

## Sermon: Looking Up

**Text: Colossians 1:15-23**

### Introduction:

We are all familiar with the word “ology.” It’s actually not so much a word in and of itself. It’s used as a suffix—a word that is added at the end of other words. The suffix “ology” means “a subject of study” or “a branch of knowledge.” When we add “ology” to the end of a word, we are talking about the STUDY of that particular word.

A common example of this is “Biology.” How many of you took biology as a course in high school? I did—in my sophomore year. I’m usually good at remembering my teachers names—but I can’t seem to pull this one up. I think it was Mr. Mears—but I’m not positive. (do you remember the name of your biology teacher?) I guess that means I’m getting old 😊. What I DO remember about biology is the bug collection we had to do. On one level, it was a bit gross—going around and having to grab and capture a bunch of insects. But on another level, I have to admit that it was very memorable and informative. I remember to this day pinning each of the bugs that I found, and placing them on a large Styrofoam display. I carefully placed each bug in rows according to their genus and species and phylum and order. I remember being very proud of my collection!

Bios means “life.” Biology means “the study of life.” In the same way that “Cheesology” is the study of cheese, or “Kookology” is the study of kooks (as in weird or eccentric people). I’m not making this up—check it for yourself.

I spent four years in seminary (graduate school for pastors). Many of these classes focused on a whole bunch of other “ologies.” I took Theology I, II and III. While in these theology (the study of God) classes, I learned about “Christology” (the study of Christ) and “Eschatology” (the study of the end times) and “Soteriology” (the study of salvation) and “Pneumatology” (the study of the Holy Spirit). This might all sound a bit confusing and boring. But the fact is, I found them all VERY interesting! Even more interesting than my high school bug collection!

I think my very favorite of all of these topics is Christology—the study of Jesus. When we dig into Christology, we’re not just studying a concept or an idea. We’re studying a PERSON. And not just any person. Jesus is unlike any person who has ever walked this earth. No one even comes close—because no one has ever taught what Jesus taught, lived like Jesus lived, or did what Jesus has done. No one has ever claimed that they would die, and then three days later rise from the dead. Yet that’s precisely what Jesus did...evidence proves this over and over again. We have an empty grave. We have the historical and undeniable evidence of a band of His followers that went out, laid down their lives, and quite literally changed the world. We have a calendar that divides time in half because of His life and resurrection.

This weekend, we are examining what is widely regarded as the highest and most treasured “Christological” statement ever recorded. **Colossians 1:15-23** is glorious. It is awesome. It states in just a few sentences the glory of Jesus. It is the summary of Christology. And we have the great privilege of reading it and studying it!

### Examination:

- Read **Colossians 1:15-23**

- Before we dig into verse 15, go up just a few verses and look at **verses 9-12**. Paul is praying for the people of Colossae, and is asking God to fill these people with the knowledge of His will through the wisdom that the Holy Spirit gives. And as this happens, they are able to give “joyful thanks to the Father”. These verses make direct reference to God the Father—and God the Holy Spirit. Study these verses closely. What, specifically, do these verses teach (tell) us about God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit?
- Verse 13 states that He (God the Father) has rescued us from the dominion of darkness. What do you think this means? When Paul talks about the dominion of darkness, what is he talking about? Is EVERYBODY part of this dominion of darkness? What does it mean to be RESCUED from this dominion of darkness?
- Verse 12 describes people who have been “qualified” to share in the inheritance of God’s holy people. These same people (born again Christians) have been brought into the kingdom of the Son (Jesus!)—and have “redemption” and “the forgiveness of sins” (v. 14). What does this teach us about what God has done to “qualify” us to inherit the kingdom of light?
- What do these six verses (vv. 9-14) teach us about the trinity?
- Paul uses **verses 15-20** to expound upon the reference in verse 13 to “the kingdom of the Son he loves.” Take some time to answer these questions: Who is this son? What is this kingdom like? How is it different is this “kingdom of light” from the “dominion of darkness” that we have all been born into?
- Paul begins this statement about Jesus (v. 15) by stating that Jesus is “the image of the invisible God.” In **John 14:9**, Jesus says, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” What does this mean?
- There has been much debate through the years about what it means for Jesus to be “the firstborn over all creation.” Numerous cults—such as the Church of Latter Day Saints (the Mormons)—use this verse to say that Jesus is not eternal like God the Father since He is God’s “firstborn” son. What they miss is that “firstborn” doesn’t always mean “first created.” It can also mean “first in status.” How do verses 15-20 show that Jesus is first in status?
- Not only did Jesus CREATE everything we see in this world, He also does something else in verse 17. What?
- What role does Jesus play with respect to each of US—the church? (v. 18)
- What, according to verse 19, did Jesus accomplish in His life on earth? What do verse 14 and verse 20 have in common?
- **Verses 21-23** take the Christology of verses 15-20 and APPLY it to our lives. This is not just “general” truth meant for everyone—but it is specific truth meant for each of us. “Once YOU were alienated from God...” “But now God has reconciled YOU through the death of Jesus.” Is this true of you? Have you applied the blood of Jesus to your own heart and life?

### Application:

It isn’t enough to read these verses once and walk away. Take time each day this coming week to study these verses. Look up, and ask God to give you a greater vision of Christ!