

Session 6: Lordship of Christ- Worldview in the Classroom (February 12, 2020 Fusion)

Welcome to Fusion: Jersey Night! Grab a Bible and find the Book of Colossians. Over the course of several services since September, we have been working our way through the Book of Colossians and discussing the Lordship of Christ. Paul, writing from prison, outlines his relationship with a historical church of young believers in Colossae. He knows they are growing and he is thankful for what God is doing in and through them. Paul, though, is also a realist. He knows these Christians are always in danger of losing their perspective and being deceived into following falsehood that will ultimately take them away from the gospel. So, what's his message to them? In **1:15-17**, he provides one of, if not the, most clear and exalted description of Jesus anywhere in Scripture and clearly provides the central message of the book: Jesus is the Creator, Savior, and Sustainer of everything!

In the closing verses of chapter 1 and beginning parts of chapter 2, Paul describes his motivation in ministry. He labors, regardless of the costs and consequences, so that these believers will reach full Christian maturity, where Jesus is their true treasure. He wants them to realize their access to Jesus' full riches- "the hope of glory" (1:27). The hope of glory is to be what motivates the Colossians to continue in faithfulness and grow in what they have been taught. It will only come, however, when they move beyond the type of confused living in which most Christians find themselves and begin to embrace a lifestyle that has Jesus as all, seeking to give Him glory in all things. As stated for us in **Colossians 3:17**, "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."

One of our main questions tonight centers on the difference between a fan and a fanatic. How is a fan different from a fanatic? **When we look at the definitions, we see some major differences. A fan is a person enthusiastic about a specified sports, pastime, or performer. In other words, a fan is devoted. A fanatic goes beyond a fan for he is filled with an excessive and single-minded zeal.** Notice that last thought: single-minded zeal. **A fan may follow a player, team, or sport because he is interested and participates in periodic events. A fanatic, however, is more than loyal; he is consumed and it shows in his daily lifestyle.**

Normally, we think negatively about being fanatics. Yet, I think there is a lesson for all of us to learn and it goes back to that key thought of having a single-minded zeal. When the Bible describes true followers of Jesus, disciples that get it and live it out, it matches the definition of a fanatic far more than the definition of a fan. There lies our main issue. We are used to fan-service Christianity. We see the importance of following Jesus, being interested in Him, and showing up to periodic events for Him, but we often reject the daily lifestyle that comes by being a souled-out, deeply-committed Christian.

You see, the Christian life is a lot like this scentsy. When we commit to following Jesus, there is a work that is done inside us. We receive His forgiveness and eternal life and are now entrusted with the gospel- a message that brings light to this world of sin. When that light shines through us, it reveals a beautiful display to the world. As we daily submit to Jesus, He continues to transform our hearts from what used to be cold, hard indifference to hot, fluid obedience to His will. By the way, that obedience becomes quickly noticeable to the world. It produces a change in us that starts to change the people we are around and the places we go, much like how this would quickly fill the room with a nice aroma.

There's just one issue. It's been said that too many professing Christians are practicing atheists. In other words, many who claim to follow Jesus by their occasional words all too often deny Him in daily life. Most of you, if not all of you, keep approaching your relationship with Jesus as something you turn on and off. You come to Fusion tonight, so you flick the Christian light on. You wake up tomorrow to go to school, so you flick the Christian light off. Maybe you pull out your phone before class to look up a Bible verse, so you flick it on. When class starts, you flick it off. Maybe, every now and then, you are actually bold enough to pray for your food at lunch, so you flick it on. But then, when you have your normal conversations with friends, you flick it off. On-off, on-off, on-off, on-off... Hopefully you get the picture. Here's my question: do you not get tired of living that way? Do you think it's actually making a difference, or have you grown content with getting through life with a half-hearted sense of obedience to Jesus?

I believe the greatest Christian issue today is that you refuse to learn, submit to, and live out a biblically Christian worldview- a way of thinking that transforms your living. Why is that such a major issue? We've mentioned it before: **worldviews shape beliefs, beliefs shape values, values shape choices, choices shape behavior, and behaviors shape consequences.** So, if you are going to be a person with a single-minded zeal for Jesus, then you have to commit and own your need for a new worldview- one that actually measures up to what Scripture says.

A truly biblical Christian worldview has 3 key parts.¹ The foundation is caring about the right opinion. Everyone has an opinion. Everyone will tell you their own ideas about how you should live your life. The Christian, however, elevates God's opinion over all others. Why? It's because, as Creator, Savior, and Sustainer of everything, God's opinion is truth. This is why you follow God's truth, not what you feel or want to be true.

The next part gets us in trouble too. When we begin to understand God's truth, we then have to respond to God's terms. Eventually, you have to make a choice of whether you submit to God or not. You may know in your mind that God has supreme authority over your life, but bowing down before Him is a totally different issue. The biblical Christian submits to God in every area of life because he knows God is over every area of life.

Of course, we can't leave out the third part. The whole point of knowing and submitting to God's truth is not so we can elevate ourselves and act better than everyone else. We follow truth and submit for the purpose of relationship. The Christian's greatest desire to pursue God's heart and love God's people.

Take a moment to ask yourself- "are these 3 things my focus everyday: truth, submission, and relationship?" What I want to happen tonight is for all of you to move beyond going through life as if you can put a Jesus jersey on your back and call yourself a disciple. That's not the definition. **Jesus gives us the definition in Luke 9:23 and 14:27, "And he said to all, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me... Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.'"**

¹ "What Is a Biblical Worldview? | PursueGOD.Org," accessed February 6, 2020, <https://www.pursuegod.org/what-is-a-biblical-worldview/>.

Every time we get together, we are confronted with the gospel- the message of Jesus and what He has done for us. The gospel demands a response from you. Some of you have only every responded with rejection. You have not confessed your need for a Savior and submitted your life to Him. You have that opportunity tonight, by the way. Many of you do have Jesus as Savior, but you are not living a life of surrender. I ask you as well to respond to the gospel tonight.

The beautiful thing about the gospel, in the words of Ravi Zacharias, is **“The gospel is the only message that provides a coherent answer both for what's inside us and what's outside us.”** Because Scripture and the message of Jesus speaks to all of life, that's why we have started looking at subjects you interact with in your classes. Last month we looked at history and I gave you several ways to look at history from a biblical worldview. You have a summary of those points of these cards. What you do with them is your business, but I challenge you to look them over, take them with you, and interact with them when you engage with history.

Tonight, I want to move on to Math. I will not be teaching a math lesson nor will I be putting any of it on the screens, but I want you to take some time with me and actually check your heart on what the Bible says. Our passage tonight is Psalm 8. It may not address math as you might think, but it does get to the heart of the issue and that is in how we understand ourselves. There are several truths here that we need to address and we will take our time tonight to do so.

Psalm 8 is a poem written by King David and it has a specific structure called chiasm. That word comes from the Greek letter *chi* and became the foundation for our letter *x*. When a passage of Scripture has a chiasmic structure it has this x-like pattern, where certain verses mirror each other and work toward a central message in the middle. **As you can see on the screen,** this psalm has a mirror relationship between verses 1 and 9 and another relationship between verses 2-3 and 6-8. When we understand those parts of the *x*, we will have a better understanding of David's heart in the center- verses 4 and 5.

Let's look quickly at the first part of the *x* (**verses 1 and 9**). While most of the words match, there is an additional phrase in verse 1. The part that is common to both verses emphasizes that **God's majesty extends throughout all the earth.** If we focus on verse 9, we are challenged by two truths. The fact that God's majesty and rule extends throughout all the earth means that **God is near and imminent.** That means that God is with us in every way desirable. He is not some cosmic force detached from us or some entity that couldn't care less about us. God is as close as a prayer, everywhere, all the time. In fact, you always have as much of God as you want. That is also means that **we can always behold His majesty.** We have a moment-by-moment choice to focus on Him and worship Him, regardless if we are at a church, school, home, on the track, in the gym, or with our family.

Verse 1 emphasizes that same truth but then strikes us with a different attribute of God. While God's majesty extends everywhere, **God's glory goes beyond all understanding and comprehension.** Yes, God is close, near, and imminent, but He is also **above and transcendent.**

He is with us in every way desirable but still beyond us in every way imaginable. His glory cannot be removed and He can never be defeated. This forces us to remember that **we can never exhaust His glory**. While we are commanded to know Him and should desire to grow in a relationship with Him, we must always admit that we will forever be incapable of fully containing the glory of God to some “box” of our finite minds.

So, put the two truths together. God’s majesty everywhere comforts us as we learn. We can have a present satisfaction in every moment and situation of our day through knowing God. Yet, because His glory is beyond us, we should always be compelled to learn more. Having an ongoing desire to know more of God and grow in His love for us is a holy thing, and frankly we need more of that attitude. What would change in your life if you woke up every day pleading with God and saying- “God, I want more of You?”

That’s just the first part of the *x*. Let’s quickly look at the second part. **Verses 2-3 and 6-8 mirror each other.** Here, David begins to look around at the structure and order of God’s creation and see his role within it. **In verses 2-3**, David explores the fact that God has revealed Himself by using what is weak and small to proclaim His strength and the proof of God’s strength by His heavenly works. David models a lesson here for all of us: **we are to look and look well into God’s work.**

Notice verse 3 specifically. David is amazed by the heavens, what he sees above him, yet acknowledges that the splendor is just the work of God’s fingers. God is so amazing that calling the heavens in existence from nothing by just the power of His word is only a small and limited picture of His power. The beauty of the heavens cannot adequately represent all of God’s creativity; it represents something like a finger painting- a simple piece of work. This is also seen in how the moon and stars are firmly positioned. Every detail of distance, composition, and relationship between what’s above us, around us, under us, and in us exists because of God’s sovereign rule and authority. David finds joy in investigating these realities for they remind Him of the majesty of God. That’s where I want to stop and pick up later. Let us take some time and celebrate the majesty of God as David did.

Earlier in Psalm 8 we saw that David was amazed as He looked at God’s glory represented in His use of the small things and the proof of His authority over the heavens. **In verses 6-8**, David keeps looking around and provides us with another lesson: **we are to rule and rule well in God’s purpose.** Because of what David will get to in verses 4-5, he claims that God has given mankind dominion over God’s works.

To understand what that means we need only look at the end of verse 6. God has placed things under the feet of mankind. Over what areas has God given man authority? Look in verses 7-8. Man is over sheep, oxen, and the beasts of the **field**. Man, then, is responsible to manage and steward the ground. We also see listed the birds of the **heavens**. Man, then, is responsible to

manage and steward the sky and atmosphere. Verse 8 includes the fish and whatever passes along the **sea**. Man, then, is responsible to manage and steward the waters of this planet. You look at that list and realize that God has given this whole planet over to us to use and rule.

Math is a major component to how we rule and rule well. While math takes a variety of forms, it “is the science that deals with the logic of shape, quantity and arrangement. Math is all around us, in everything we do. It is the building block for everything in our daily lives, including mobile devices, architecture (ancient and modern), art, money, engineering, and even sports.”

We see developments in math all throughout history.² Formally, the beginning of math as we define it is traced back to the ancient culture of the Sumerians who are credited with developing the first counting systems. Eventually arithmetic (including basic operations, fractions, and roots) was passed through the Babylonian Empire hundreds of years before the coming of Jesus. Societies like those of the Mayans studied patterns and time to develop elaborate calendars and astronomy records. Advancements by the Greeks and Romans, especially in the fields of geometry, construction and design, set the stage for the later development of algebra in the Persian Empire around AD 800. Here algorithms, standards methods for working problems, were established, opening a new realm of possibilities for planning, predicting, and preserving resources. These advancements in algebra soon transformed into the beginnings of number theory and the solving of special equations whose solutions of were not just positive but negative and other forms that were previously thought to be inconceivable. Soon trigonometry, probability, and other forms of analytical mathematics became prominent as Europe developed. Movements like the Renaissance brought new advancements and eventually led to the foundation of calculus- a form of mathematics that handles infinite processes and continuous change- which radically changed the applications of science. With the onset of computers in the last century, the possibilities of investigating, computing, and theorizing are greater than ever before.

What is so unfortunate is that most people see these advancements as a product of chance, not design. Some historians claim that math arose simply based on the needs of society. Instead of seeing math a tool for understanding creation and revealing God’s wisdom by which He made all things, too many see it as an evolutionary tool invented by man himself, thereby giving all glory to mankind instead of the Creator.

Math did not come purely from man’s curiosity, thoughts, and experiences; it is a fundamental part of who we are in God’s creation. Even when men rebel against God, they do not cease to be in His image nor can they escape their impulse to fulfill, shape, and learn.³ It

² Elaine J. Hom-Live Science Contributor August 16 and 2013, “What Is Mathematics?,” livescience.com, accessed February 6, 2020, <https://www.livescience.com/38936-mathematics.html>.

³ “A Biblical View of Mathematics,” accessed February 5, 2020, <https://frame-poythress.org/a-biblical-view-of-mathematics/>.

only “because Christianity is true, because God is who He is, because man is the image of God, the non-Christian knows anything.”⁴

Math actually presents an opportunity for us to engage with the beauty, structure, and functionality of God’s creation that we cannot engage any other way.⁵ Furthermore, we should understand that we are invited by God Himself interact with math. God designed a universe of order, purpose, and design and specifically made you with an ability to create a “language” or framework we can understand and use. God’s rule, majesty, and governance over the universe exist whether we care about them or not, but the more we discover and develop our mathematical language, the more we can give glory to God.

Because of Psalm 8, we must recognize **math is not a neutral collection of facts.** When we learn and use math, we are worshipping someone or something: God, ourselves, or the math itself. That is why we must approach the facts and use them through a biblical worldview. **When we do, we understand several things.**⁶ **1) God rules over the universe and math is one means by which we understand His rule. 2) Mathematical truth, as all truth, belongs to God. 3) Math reminds us that we live in a created and intelligently governed world, sustained by and dependent on Jesus. 4) Math proves mankind is created in God’s likeness, capable of reasoning and invention. 5) Math demonstrates the existence of objective truth that goes beyond differences in culture. 6) Math is a gift to develop man’s problem solving and use of logic, as well as shape his work-ethic and character. 7) Math is a tool for accomplishing the work God has assigned in bringing order to disorder. 8) Math aids man in fulfilling the Great Commission through the development of technology. 9) Math enables man to seek applications for the good of others and the glory of God.**

Those truths have motivated so many people, including some of the greatest mathematicians in history. Take Sir Isaac Newton as an example. A man of tremendous influence in math and physics, nearly unparalleled, he was also a committed Christian who saw all of his discoveries as evidence of God’s design. Or, take Johannes Kepler, the German scholar, whose work shaped our understanding of the laws of planetary motion. It is said of Kepler that his faith in God shaped every part of his research. He even included many prayers and poems of praise in his writings. Notice this statement: **“The chief aim of all investigations of the external world should be to discover the rational order and harmony which has been imposed on it by God**

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ “What Is a Biblical Worldview in Mathematics? - TPS - The Potter’s School,” accessed February 5, 2020, <https://at-tps.org/biblical-worldview-in-math/>.

⁶ Many of the following truths are summarized from “Transforming Teachers - Math Connections with the Biblical Worldview,” accessed February 5, 2020, <https://www.transformingteachers.org/en/articles/biblical-integration/mathematics/95-math-connections-with-the-biblical-worldview>.

and which He revealed to us in the language of mathematics.”⁷ Simply put by one theologian, “mathematics... is a means whereby we can think God’s thoughts after Him.”⁸

I want us to close by going back to Psalm 8. We have looked at the two sections of the *x* but haven’t yet looked at the true heart of the passage. It is what ties everything together tonight. **Look at Psalm 8:4-5.** What are the main thoughts we need to understand if we are going to honor God through math and every area of life? The first one is found in verse 4. As David has investigated God’s use of small things, the beauty of God’s handiwork, God’s rule over the heavens, and the authority He has given to man to rule over the earth, David now asks a question: what is man that you are mindful of him and the son of man that you care for him? In view of everything God has made, David is left speechless that the God of the universe personally cares for Him.

I think this challenges us with the truth that man was designed for reflection. We all need to **learn**, like David, **to pause and consider the reality of God’s attention and care.** We hardly ever slow down enough to feel the weight of that statement. God knows you and cares for you deeply. Even though we are just specks in the grand cosmos of His creation, we are His greatest treasure! In fact, everything has been made for us to know God and make Him known. Let that grip your heart!

Look also in verse 5. The ESV has man described as lower than “the heavenly beings.” The term here is *elohim*, which some translations have as “angels.” The main meaning of this psalm though is that we have been created lower than God, yet He has still crowned us with glory and honor. Because of the worth that God gives us, **man was designed for stewardship**, so we need to **learn to work and accept the responsibility that comes with God’s honor and authority.**

I was reminded in studying this passage how much it applies to things other than Math. I see myself in need of these lessons particularly as a husband. Valentine’s Day is approaching and I’m consistently amazed at the attention and care my wife gives me. It is so undeserved. The more I pause and reflect on her unconditional love for me, the more I am motivated to live up to my responsibility and commitment of being her loving husband. Yet, as I think about her love and how much it means to me, she would be the first one to tell you that her love is nothing is comparison to the love God has for me through Jesus Christ. And if my wife and I take the time, especially this week, to reflect on and communicate the love we have for each other, how much more so should I do that in my relationship with Jesus every single day?

What is so incredible about these verses in Psalm 8 is that they are repeated later in the Bible. Hebrews 2:6-8 shows that, while man has ultimately failed to properly reflect upon and respond to the love of God, Jesus Christ, the Son of God stands in our place to bring us back to our exalted destiny.⁹ Because of His sacrifice for us on the cross and victory over the grave, Jesus is

⁷ “Johannes Kepler | Great Thoughts Treasury,” accessed February 11, 2020, <http://www.greatthoughtstresury.com/author/johannes-kepler>.

⁸ Georgia Stratton Miller, “Teaching Mathematics with a Biblical Worldview and a Historical Perspective,” accessed February 5, 2020, <https://www.belhaven.edu/pdfs/worldview-papers/Georgia-Miller.pdf>.

⁹ Allen P. Ross, “Psalms,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 797–798.

the ultimate One who has dominion over everything. He sits enthroned in glory and He will return to put all things under His feet and fulfill all of what God has planned. Everything belongs to Him, including your life, eternity, and the breath in your lungs at this instant. So, my prayer for you tonight is not to become a mathematician or have math as your favorite subject. I simply want you to respond to Jesus' love for you and let that love change everything about you!