

**All Things New**  
**Week 3: A Stronger Core**  
**Colossians 1:15-23**

When I was a Middle Schooler in the 90's, there was a time when Reebok Pumps were THE shoe to have. Do you remember those? They had the little basketball on the tongue and if you pumped on it, air pockets would fill up, giving you the ability to dunk a basketball.

It felt like all of my friends had a pair and I wanted some so badly, but they were crazy expensive. My parents worked hard and provided everything we needed, but Pumps were a want, not a need. I remember one night me and my mom were out shopping at Castleton Square Mall and we went into Payless Shoes. They didn't sell Reebok Pumps, but they did sell a knock off that looked like the real thing, but for a lot less money. So, after some begging, my mom got a pair for me.

The next day, I threw on my new shoes, got on the bus, and almost immediately, one of my friends noticed they were knock offs and everyone started making fun of me. I got roasted. Maybe you experienced something like that growing up.

Sometimes counterfeits are easy to spot. You can see them right away. My new shoes looked like Reebok Pumps, but it was pretty easy to tell they weren't the real thing. But, that's not always the case. Sometimes counterfeits are a lot harder to see.

Think about money. I read this week that Business Insider estimates more than \$220 billion is lost each year because of counterfeit money being used. The fake bills look so real that most people can't tell the difference. In fact, the Federal Reserve estimates that between \$70 million and \$200 million dollars in fake money is in circulation at any given time.

It's hard to see the difference. You might even be carrying some on you right now. How do you know? I've read that when the FBI trains agents to spot counterfeit money, they don't have them study all the different kinds of fakes that are out there. Instead, they spend hours looking at and studying and touching real money so they're able to spot a fake when they see it. They become so familiar with the real thing that it's easy to spot a counterfeit.

I kind of think that's what Paul is doing in our text today. The church in Colossae was being presented a counterfeit Jesus. They were being told they needed Jesus AND something or someone else to save them. To make them new. So Paul spends the first part of his letter reminding them what the real Jesus looks like...what's he's done for them and is doing in them...he spends the first part of Colossians showing us what the real Jesus looks like so we're able to spot the fakes. We're able to see through the people with a Messiah complex telling us we need them, and their ideologies, to save us.

And in our text today, Paul writes one of the most Christological passages in Scripture. These verses give us a clear picture of who Jesus is and what he's done, and continues to do, for us. I

think what we'll find in our text today is that **When you see Jesus for who he really is, you'll find that he's better than you can imagine.** When you know the real Jesus...his power, his glory, his grace that is at work in you...when you know the real Jesus you'll never want to settle for anything less. You'll never be satisfied with a lesser savior.

Let's look at our text. Colossians 1, starting in verse 15...(READ vs. 15-17)

Paul has just talked about how God rescued and redeemed us through the Son he loves. Now he goes into detail about who Jesus is. And I think what he wants us to know more than anything is that **Jesus is supreme over everything.** There is not a single thing in all creation that is above him.

In other words, Jesus isn't ancillary or secondary to anyone or anything. Paul says he is the firstborn over all of it. Not the first created because Jesus has always existed with God. He's the firstborn who has rights over all things. Paul taps into the custom of his day. The first born was given certain rights and privileges the other children didn't receive. The firstborn was the father's representative and heir. He was given management of the father's household.

And so, by calling Jesus the firstborn over all creation, Paul's saying that God has given all things to Jesus. He put them under his rule and reign, which makes sense because he goes on to say that all things were created in, through, and for Jesus. It all happened within his power and control. He was the one carrying out the process and all things were created to bring him glory.

But it didn't stop at creation. Jesus continues to hold all things together. All of the complexities and fine tuning of our universe, Jesus is holding it all together so that it functions to the exact tuning it was created for. To paraphrase one author, Jesus is the cohesion that keeps the cosmos from spiraling into chaos!

He is supreme over everything, and if he is, then that mean the right order of anything, including your life and the Church, is for him to be at the center. It's all about him. Paul continues in verse 18...(READ vs. 18-20)

Again, we see that Firstborn language. God has given all power and authority over death to Jesus. And because he was raised from the dead and experienced new life, we can, too. And I love the power of verse 19. Jesus is the image of the invisible God and the fullness of God dwelled in him as he dwelled in our world. When you look at Jesus, you see the heart and the character of God.

And so, how Jesus loved others is exactly how God loves us. And he loved us, not by condemning us for the ways we've turned our backs on him or the ways we've hurt others. He loved us by making a way for us to be reconciled to him. Brought back into a right relationship with the Father.

A core verse in my life and my faith is Romans 5:1. It says...(READ Rom. 5:1)

When we put our faith in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we are at peace with God. We were once enemies of his because of the way we lived. We had broken our relationship with him and there was strife between us. But, God has forgiven us through Christ. When we put our faith in him, we are justified. God makes us just as if we've never sinned. Paul continues in verse 21...(READ vs. 21-23)

Jesus is supreme over everything! He is Lord of creation and Lord of our redemption. And listen, don't miss this...**Because Jesus is supreme over everything, He is sufficient for anything.** Jesus is MORE than enough for you. It doesn't matter what you've done, or how far you have wandered from him, Jesus is more than sufficient to give you the forgiveness and grace you need. When you put your faith in him, you stand before God as holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation. Jesus is sufficient to bring you new life and a fresh start. HE is all you need.

But if we're honest, it doesn't always feel that way, does it? We might say that we believe that Jesus is supreme over everything and sufficient for anything, but I think it's so easy for us to believe the same lie that the Colossians believed. The lie that Jesus isn't enough. We need more.

I think often times we settle for a counterfeit Jesus. Like, we don't abandon him all together, but we look to other things or people to rescue us or satisfy us. So, when life isn't turning out the way we expected it to, or wanted it to, we turn to these functional saviors to ease our pain. Our unfulfilled longings leave a hole in our life that we naturally want to fill with something. We *want* Jesus to be enough, but what we want even more is to fill that hole of pain in our life with something that brings immediate relief, even if it's only temporary.

And so, we feel a hole in our identity and we fill it with a lot of time and energy and money to project a carefully curated image that we're okay and have it all together. That we're living our best life. But we continue to feel empty inside.

There's a hole in our peace, we're restless, so we turn to an addiction or a relationship to escape the pain we feel. There's a hole in our relationships, so we try to fit in and be what we think others want us to be, forgetting who we actually are. There's a hole left by the guilt we feel for not being enough, so we strive to do more and be more.

All of us have unfulfilled longings that leave a hole in our life and we and we try to fill those holes with things or people that were never meant to satisfy us. We substitute the Creator with his creation. We replace him with lesser things that take center stage in our life and we look to these functional saviors to rescue us and do for us what only Jesus can.

And what many of us have found in life is that, instead of bringing us what they promise, these counterfeit saviors only end up weighing us down even more. We become a slave to them and they start to control us. It's why I love Jesus' invitation to us in Matthew 11. He says,

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.” Matt. 11:28-30 (MSG)

If you walk into my office, these are the words you see right by my door. I have them there as a reminder to me and anyone who enters that Jesus is the One our hearts truly desire. We may be chasing other things or other people to fill some void inside of us, but only Jesus invites us to live freely and lightly. Only Jesus, who is supreme over everything and sufficient for anything, can truly satisfy the longings of your heart.

I’m wondering this morning if there’s a place where you have settled for a counterfeit savior. You’ve believed the same lie that the Colossians believed and you’ve put something or someone else in the center of your life. Maybe you’ve lost a desire for Jesus that was once there, but it’s been chewed up by all the things in life pulling you in different directions.

Today, Jesus is inviting you to come to him. For the first time or again. He’s inviting you to lay down your counterfeit saviors, recover your life, and find real rest in him. When you see Jesus for who he really is, you’ll find that he’s better than you could ever imagine and that nothing and no one can satisfy you the way he can.

So, are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on chasing counterfeits that never deliver? Turn to Jesus, who is supreme over everything, and find that he is sufficient for anything you’re going through today.

Pray/Response Time