to do?

It's the great principle of the work of God in the heart of a sinner. And no longer is he the captain of his soul.

[ 10 : 20 ] He owns a higher power. A divine authority. God has to do the will. But you see there are degrees of knowledge.

And whilst we may want to do the Lord's will, yet when it comes to that will crossing our own, we don't want it.

When it comes to a conflict, we cannot say take what they will. there is a conflict in our text between God and the sinner.

And if this truth is to be true of us, that he might have the preeminence, then there's going to be a conflict. for so much of the way we want God and mammon.

We want a mixture of God in our own will. God's dear children, under the teaching of his spirit, have to learn what Moses learned on Sinai, the Lord, the Lord God.

[ 12 : 00 ] God and it's like this, you know, a pillar of cloud before and a pillar of fire behind and they were shut in.

And God determined where they went. God determined every footstep of their life. God determined everything that happened to them.

All their food was provided by him. All their strength was his. Moses' strength was not diminished, neither his eye dimmed when he was 120.

The Lord had supported his dear servant. But there was a control, there was a power, and mark this, there was a security.

safety. Oh, there was a safety. But the Lord went before them and mapped out the way.

[ 13 : 11 ] And they followed and they obeyed. all how different were those steps from the argument that Moses had with Christ at the burning boy.

He did not have the preeminence in that moment. He could not trust him implicitly. He could not go to Pharaoh in faith. He knew too much of what that court meant and the death that was there and the rule of Pharaoh.

And he couldn't face it. Send whom thou will. He was a man of God. But he conflicted with his God.

God did not have the preeminence in faith. He did not have the preeminence in obedience. He could not have had the preeminence in his affections.

Otherwise you would have evaded him. If you love me keep my commandments. For when we see the learning of the words that he learned on Sinai long after he'd come through the Red Sea the law the law I say there's a growth there's a growth in the knowledge of God.

[ 14 : 40 ] show me now thy glory. Here is the glory of God that he might have the preeminence in our lives.

In every footstep of the journey in his divine sovereignty that we in sincerity oh I cannot explain the depth of sincerity which God requires.

I'll show you one glorious example of sincerity and that was when Abraham laid Isaac on the altar of sacrifice. That was obedience.

And raise the knife over everything. raise the knife over the divine promise. Oh what an example that he might have the preeminence.

What an example. What a glorious example of obedience. He did not flinch. His eyes were up to heaven.

[ 15 : 59 ] He didn't always walk like that as you well know. He denied his wife in front of Pharaoh. but in that hour his eyes were up to heaven. And what an example.

He went all the way knowing what it meant. The knife was raised over his whole religion.

And there everything was there. The promise of God was there. And the apostle Paul in looking at it in wonder said, accounting that God was able to raise him from the dead.

He knew what it meant. Whereof he received him in the figure. But I tell you this, that that lovely account shows us that when Christ has the preeminence, there will be blessing.

And Mount Moriah to Abraham was this, Jehovah Jarrah. it was a place he never forgot. Obedience must produce blessing.

[ 17 : 30 ] He left Mount Moriah with these words of God in blessing. And you know, if we attempt to analyse what that blessing was, it was the grace that was given to him to walk that way.

Of giving his God the preeminence. The way of implicit obedience. The way which said Jehovah Jarrah in his heart.

And he couldn't see what was going to happen. The way which rested in his God in the hour of bitter conflict.

In which he needed strength. And God gave him every particle of strength which he needed. The strength to raise the night.

The strength to obey. When he came from that mountain, lovely word, in blessing. God what if he had shied on the way, like Jonah shied on the way to Nineveh?

[ 18 : 59 ] What if he had taken his eyes off Jesus? What if he had left forth a moaning complaint? all these things are against me?

Well, that he have said, O Lord, I am a prayer. Undertake for me. Well, had he done it, they'd have been chastening.

him blessing. Here is the example before us in the page of the scripture. If we walk, and we can lay this principle down here this morning, as revealed in the divine record before us, we may truthfully say that if God does not have the preeminence, then we must expect chastening.

Do you accept that? Can you add your amen to that?

And that chastening, I might attempt to analyse. It'll be darkness, dear friends. That's initially. It'll be a sense of the Lord's anger, of his displeasure.

[ 20 : 48 ] It'll be sorrow. It must be. The principle that is before you in the scriptures is this.

Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. I have not found so great faith, said Christ, not in all Israel.

When he has the preeminence, we walk like that centurion. We walk like Abraham.

We go like Elijah did to Carmel. and pray for the fire and the rain. God's dear children, when they trust him, will ever prove that he is the God of his word.

He will never leave them nor forsake them. but he calls them to go into the fire, into the furnace, into the thorn and the flesh, into the cross, and into the weakness.

[ 22 : 20 ] But they will prove in it his faithfulness. he calls them into the obedience of his hands, and they will prove in the waters of baptism his presence.

I can lay it down here this morning with absolute certainty that not one of his children has ever walked that way in obedience to his commandments without his presence.

What a truth. I am with thee. Israel passing through the fire. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.

He is a God of his word. His children will prove as they are enabled by faith in blessing.

I will bless thee. They will prove as they are enabled by faith to venture on him that he is with them. And finally in the great waters of death. The same golden thread running through all.

[ 23 : 51 ] from its beginning to its end. The alpha and omega of their faith. It will take them through that last solemn hour to heaven into his presence.

and here we see him, the firstborn of every creature and the first begotten from the dead.

In all things he might have the preeminence. He has gone to the grave for them. He has risen for them. one day he will come to call their bodies from the grave and to raise them.

One day he will come to have that blessed preeminence. The first begotten then.

Where now is he in your pathway? where is he in mine? I feel it as I preached to you this word was given to me quite distinctly during the past week to preach here from.

[ 25 : 20 ] I felt it drop into my heart suddenly and my attention was aroused to this word for I have felt of late that the Lord has been calling me to an awareness over my life of the lack of the perfection of that preeminence in my soul.

God that there were things standing between my soul and my God things of my will that is obedience things of my affection and he will not have anything that will lie between us and him.

He will mar all that we attempt to put in the way of him. He will work in such a way that we shall be brought into that place where we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and where we know in the peace of our heart there is nothing which lies between our souls and him.

Now let me attempt this morning to search out your hearts and answer these questions does he have the preeminence in your life?

What is wrong? what is there which comes between you and him? Martha was careful and troubled without many things.

[ 27 : 25 ] Mary sat at the feet of Jesus. What comes between your affections and him?

I wonder you see we sing many hymns and he makes one almost shudder. From the pulpit it does me good every now and then when I become aware that somebody in the congregation is not singing the hymn.

I've witnessed it once or twice lately and I wonder why. So easy to glibly sing the hymns.

but I wonder how many of you could truthfully honestly before God sing I could from all things parted me but never never Lord from me.

How far to what degree has he the preeminence in your life? And when it comes to your will are there things which you feel you could not give up?

[ 29 : 02 ] are there things which you just feel totally and utterly unable to say before the law when my late wife was taken from me some of you may have noticed that at the funeral service I gave out I had on the hymn sheet the 261st hymn it is the Lord enthroned in light whose claims are all divine who has an undisputed right to govern me and mine I wonder how many of you noticed what I did I did not include the last verse the last verse was omitted from the hymn sheet and the last verse is this my gracious

God take what thou please I had a child I could not commit him that was the reason why I left that verse on the Lord in that hour and I knew it in my heart in that hour and you know this preeminence is everything utterly everything health home family is included in this preeminence but there came an hour and I can say this before God there came an hour in my operation in the Royal United in 1979 when the

Lord so dealt with me and so blessed my soul but I laid in his arms in that hospital after the operation like a little child and in that moment I could and did commit everything my whole family and wife and all into his hands and I could have left them all there knowing that he would care for it searches us to the very core and we don't know how far or to what degree he has the preeminence in our life until we're brought to the issue and have to lay everything health home family partner all upon that altar of sacrifice

I believe there's a purpose in it you see because the Lord is preparing us for death and we shall have to do it and he will bring us to himself into the experience of this the Lord the Lord God and we dwell on this for a moment in the exercise of this pathway that he might have the preeminence Satan and you may think this strange that Satan would have us see our God as one we cannot trust and he may do to us awful things but you see let me point you to this in all the path that Jacob walked in all the loss that he had of

Joseph and Benjamin in all the grief of his spirit as the Lord dealt with him what Joseph said was true it wasn't you he said to his brethren it was the Lord and he could see that God had done it for their good and it must be that in every part of the wine in every step of providence and grace God is working for our good we cannot see it often he says to us in the journey he said it to me several times the clouds he so much dread are big with mercy and shall break in blessings on your head when we give him the preeminent there are going to be those mysterious things in our lives which you cannot understand but you know we shall have his presence his strength his approbation his blessing as we're enabled as Abraham was to go to

[ 34 : 46 ] Mount Moriah so there we shall see the divine provision the ram caught in the thicket is typical of a multitude of divine provisions of the Lord typical of the Lord Jesus Christ himself the greatest of all provisions of his church I always remember what my dear father said to me many years ago now when sitting on a train in one of the main London stations waiting to depart I was having a discussion with him about blessings and mercies and trial and I was in a deep trial myself at the time and not knowing which way to turn and he said this always remember these words shall never forget he said if we avoid the Lord's trials we shall avoid the

Lord's blessings I proved that and many times since then I've avoided the Lord's trials I've shied and turned away in the face of a trial and perhaps there's someone here with a heavy trial before them in the midst of a heavy trial and they're shying how can they get out of it how can they alter their path my dear friends there's only one why that's right and it's that he might have the preeminence and it's to go to him not my will but thine bid I leave me in thy powers and teach me for thou art the God of my salvation you think of that perhaps the Lord has shut you up slaughtered you frustrated you held you down you cannot move you cannot turn for he did it to

Joseph and he carried a vision the vision was yet for an appointed time at the end it would speak it did when it did he broke down and wept how he longed to hasten the Lord's purposes how he put his hand to the butter and the baker's tree to attempt to get himself remembered and how the Lord shut him in the prison too fully but in the end when he came out he came out with haste he had to hasten to shave to get into the court of Pharaoh in time when the Lord's way was ready I tell you this when the

Lord's time is ready every door will open from your prison as it did from Peter's you'll go through the first and the second gate and I tell you this they will open before you you won't have to touch them and you'll know what's right when he has the preeminence nothing will hold you in God will bring you out and God and I say it here this morning with divine authority the Lord will provide who I say that to I do not know but the Lord will provide he has sent me to tell someone that here this morning and in the days to come you'll see it but the way to it is this he must have the preeminence and be prepared it may not be your way my thoughts are not your thoughts neither are your ways my ways saith the

Lord for as the heavens are higher than the earth so just so exactly so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts we have to learn it we have to walk it in we have to prove it I began this morning by speaking of sincerity it means this that we must go to him prepared for his will we must go to him not saying thy will be done when we want our own we must go to him in absolute total sincerity and seek to know his will and all to have grace when we know it to obey grace when we know his will to be brought to walk it out now

[ 41 : 00 ] I haven't preached to you like I have this morning without having walked out every step of what I've preached to you and I know that what I'm saying is going to cost you agony it's cost me agony I know that when he has the preeminence we shall have sufferings and sorrows I know that his will is a pathway that is peculiar to him but dear friends Joseph went through over twenty years of deep sorrow and he could see at the end of it that it was all right everything was right before

God he had the whole many times in the journey he didn't think that when he when he named Manasseh it was forgetting as though the past was behind him and gone forever Ephraim fruitful in the land of his captivity Manasseh forgetting his father's house he couldn't see but he did see and Jacob was the same he couldn't see God worked that Joseph should not have a place between Jacob and his God he took him away and he took Benjamin away but you mark it he restored God and both and my

God is like that he's a God of love his path is not what Satan would make it out to be oh he's a God of mercy the Lord the Lord God merciful gracious long suffering you mark here is your God the pathway is obedience the pathway is faith the pathway I tell you this this morning with absolute certainty the pathway is blessing it'll be a cup of sorrows and it'll be a cup of blessing amen it'll be Drum All right.

All right.

All right.

[ 45 : 38 ] All right.

All right.

All right.

All right.

All right.

[ 48 : 08 ] All right.

All right.

All right.

All right. All right. All right.