

# The Supremacy of Christ

Part 3


## The Excellence of Christ

Dan Clement

# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

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**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Triangle Community Church aims to be a "transforming church". We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent action. 1 Timothy 4:7 instructs you to "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness." Since "Talking Points, Walking Points" is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to "dive deep" too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty,

## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- Read Colossians 1:15-20. List everything you learn about Christ's identity and achievements.  
Which of those things do you think American culture at large today would deny?  
Which of them do you think it would accept as true?  
How, and how much, has your estimation of Christ changed over the years? Tell us about it.
- Read Colossians 1:21-23. List everything it says was true of you before and after you believed.

Before I trusted Christ, the Bible says that I...

Since (if) I've trusted Christ, the Bible says that I...

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- **Which** of those do you have trouble believing—and **why**?  
What can and should you do to resolve those doubts? How can we as a group help you with that?
- Read Colossians 1:23. **Why** do you think that it's so important that we "**continue** in the faith"?  
What can and should you do to ensure that you will? How can we as a group help you with that?

# Sermon Summary

The Lord Jesus gave the church two ceremonies that serve as “mile-markers” in our Christian lives.

(1) Baptism marks a believer’s official welcome into the family of God.

(2) The Lord’s Supper proclaims our continuing participation in gospel living.

Today we will formally be welcoming some folks into the life of TCC through baptism.

**I. Baptism is an act of obedience and submission to the lordship of Christ.** Acts 2:38 says: “Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ”. Identifying with Jesus Christ through baptism is both a privilege and also a responsibility (Matthew 28:18-20). Baptism initiates us into the church, the people of God. There is a mutual responsibility; the individual is responsible to submit to and love the church; and the church is responsible to love and nurture the one baptized.

**II. Baptism is a powerful testimony to believers and non-believers alike.** Baptism is a witness, an acting out, of the gospel story of how Christ died and we are dead to sin through salvation. Baptism is a picture of the gospel story. We go into and out of the water, as Christ went into the grave and arose to new life.

**III. Baptism reminds us of our own identity.** The original Bible word (in Greek), literally means “to dip, to plunge, to immerse.” Just as cloth placed into a vat of dye becomes “identified” with the dye—it goes in as white cloth, but it comes out the color of the dye—so in baptism a Christian is identified with Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:27). Baptism also identifies us with the church, the body of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13).

**IV. Colossians 1:15-23 shares important truths that shape our Christian identity.** Christ is the head of the body, the church (v. 18a). He is the beginning of it all, he’s the “firstborn” from the dead (v. 18b). As a result of this, Christ must have “first place in everything” (v. 18c). In baptism we declare that Christ has first place in our lives. But it doesn’t stop with just our lives—Christ will have first place in the universe (v. 19-20). Christ will restore and reconcile all creation (Romans 8:18-22).

Christ is the image of the invisible God and the “firstborn” of all creation (v. 15). That doesn’t mean that Christ is part of creation, but rather that he deserves “first place” (v. 18) because he’s the Creator! In ancient culture, the firstborn son got top honors in the family. So in biblical thought, the phrase, “firstborn”, came to mean “the one who deserves the highest honor” (see Psalm 89:3-4, 23-24, 27-29). Jesus gets top honor over all creation because everything was created by him, through him, and for him (v. 16). He’s not part of creation, he is “before all things”. He “holds all things together” (v. 17).

Our baptism declares that, although we once did the devil’s bidding, “although we formerly were alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds (v. 21) ”yet now Christ has reconciled us to himself” (v. 22a) and “he will present us before him, holy and blameless and beyond reproach” (v. 22b), “if indeed we continue in the faith, firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel” (v. 23), which we affirm today in baptism.

Those who are being baptized are affirming that they used to be alienated from God and hostile toward him. They are promising to continue in the faith. Those of us who are baptized followers of Christ welcome them into the church, Christ’s body, and we invite those who yet are outside to give Jesus first place in your lives as well.

# Colossians 1:15-23

- <sup>15</sup> [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
- <sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created,  
 both in the heavens and on earth,  
 visible and invisible,  
 whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—  
 all things have been created through him and for him.
- <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
- <sup>18</sup> He is also head of the body, the church; and he is the beginning,  
 the firstborn from the dead, so that he himself will come to have first place in everything.
- <sup>19</sup> For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in him,
- <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile all things to himself,  
 having made peace through the blood of his cross;  
 through him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.
- <sup>21</sup> And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds,
- <sup>22</sup> yet he has now reconciled you in his fleshly body through death,  
 in order to present you before him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—
- <sup>23</sup> if indeed  
 you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast,  
 and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard,  
 which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven,  
 and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

<b>Colossians</b>															
<b>Christ's Supremacy ~ Our Submission</b>															
<b>Part 1</b>		<b>Part 2</b>		<b>Part 3</b>		<b>Part 4</b>		<b>Part 5</b>		<b>Part 6</b>		<b>Part 7</b>		<b>Part 8</b>	
Introduction and Thanksgiving		Prayer for Spiritual Maturity		Excellence of Christ		Mystery of the Gospel		Warning Against Falsehood		New Life in Christ		Christ-Centered Relationships		Prayer and Conclusion	
<b>1:1</b>	<b>1:8</b>	<b>1:9</b>	<b>1:14</b>	<b>1:15</b>	<b>1:23</b>	<b>1:24</b>	<b>2:3</b>	<b>2:4</b>	<b>2:23</b>	<b>3:1</b>	<b>3:17</b>	<b>3:18</b>	<b>4:1</b>	<b>4:2</b>	<b>4:18</b>

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

**"Five Question Bible Study"** (see page below) is a simple way to study any topic.  
Let's use it to explore the importance of confessing Christ...

**Monday**—Read 1 Timothy 6:13–14. What do you learn from **Christ's** "good confession" before Pontius Pilate? (See John 18:37.)

**Tuesday**—Read 1 Timothy 6:11–12. Have **you** made a similar "good confession" before men? When? How?

**Wednesday**—Read Romans 10:9–11. Have you made **this** "good confession"? If not, will you do so now?

**Thursday**—Read 2 Corinthians 9:13–15. Are **others** glorifying God as a result of your "good confession"?

**Friday**—Read Hebrews 4:14–16 & 10:23–25. Are you **"holding fast"** to your good confession? Give evidence.

**Saturday**— In preparation for gathering to worship on the Lord's Day, read Colossians 1:24—2:3.

### Five Question Bible Study

Bible Text: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]