

Message Series Title: **'Moving Forward: What Does That Look Like For You?'**

Message Title: **'Jesus: A League of His Own'**

Scripture Source: **Colossians 1:15-23**

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Controversy

When it comes to Jesus, opinions, perceptions, and convictions are all 'over the map.' In most cases, He is well thought of. Rarely throughout history has Jesus been spoken of negatively, as one who was a detrimental person in the history of humanity. Yet, controversy rages in many religious or philosophical circles. Just Google 'the uniqueness of Jesus' and trace the range of thoughts, beliefs, and opinions. It is thought provoking.

We have many people who regard Jesus as a wonderful example of moral purity, unconditional love, and a source of wise and down to earth teachings for everyday living. Yet, he is placed, by many in the same league of dominant religious founders or leaders...Buddha, Mohammad etc.

At Redeemer, your leaders and pastors see Jesus as in a 'league' of his own. As far superior to all other religious or philosophical leaders/teachers. Why? Because of the teachings of Scripture and the claims of Jesus, from his own lips.

This morning I want to help you move forward in your understanding of who Jesus is, why He came to earth, and what he has in mind for you...for all humanity.

At one point in his life, Jesus turned to some followers and asked this timely and searching question recorded in Matthew 16:13-17 "Who do people say the Son of Man is?...Who do you say I am?"

Let me ask you...who do you think Jesus is? Why did he show up on this planet? What could he mean to you? As clearly and simply as you can say...

Declaration: Colossians 1:15-22 (made in the face of questions about Jesus and the faith)

This passage of Scripture makes some astounding, thought provoking, and mind stretching claims. Would you ponder them thoughtfully? Would you acknowledge that your mind, like mine, has limitations?

Who is Jesus?

The Revealer of God: Colossians 1:15 – Compare Hebrews 1:1-3, John 1:14, 18, 14:8-9
Jesus is God 'with the skin on.'

The Creator and Sustainer of creation: 1:16-17 – yep, mind boggling! Yet, Christians choose to believe these strong and clear declarations that speak of the reality of the supernatural.

The Risen Founder and Head the Church: 1:18 Compare: Ephesians 2:19-21

Saviour: 1:19-22 – All the fullness of God resided in Jesus, for a profound purpose...to provide salvation from the penalty of sin and death and enable people...like you and me, to experience a restored relationship with God. Compare The Message rendering of these verses. It is the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross that makes this restoration possible. A penalty had to be paid...for your sin and mine.

What do you make of these Biblical declarations? Honestly now...

Explanation: Colossians 1:21-22

The writer becomes personal and direct. He draws his readers in and reminds them of how they personally needed the salvation Jesus secured. And that includes you and me, thousands of years later.

Our sin ruptured the relationship with God. Our choices to be our own lord and leader separated us from God. The inability to love God fully, others sacrificially and ourselves wisely resulted in a broken relationship with God. Compare: Romans 3:23, 6:23.

Consideration

What do you make of what you have been hearing in music and message? Are you gaining clarity of understanding regarding who Jesus is and why he came? For some of us, this may be new material that will take some time to digest and think through. If we can help you, please ask us. Let God know that you want to know the truth about who Jesus is. Pray to that end.

Move forward in your understanding through conversations, and personal study. Check out resources such as Lee Strobel's series of books, beginning with 'The Case for Christ' and 'The Case for Faith.' Go online and research these questions on Ravi Zacharias' website.

Think through the beliefs you hold to...are they meeting the deepest needs of your soul and answering the most stirring questions of your mind...such as, 'Why am I here?...what about the afterlife, is there a purpose worth giving my life to?'

Don't stay stuck in confusion, fear, and biblical ignorance. One final consideration. Examine from the Gospel of John the 'I am' statements of Jesus. 'I am the good shepherd, I am the light of the world...' Ponder his claims, for we learn much about his character and his purpose for coming to earth from his claims. And, we see ourselves as core to his 'reason for being.'

For many of us who profess to be followers of Jesus, are we able to help people think through their questions?

Invitation: Colossians 1:23

How can we experience the life changing power of God's salvation? The guilt easing offer of forgiveness of sins? Through faith in this message of Jesus, this good news. We come to a point, a place of believing that this message is true and has full relevance to my life...and we ask God to forgive us on the basis of the sacrificial death and triumphant resurrection of Jesus.

This invitation has your name on it my friend. 1 John 1:9 What will you do with this invitation? Today, you can move forward through an honest and simple act of faith in Jesus and his good news message. Can we help you after church? We would love to.

Participation: Colossians 1:24-29

Paul passionately declares that he is fully committed to helping others gain clarity regarding this gospel message, and grow in becoming like Jesus in character and conduct. He is fully engaged in doing his part to see this hope infusing message become core to people, one precious life at a time! He is willing to suffer for this grand cause of Christ. He pours his life out in acts of service for the sake of others and the building up of a strong and healthy church family.

What of my commitment to this level of participation in 'making disciples' of Jesus, who in truth become 'disciple makers' of others in their world? If we bear the name Christian, participation is essential. Compare Ephesians 4:11-16 "The body grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

I am so grateful for the many who are passionate and committed participants in this mission of 'making disciples of Jesus.' Thank you! Yet, commitment can wane and waver. It does in my heart at times, how about you? Is this a moment to make a thoughtful and fresh commitment to be a participant in 'making disciples? Are you just one conversation short from moving forward in a meaningful way of service? Please talk with us, today.

Moving forward today, what does that look like for you? Let's think about these 6 words...