

COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

THE CHASE: OUR DESIRE FOR ENOUGH & JESUS' PURSUIT OF US

SCRIPTURE & SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE — FEBRUARY 16

OPEN

1. How do your friends or coworkers talk about Jesus (if they do)? How would they respond to the question, "Who is Jesus?"

Paul writes to reassure the Colossians that Jesus is enough for their salvation and spiritual growth and to strengthen them in resisting "hollow and deceptive philosophy" (2:8, NIV). But notice he starts not by focusing on the false teaching, but on who Jesus is—and who he is in relationship to God, the world, the church, and themselves. READ COLOSSIANS 1:15-20.

DISCUSS

2. Most English Bibles have a heading over this passage, "The Preeminence of Christ." And in verse 18 we read the phrase "that in everything he might be preeminent." What does that word mean? What do you give "preeminence" to in your life? How can you tell if something has "preeminence" in your life?
3. There is so much packed into these verses! Some of the concepts and imagery may be unfamiliar, but what do we learn about Jesus here? And what do we learn about our world (explicitly or by implication)? [NOTE: Feel free to go around and list things, as we'll dig deeper in the following questions]
4. As one pastor writes, Paul is praising Jesus with *prepositions* here. All things were created *by* him *through* him and *for* him, and it is *through* him all things will be reconciled. What do these various prepositions reveal about Jesus and our world?
5. Why do you think Paul doesn't just say in plain terms (*to us*) that "Jesus is God"? How do the people around you—Christians and non-Christians—tend to imagine or describe "God"? How do they imagine or describe "God's" involvement in the world and in their lives? How does their concept of God compare to what Paul writes here?
6. In *Orthodoxy*, G. K. Chesterton once wrote in reflection, "How much larger your life would be, if your self could become smaller in it ... [if you could] break out of this tiny and tawdry theater in which your own little plot is always being played." In what patterns of thinking and acting are you "big" and Jesus "is small" right now? In what way is the life and story you are performing now not "in character" with who Jesus is and what he's doing?

PRAY (A.C.T.S.)

Adore (and praise) Jesus for who he is as God. Confess ways you have (tried to) minimize him. Thank him for what he has done, is doing, and will do. Ask (Supplication) the Spirit to open our eyes to his glory and greatness and to empower us as his body, the church.

NOTE FOR LEADERS: Though Paul does not go into much detail in verse 16, it seems (based on the rest of Scripture) to refer to (non-human) spiritual beings. Hours could be spent on this topic. Take a look at the Bible Project's "Spiritual Beings" series if you want a good resource. If you have time and interest as a group, here are some starting points for a discussion: *Share to what extent the "supernatural" or "unseen" has informed your understanding of Christianity. What have conversations around this topic looked like for you in the past? Does this concept of spiritual beings play a functional role in your faith?*