

Welcome to our time of worship together. We are continuing our series on Colossians today with a passage that is focussed on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith. Let's start by praying together.

**Lord Jesus we thank you that you promise to be here with us. Help us to hear you speak to us this morning. Encourage us, comfort us and challenge us we pray. Amen**

**Call to worship: (based on Philippians 2)**

Equal with God	<b>Jesus is Lord</b>
Emptied himself	<b>Jesus is Lord</b>
Came as a slave	<b>Jesus is Lord</b>
Found as a man	<b>Jesus is Lord</b>
Humbly obeyed	<b>Jesus is Lord</b>
Went to his death	<b>Jesus is Lord</b>
Death on a cross	<b>Jesus is Lord</b>
God raised him up	<b>Jesus is Lord</b>
Gave him the name	<b>Jesus is Lord</b>
Higher than all	<b>Jesus is Lord</b>
Every knee bow	<b>Jesus is Lord</b>
All tongues confess	<b>Jesus is Lord</b>

Let's praise his name together as we sing/read/listen to: "O Praise the name". [Click here to find the song on YouTube.](#)

**Thanksgiving:**

Father God we thank you for all the many blessings you shower on us throughout our lives. This morning we want to thank you for.....  
We thank you for the opportunity to give back some of what you have given us. We pray for the money that we give to your work, help us to use it so that your ways can be known, and your love shown, here in Wendover and in the wider world. Above all we thank you for the gift of your Son who lived and died and rose again so that we could have new life. Amen

**Reading: Colossians 1:15-29**

<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; <sup>16</sup> for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. <sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God

was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup> and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

<sup>21</sup> And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him—  
<sup>23</sup> provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel.

<sup>24</sup> I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. <sup>25</sup> I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, <sup>26</sup> the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. <sup>27</sup> To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. <sup>28</sup> It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. <sup>29</sup> For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me.<sup>i</sup>

### **Reflection:**

"For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me." It seems to me that this sentence sums up everything Paul is about. Everything he does and everything he writes is focussed on telling people about God's love and helping them to grow in faith. And the force that gives him strength to do this work comes from the Holy Spirit within him. In this part of the letter, he uses a poem to teach and inspire his audience. Verse 15-20 are a really clever poem that is constructed around the different meanings of the Hebrew word "Head". Jesus is *firstborn* of all creation (head of the family) Jesus is *before all things* (Ahead of everything) Jesus is the *head* of the Church Jesus is the *beginning*.(ahead) This clever poem is one of the earliest Christian poems and it sums up everything that is important about our faith. The Colossians need to understand that it is all about Jesus. The more they get to know Jesus the more they will understand who the true God is and just what he has done for them. Knowing more of Jesus they will understand more about who they are, children of God and ambassadors of Christ. Knowing more of Jesus, they will understand more of what it means to live in him and for him.

There are three key things that the Colossians and we need to understand from this poem. 1) It's by looking at Jesus that we find out

who God is and what he is really like. Our God is the God of selfless, self-giving love. No wonder we are called to be grateful! 2) Jesus holds everything together, the old creation and the new creation to come. Jesus was there at the creation of the world, and it was good. But things went wrong right back at the beginning bringing pain and sickness division and inequality into our world. It is Jesus that puts things right and it is Jesus who will bring the new creation to heal our world once and for all. 3) Jesus is also the perfect human, our example and our guide. He is the one who can show us how to live abundantly. Tom Wright puts it like this "Jesus is himself the one in whom we are called to discover what true humanness means in practice. We have so often settled for second best in our human lives. Jesus summons us to experience the genuine article."<sup>ii</sup>

We're thinking about prayer in this series and of course it is prayer and thanksgiving that help us to draw close to Jesus. We see numerous examples of the importance of prayer in the Gospels. Jesus was a man of prayer when he lived among us on earth. He prayed for us then (John 17:20) and he still prays for us now (Hebrews 7:25). Spending time listening a talking with the God of the universe, the God who loves us so very much is always going to be time well spent! Being reminded of his love and his power as we spend time with him helps us to live our lives the way he wants us to. We too can enjoy that energy and inspiration that fuelled Paul's life as we spend time with the God who loves us.

### **Questions:**

1. Colossians is thought to have been written by Paul when he was in prison. How do you think he kept his passion for the Gospel in such difficult circumstances?
2. What really stood out for you in this reading?
3. What helps you to stay focussed on Jesus?

Our next song is all about centring ourselves on Jesus. We're going to sing/read/listen to "Jesus be the centre" [Click here to find the song on YouTube](#)

### **Let's take some time to pray for the needs of others**

Holy and Loving God we pray for your world, for the leaders and policy makers give them wisdom and love for those they serve...

Lord of all, Lord for all

#### **Hear our prayer**

We pray for our nation, that decisions might be made with wisdom and care for the benefit of all...

Lord of all, Lord for all

#### **Hear our prayer**

We pray for Wendover and our local communities. For everyone who lives near us for your ways to be known and your love to be shown...

Lord of all, Lord for all

**Hear our prayer**

We pray for those who serve who make our lives safe and comfortable. We pray for doctors, nurses, carers, shop workers, refuse collectors, postal workers and so many others...

Lord of all, Lord for all

**Hear our prayer**

We pray for our loved ones, those we know who may be ill, those who are struggling, those who are confused and conflicted... *(think of people you know and bring them before God in prayer)*

Lord of all, Lord for all

**Hear our prayer**

And finally we pray for ourselves, you know what is on our hearts and minds, and so we offer that to you ... *(take a few moments to tell your concerns to you Father in heaven)*

Lord of all, Lord for all

**Hear our prayer**

**Amen**

Let's finish our time of prayer by saying the Lord's prayer together.

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.**

**Amen.**

Our last song today, is a song of Praise to Jesus our king. Let us sing/read/listen to "Jesus is the name we honour". [Click here to find the song on YouTube](#)

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore, Amen**

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<sup>i</sup> Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>ii</sup> Wright, N. T. (2004). *Paul for everyone: the prison letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon*. Westminster John Knox Press, p152