

DAY 6 | Supreme | Colossians 1:15-18

Supreme. What does that word mean to you? I bet at least one of you just whipped out your go to pizza ordering app as you began to crave a delicious supreme pizza.

But really, think about the word supreme. Take a second and write that down on the top of a piece of paper.

The word supreme, according to the dictionary, is the state or condition of being superior (or above) all others in authority, power, or status. I want us to focus in on this idea supreme, superiority, and how it applies to us, not just during this season of life, but every single day of our lives.

Grab your copy of God's word and meet me in Colossians chapter 1. We are starting a new devotional study in the book of Colossians this week. The purpose behind Paul writing this letter to the church at Colossae was to show that as believers we have everything we need in Christ. Paul opens this letter by making, in my opinion, one of the most important statements about Christ that we as believers need to not only hear, but commit to our hearts and minds to strengthen our faith:

Read Colossians 1:15-18

Jesus – before (or above) all things with everything held together through Him. Paul wanted the believers at Colossae to understand this one crucial thing: NOTHING happens that comes as a surprise to God, because everything that happens He has authority over. His Omniscience, the characteristic that allows Him to know all things, His Omnipresence, the characteristic that allows Him to be everywhere at all times, and His Omnipotence, the characteristic that speaks to His all mighty power, reveal Jesus' supremacy, or supreme authority over all things – even our sin and the penalty of death that comes through it.

See, many times I think we can allow the enemy to tell us that Jesus isn't enough. He isn't enough to cover our sinful filthiness. He isn't enough to transform our doubt into joy, or our pain into peace. He isn't enough to mend broken relationships. He isn't enough to pull you out of your shame. He will never be enough.

But let me tell you students, do not allow the enemy to have a seat at your table.

What do I mean by that?

Read Psalm 23

This whole passage of scripture spells out how supreme God is. He is a God that makes us lie down in green pastures. He is a God who leads us beside still waters. He is a God that restores us. He is a God that guides us through the darkest valleys. And then we come to verse 5:

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.”

Now, you might ask why God wants to prepare a table in the middle of my enemies. Why can't God prepare a table for me and Him to meet with each other on a mountain top or beautiful lookout somewhere? Why in the presence of my enemies?

Catch this: because it's ultimately not about your situation, it's how you view God and the type of relationship you have with Him. In the middle of your toughest situations, God not only wants to help you, but He wants His glory to be seen, His superiority to be seen by your enemies. He wants your enemies, and ultimately the enemy himself, to see how He is providing for you. God is not looking to eject you from your trials; He is looking to provide for you in the midst of them.

The enemy comes to steal, kill, and destroy God's glory. He comes to steal your Father's glory. He comes to try and diminish the victory that we have in Jesus. But he has no power where Jesus reigns supreme in the heart of a believer. The question is whether or not we are letting the enemy sit at the table that God has prepared for us – prepared for you!

Refer back to your piece of paper that you wrote on earlier. Underline that phrase that you wrote down. Now, I want you to think about every lie that you have felt the enemy tell you, every struggle that you have or are currently going through, every insecurity, every sin that you are ashamed of, anything that the enemy is using to tell you that Jesus isn't good enough for you or your problems, and write them under that phrase.

Now go back and read that sheet of paper.

Students, Jesus is enough. Jesus prepared a table at the foot of the cross while He was surrounded by every single one of His enemies – an enemy that was at one point and time you before you accepted Christ as your Savior – and displayed His supreme power, His supreme authority, but most importantly, His supreme love for you by dying in your place.

Today is the day that you decide in your mind, heart, and spirit that the enemy WILL NOT have a seat at your table, and instead meet Jesus right where he has prepared a table for you, confident that He is more than enough for you; He reigns supreme.

DAY 7 | Shades Student Devotion

...having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Colossians 2:12

Question: are you a person who has grown up in church or more recently been involved in church? Either way I'm glad you are reading this! Have you ever thought about the fact that several things that we do in church normally are really weird? Put yourself in someone's shoes who has never been in a Christian church before. That someone would more than likely ask a question like, "Why did that man in a white robe just say some words and dunk a child underwater?" Baptism is an important part of our ministry. And even though it seems like a weird concept, it's so important to following Jesus!

Questions to think about: Have you been baptized? If so, when? If not, have you made a decision to follow Jesus as your Savior and Lord? Why or why not?

Paul is referencing baptism in Colossians 2 to remind believers that the very power of God that raised Jesus from the dead has made us alive in Christ through faith. We don't believe Paul is saying that baptism is what saves us or allows us to experience transformation. But baptism is a symbol of the powerful transformation that takes place when we choose to trust Jesus. Baptism is a physical representation of what happens when we are saved. Our old self that did not know Jesus and was living for ourselves has passed away, buried with Christ. And God makes us alive, making us a new person through faith.

If you have been baptized, do you remember when that took place? For me, I was 6 years old when I talked to my parents about becoming a Christian. I knew I wanted Jesus and still to this day remember my baptism. Whether you were baptized as a child, a middle school student, or a high school student your baptism is an important step in your spiritual walk! It doesn't save you, but it communicates these very powerful things:

- 1) It shows that we are committed to obey the Lord. Baptism is a step of obedience for a believer that was initiated by Jesus himself at the beginning of his ministry.
- 2) Baptism tells the church and the world that you have decided to follow Jesus.
- 3) Our baptism serves as a major spiritual marker in our lives. When we experience fear and doubt about our salvation, we can remember our baptism and the decision that led us to be baptized. Remembering that experience gives us confidence as we remember why we decided to follow Jesus and why we took that next step of baptism.

Here are some questions to reflect on as you end your devotion today.

If you have been baptized do you remember that time in your life? While you have some free time, it could be a helpful step to ask your parents for pictures or videos of your baptism and reflect on your confidence in Jesus at that time.

How can your baptism remind you of how God has moved in your life? How can that give you confidence to keep pursuing him today?

Thinking about baptism is a great time to think about people we know who don't know Jesus yet. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) commands us to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

How can the Lord use you to lead others who don't know Christ to this moment of believing in Jesus? How incredible would it be to see them believe and then be baptized!?

If you have not been baptized yet, have you come to a time in your life where you believe in Jesus? If you know that answer is yes, what's holding you back from following through with baptism? If that answer is no, we would love to talk with you about why following Jesus is the most important decision any of us can make!

Close in prayer. Thank God for the gift of baptism and the reminder that baptism represents the time in our lives when we truly became alive in Christ! If you haven't been baptized, have an honest conversation with God about why that's the case. See how the Lord leads you in that conversation.

DAY 8 | Colossians 3

Runners...take your mark... get set....(2 gunshots)

If you know anything about track and field, you know that I just left my blocks too early and committed a false start. There is nothing worse in the world than training for countless hours to experience failure. You ever been there? Sure you have, we have all experienced failure in a moment where we should've made the right decision. Our relationship with Jesus can often time look the same.

I believe that God has called you and I to live life in a way that is bigger than ourselves. Free of guilt and shame. God knows that as Christians we often time experience failure and it can take us to places we never want to go. The good news is that Jesus calls us to a life of freedom in Him.

Look at Paul's words to the church at Colossae in Colossians 3 and be encouraged.

Read Colossians 3:1-3

Check this out: We will be free people when we can see that failure doesn't define who we are as Christians. Jesus does.

Paul instructs you and I to set the two major things that dictate what we do as humans on Jesus, our minds and heart. **Take the next few moments and journal a prayer to God based upon what you read.**

Prayer Points: (Spend 3 min in prayer)

- Pray that God would break through any lies you are believing.
- Pray for confidence to walk in freedom with Jesus.
- Pray about anything in your past that may impact your present walk with Jesus.

DAY 9 | Authentic or Counterfeit??

Do you ever feel like everyone calls themselves a Christian, but you don't see their actions matching their self-given title? Have you had your feelings hurt by someone you thought you could trust and was your friend? Do you get frustrated with behavior by some of your classmates? Does it bother you when people call themselves a Christian but they don't ever try to act like Christ to others? If your answer is yes, you are not alone! I taught Sunday School for many years to teenage girls and this was a consistent theme and topic of conversation/frustration amongst the young ladies in my class. They would get frustrated because they were sincerely trying to authentically live out their faith in their sphere of influence but felt they were not being effective because of actions and behaviors that were inconsistent of Christ by some of their peers that claimed to be Christians. They found it to be very difficult to share the gospel, the Good News of Christ, because so many had a bad taste in their mouths regarding Christianity because they just didn't see a difference between "Christians" and everyone else.

Do you think there is a lack of authenticity in your generation?

Let's look at what the definition is for authentic. ***Authentic*** – *not false or copied; genuine; real. Representing one's true nature or beliefs; true to oneself or to the person identified.* In essence, it's being the real deal. Walking the walk, not just talking the talk. Being genuine, practicing what you preach. I believe this generation is pleading for authenticity. Authenticity in friendships, authenticity on social media but mostly authenticity in faith.

Let's look at what Paul tells us in Colossians about how we should be acting as true, authentic believers. ***"So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. "* (Colossians 3:12-14)** This is authentic. Loving others, forgiving others, being compassionate with humility and showing kindness. I believe that we are desperately in need of kindness. I am always reminding my children to show kindness even when they feel like that person doesn't deserve it. This can be hard. BUT, we are called to be salt and light in a dark world. We are called to be different, set apart for holiness so that we can be an example to others and show the love of Christ and in turn, lead others to Christ. Be *inclusive* not *exclusive*. When others see you at school, at church, in your sport, at home, do they see a difference in you? Are you being an authentic disciple of Christ that others want to follow? I challenge you to have others follow you as you follow Christ.

Food for thought:

Am I the real deal?

Am I living a life worthy of imitation?

DAY 10 | Colossians 4

Have you ever paused and considered how impactful your words and actions can be? Words can speak things into existence and actions can completely change things within seconds. In a fast-paced world, it's easy to never realize the weight of your words/actions and what they can do to people until something actually happens! Your words and actions matter as a Jesus Follower.

The majority of us know the Apostle Paul very well, I mean he's basically the LeBron James of Christianity. Paul is writing his final thoughts in Colossians Chapter 4 as he encourages his readers with two simple yet powerful reminders. He reminds you and I to "walk in wisdom" and "watch our words".

Take a moment to Read Colossians 4:5-6

RE-READ VERSE 5 & Think about these questions:

1. Write 3 ways you can use your time to "walk in wisdom".
2. What is God calling you to do as you read this verse? (Make this an action step)

RE-READ VERSE 6 & Think about these questions:

1. How has your speech/words impacted people in the last month?
2. How can you use your words today to lift up and encourage a family member towards Jesus? (Action Step)

Pray for 2 minutes.

(then go eat snacks and have fun)

