

EFC

June 11, 2023

Big Story. Bigger God. – “The Answer to Every Question that Matters”

Good morning, English Fellowship Church. My name is Jeremy, and I’m one of the Pastors here. As we continue to study God’s Word and the big story of what God is doing in this world, we will look at the book of Colossians this morning.

Pray.

Colossians is a New Testament letter, written by the Apostle Paul to the believers in the city of Colossae. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison. Paul had been thrown in prison because he constantly told everyone he came in contact with about forgiveness of sins and new life in Jesus. I want you to note that: Paul was in prison because he was obeying Jesus, and not everyone liked that.

Paul had never been to Colossae himself, but some of his missionary companions had been. Paul had heard of some threats to the believers there, so he wrote this letter to guard them against false teachings and deceptions.

At the heart of the danger confronting the believers in Colossae was this: they were being told that Jesus alone was not enough for salvation and a close relationship with God and a full and vibrant life with Him. They were being told that they needed to know other things, secret things, in order to be close to God. They were being told that they needed to observe certain festivals, pray to angels, and abstain from certain foods and drinks, if they really wanted to be godly. And the subtle message through it all was this: “Jesus alone isn’t enough.” They were being tempted to try to “add” to Jesus and His work, if they really wanted to live.

But to try and “add” anything to Christ and His work is really a case of “more is less.”

Mr. Brian’s salsa.

If Christ is perfect, and His work is perfectly finished, “adding” anything is really taking away. You cannot make something better when it is already perfect.

In fact, trying to add anything to Jesus and His saving work ends up causing us to lose Jesus completely. Grace is either 100% free, or it is not grace. Either we are saved by Christ alone, or we are not saved at all.

The believers in Colossae were being tempted to believe that Jesus alone isn’t enough; the devil was trying to lead them away from faith in Christ alone, so that they would be lead away from Christ completely.

Colossians is Paul’s response and warning against such false teaching. We are going to read through the entire letter. As we do, pay close attention to Jesus, and how He is sufficient and the answer to every question in life that matters.

Read Colossians.

I've heard that a Sunday School teacher once asked his students the following question: "Class, what is small and furry, has four legs and a bushy tail, and hides nuts for the winter?" Timidly one of the students raises his hand and says, "Jesus" because "Jesus" seems to always be the right answer in Sunday School.

We often laugh about "the Sunday School answer" because we jokingly say "Jesus" is the correct answer to any question, even when it is obviously a squirrel. But if we are willing to pause and think for a moment, we see that "Jesus" is the correct answer to every question in life that really matters. This is what we see in Colossians. Questions like:

- Are we just accidents without meaning or purpose; where did we come from? Colossians 1:16 "For by him all things were created, 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."
- Is there truth? And if so, how can we know it and avoid deadly deception? Colossians 2:3 "in [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."
- Is everything spinning out of control? Colossians 1:17 "And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together." Colossians 2:10 Jesus "is the head of all rule and authority."
- Is there a point and purpose and end goal of human existence? Is this world and life here all there is, or is there something more? Colossians 3:1-4 "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."
- Are our enemies too strong? Colossians 2:15 "[God] disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in [Christ]."
- Can we know God? Colossians 1:15 "[Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." Colossians 2:9 "For in [Christ] the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily...."
- Are there many paths to God, among whom Jesus is but one? Already saw in Colossians 1:16 that everything that exists was created by Christ (and, therefore, cannot be His equal) Colossians 1:27 "Christ in you, the hope of glory." All of the "in Christ" statements.
- Is there a way out of the darkness of this age and this world, to a life of light? Colossians 1:13-14 "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."
- Can we be truly forgiven of our sins and freely welcomed into God's presence? Colossians 2:13-14 "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross." Colossians 1:19-20 "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."
- Can we really change and grow and live in the fullness of life Jesus has promised us? Colossians 1:21-22 "And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him...."
- Is there a better way to live? Colossians 3:12-17 "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one

another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

- Is the church a lost cause, standing against the tidal waves of the world? Colossians 1:18
“And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.”

Jesus is the answer to all the questions that matter in life. In Him we find life.

The problem is not that we think “Jesus” is the answer to every important question. The problem is that we don’t really believe that’s true, because we don’t really know Jesus in all His fullness.

The problem is that our understanding and vision of Jesus is too small, not too big.

The problem is that we so often live compartmentalized lives, and think of Jesus only in the “religious” aspect and activities we engage in, when all of life is meant to be lived as worship to Him. For He is God over all, working in all, with us every moment, and has purpose for every thing. No more compartments: let Jesus reign supreme in all of your life.

The problem is that we have been deceived into thinking that something is missing from Jesus, which we need to add. Good works, religious activities, enough given to charity, abstaining from legitimate enjoyments; these may have their place in the Christian life, but none of them adds anything to Jesus!

Jesus is sufficient for every need. He has already won forgiveness, and reconciled us to God. Our sin is no longer counted against us, for Jesus nailed it to the cross and paid our debt to God in full. He has already won the victory over every enemy and dark power. He has already raised us to new life with Him. He has given us a purpose and calling here and now, and a sure hope of eternal life with Him in heaven. There is nothing we need to add. There is nothing we can add to Jesus.

Give up on trying to impress God. Let go of your pride that causes you to try to be our own Savior – or add anything to what Christ alone has done. Tear down false gods that compete for Jesus’ supremacy in your heart. Hold fast to Christ, and never let Him go. Since Jesus is the answer to all of life’s important questions, don’t ever lose hold of Jesus. Cling to Him for your life! Trust in Him with your all; He will never let go of you. Lay aside every other pursuit, every other so-called “path to a better life,” and let the cry of your heart be this: “always Jesus, only Jesus, forever Jesus.”