Jesus - What does it mean to be part of His Family

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[0:00] I'm turning back to the chapter we had there in Colossians chapter 1. Colossians chapter 1.! We'll focus on just verse 18 today. Colossians 1, verse 18.

He is the head of the body of the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.
Like all of Scripture, really, Colossians, and even Colossians 1 here, it's very difficult to take one verse and just do that because it all connects together.
So we always must be careful to get the context of what's being said. And the context, of course, here begins, well, part of the context begins in verse 15.
Verses 15, there down, down to the end of reading there, it's Jesus we're talking about. This is the Son of God we're talking about. Verse 15, he is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. By him, by Jesus, by the Son, all things created in heaven and on earth, visible, invisible, thrones, dominions, rulers, authorities, all things created through him and for him.
[1:22] He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Verses 15 and verse 17, down to verse 17, it gives us, you could say, the breadth of the majesty and the power of who Jesus is.

Who the Son is. This is the Son of God. This is the one who has existed from all time. And we're reminded, he isn't just a copy of God. He isn't just like God.
He is the image of the invisible God. And this is not our study today, but if we had time, we could study that. Look at Hebrews 1. If you have time this afternoon, read Hebrews 1 together.
Read it yourself and see there how Jesus is described. But he is not just like God. He isn't just similar to God. He is God.
In his power, he is God. And we see that. It gives us that image of him there because he is God in that all things, all things created through him, all things created for him, everything, heaven and earth, everything physical, everything spiritual, thrones, dominions, and so on.
[2:34] There is nothing outside the full creative control and the full creative origin, but is the Son of God. All things made through him, made for him.

And verses 15 down to verse 17 give us the enormity of who the Son is. Brothers and sisters, we come to worship the Son who is the eternal, ever-reigning Son of God, who heaven and earth belongs to him, not just in general, but every single atom, every single molecule, every single star created then and in process of creation now, every galaxy that we never see or understand, it all belongs to him.
All his. Everything spiritual is his. And we have this list here, thrones and dominions, rulers and authorities. We are beginning a series in Tolstain in our prayer meetings, looking at angels in Scripture or spiritual beings in Scripture.
And sections like this are fascinating, but actually we don't know all that much about what Paul is talking about here. Thrones, dominions, rulers or authorities.
In short, there is far more involved in the angelic spiritual world than we might ever think. And all that belongs to him. All the heavenly beings belong to him.
[4:00] All is his. But then we come to verse 18 then. See, before we see, yes, Jesus, the Son of God, he is in full control of all of time and space and reality.

And that is worthy of praise. That itself is worthy of hundreds of sermons. But then it comes down to verse 18. It carries on. This same Son of God who is in full control of all things, that all reality answers to him.
We're then told in verse 18, our text for today, and also, you could say, also with that, he is the head of the body, the church.

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He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. It brings it, you could say, down, and by that I mean physically, not in value.
But it brings it down from he is in charge of all things to brothers and sisters, he is in charge of us. That he who names and numbers and created and creates the stars is also the one who names and numbers and has us here today.
[5:13] Who says of himself that he is the head of the church. Just three very short headings for us today. Three very short headings. First of all, we have our family in him.

He is the head of the church. Our family in him. Second of all, we see we have our life in him. And thirdly, we see we have our future reign with him.
Our family in him, our future, our life in him, I should say, and our future reign with him. Family, our life, our future reign. Our family in him.
Jesus as the head of the church. We could easily have read just now for our reading 1 Corinthians chapter 12.
That section that we've read many times and heard many times. I won't read it all just now. 1 Corinthians 12, verse 12 there onwards. For just, I'll read verse 12.
[6:16] For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. So on. Jesus is the head of the body.

When it comes to what the church is, brothers and sisters and friends, so many of us, even Christians, so many of us get this so wrong. And if we get this wrong, then errors will then go from that to other parts of our life.
Now, we know this theologically. We've heard this countless times. But in practice, we seem to forget it very easily and very quickly. What are we? What are we?
What are we as a church? Well, okay, on paper, we are a charity, technically. We have to be. It fulfills legal requirements, yes.
What are we? Well, yes, we have these layers of structure. Kirk's session and deacon's court. I mean, you've got presbytery. You've got the general assembly and everything else, yes.
[7:21] Pair it all back to basics. What are we? According to Colossians here in verse 18. What are we? We are part, brothers and sisters, of the body of Christ.

We're part of the body of Christ. Now, there are many reasons we forget that. Some of it's just we've been with it. We've had it in our culture. We've had it for so long that we forget how extraordinary a thing it is.
We are so used to our patterns, aren't we? We come to this building. I'm up here. You're there. We have ways to do things. This happens and that happens. It's procedural and that is fine.
There must be order in how we worship. Absolutely. I'm not saying that. What I'm saying is we're a family just now, worshipping together. Our elder brother, our saviour, the Lord Jesus.
He is the head of the body and we are part of that body. Now, we know that, but actually when it comes down to it, sometimes we don't really live that out very well or very easily.
[8:23] And outside of us, the world, when they look at us, they see us. Well, if you have different views on us, some see us as, you can see, the custodians of history.

We're just here to preserve how we've always done things. We're here to preserve our culture. No. Or some see us as this gathering of people who are trying to set the rules for a wider society and wider community.
No. Brothers and sisters, we are brothers and sisters. We are the saints of God.
We are the family of God. The family of our saviour. As Paul opens Colossians. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, beloved of God, and Timothy, our brother, to the saints.
Speaking to the Christians in Colossae. Remember, saints are those who know and love the Lord Jesus. Saints describe every Christian. To the saints and faithful brothers.
[9:28] If you have a church Bible, you'll see brothers has a wee number one beside it. It goes down there to the bottom. The word there for brothers in Greek, it's a catch-all term. It's a bad example, but it's how we might say, some of us might say guys today.

You know, meaning men and women, boys and girls. When Jesus, when Paul, inspired by the Spirit, says, To the saints and faithful brothers. The translation is correct and faithful, but the context is, To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters.
Brothers. And we see that throughout the New Testament. Brothers and sisters is always meant by the word brothers. Almost always. We are a family. And we're a family that lives only through our

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head.
When you think of a body that tries to exist with our head, It's an impossibility, isn't it? If it does move with our head, it's a horror.
It's a horrible thing. It's something akin to Frankenstein's monster. It might work for a while, but it'll flail eventually. And fall eventually.
[10:38] We must have Christ as our head. He is the head of the church. Note. Our vitality comes through him. Our direction comes through him. And sometimes congregations and churches, denominations, church families, Try and live without having Christ as the head.

They subtly, often, replace Jesus as the head of the church. They replace Jesus with, sometimes, with history, with heritage.
And they forget that as a church family, our goal is serving him. And we end up serving X, Y, or Z in the past instead. We think of ourselves as some kind of cultural museum.
Which we're not. On the opposite side. Some try and serve him by forgetting him as head and placing, you could say, modernity as the head instead.
Well, if we do this and change that, and if we bring in this, that'll change things. That'll revive things. And actually, the funny thing is, those who replace Jesus with culture and history, and those who replace Jesus with modernity, they're both doing the exact same thing.
[11:51] If Jesus is not head of the church, the church might prosper for a while, but it will always flail, falter, and die eventually. He must be head.

His truth. His word. He is a reason for our gathering. He is a reason for all that we do. Why do we seek to reach out to this community? Well, we want to see more people in this building.
Why, though? To keep the lights on? To keep justifying our existence? Certainly not, I hope. We want to see people here, because we want more people to hear about Jesus. Don't we?
To know who he is. To follow after him. To have him as Lord and King and Saviour of their lives. To live a life eternal with him in glory. Our motivations have to be with him as the head.
Our own personal lives must be lived as him at the head. And I say this so carefully. And I say this very carefully, because when you're in the middle of vacancy, it feels like a slut.
[12:52] I'm not saying this with any knowledge whatsoever. I know nothing. Quite literally, I know nothing about your vacancy situation. Believe it or not, ministers, when we get together and chat, we discuss these things.

But actually, we're always doing our best, our own wee bits and pieces. Honestly, I know nothing. But speaking generally, having been through vacancies growing up in Graver, and quite long ones out of that, it's not always easy, is it?
And especially when it seems like there's very, perhaps, few viable options, and the worry sets in, and the panic sets in, and that can cause problems. Bring it right back to what we are.
What are we? What are you, brothers and sisters? You're a church family. Now, again, having a minister as part of that family is good and beneficial, but it does not make you any more or less valid as a family gathering.
It might help things, but it doesn't change who you are. You're a family gathering of the Lord's people. Tomorrow morning, this church gets condemned.
[13:59] It falls to the ground and crumbles back to the dust from whence it came. Do you cease to be a family? Do you cease to be brothers and sisters? Do you cease to be a church here, worshipping God in Barvis?

Certainly not. The free church closes down on Tuesday. It's a bad week for us. The free church is gone on Monday. The free church gets just mothballed on Tuesday.
No more ministers, no more pay for ministers, no more mansas, nothing. It's all done. Do we cease to be a church gathering? We lose our building. We lose our name.
We lose our finances. But we still gather people of God. Much more difficult, yes, but it still does not change the fact we have Christ as our head. Let's never forget who we are.
We're not here just for the organization. We're not here just to tick the boxes and do the job. We're here to proclaim the living Lord Jesus to a dead and dying community, to a dead and dying household or some of us, dead and dying neighbors, spiritually dead, spiritually gone.
[15:03] And we're here to say to them, you have hope and you can have life and you can have life forever through Jesus, our elder brother. Come and meet him. Come and see who he is.

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He is the head of the church. And the church, any denomination, any congregation, they will die if he does not remain the head.
He's the head of the church, the head of the body. We're then told, our second point, he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.
He's the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. Now, something a bit confused here. Are we saying he's the first ever to be resurrected from the dead?
Well, no. Despite even Old Testament accounts we could go to, even think quite simply of Lazarus.
[16:02] Lazarus, resurrected from the dead. So what does it mean that Jesus is the firstborn from the dead? Lazarus, of course.

Lazarus is resurrected. He's brought from death back to life. What happens to Lazarus? Eventually. As far as we know. Lazarus, of course, at some point in his life, Lazarus would die again.
Resurrected, yes. But eventually, Lazarus would taste death again. He would die again. When it comes to Jesus, he is the firstborn from the dead.
He is the beginning. The word there, firstborn, we see it also in verse 15. Again, we're not doing a study on verse 15. But in verse 15, Jesus is called the firstborn of all creation.
He's the firstborn of all creation. Well, that's getting very confusing. Because if Jesus is the firstborn of all creation, is that saying that Jesus is created? That he's the firstborn thing of creation?
[17:11] Well, we give praise to God for context. I mean, again, no. Jesus can't be the first thing of creation. Because all creation, verse 16 tells us, came through him and from him.

Well, what does it mean that Jesus is the firstborn? Well, again, not doing a study on verse 15. But the term firstborn, it's a term of title rather than timeline.
Think title rather than timeline. Firstborn is a title that denotes he is the prime. He is the top. He is the foremost.
He is the heir. There is nothing and no one greater than him. He is the beginning.
He is it. He is the firstborn from the dead. He is the prime, not example, but he is the prime template of what we will follow after.
[18:11] As he was raised from the dead. As he was the firstborn from the dead. As he was raised from the dead in his resurrection body. So too we all will one day be raised in our resurrection bodies.

Brothers and sisters. Raised never to die again. Raised never to deteriorate again.
Brothers and sisters. It doesn't take a minister or a preacher from a pulpit to say that death is certain. We know that.
We feel that. As a community, as an island, we are, and always have been keenly aware of that. But also, we are keenly aware of the reality of death is something that we manage to hide and not think about very easily.
Very quickly. Very quickly. Indeed, very often. We distract ourselves. We think, when we hear of difficult circumstances and of death, we think, well, that's sad for them.
[19:27] And we mean that. It's sad for them. We never think that them will one day be us. We've moved that far from us. Never us. Not me.

Not my family. Not my loved ones. And we do that at times to protect ourselves. But reality is, bring it right back down to what biblical reality is. We all know. We all know that death must come.
Why do we avoid it? Even the Christians, why do we avoid thinking about it at times? It's because death, it is not right. At the very core of who we are, we know death is not how it should be.
We know that death is not how it was meant to be. It feels unnatural because it is unnatural. It is the order of things now, but it was not the order of things, of course, at creation.
And the reality is that all who follow after Adam, of course, will die. But we're told, think of 1 Corinthians again. 1 Corinthians 15, verse 20.
[20:33] I'll read some verses for us. 1 Corinthians 15. Chapter 15, I should say. And verse 20.

Verse 21, I should say. For as by a man came death, by a man has also come the resurrection from off the dead. It says, for as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.
All who follow after Adam will die. Friends, brothers and sisters, that's us. We all follow after the lineage of Adam. But on the other side of that, all who follow after Jesus, all who are his, all who are born from his finished work, we will live.
And live forever. And we will live as he now lives. And how does he now live as the beginning, the firstborn from the dead?

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How does he live? At the Father's right hand. In a fully resurrected body. That is the template we will one day follow.
[21:44] One day soon. Of course, for many of us, for most of us, unless the Lord comes first, yes, we will go back to the earth. Our dust will return to dust.

Our soul will go to be with God in his presence. But even then, even then, we see that in Revelation, there is a sense of a beautiful, glorious longing in heaven.
As the souls of beloved brothers and sisters in heaven around the throne say to the Lord, How much longer? How much longer? When the day comes when soul is rejoined forever to resurrection bodies.
Some to everlasting life and others to everlasting death. We have life in Jesus.
He is the firstborn from the dead. He is the beginning. Some might think it is very full of Christians.
[22:49] Christians are being full of themselves, as you say, by saying, we can know for certain we are going to heaven. And Christians, brothers and sisters, and it is perhaps a cultural thing, I am not sure.

I mean, it is a West Coast thing, I do not know. But I have certainly had conversations with Christians over the years. I have heard it myself. And you ask a Christian, are you going to heaven? Well, I certainly hope so. No.
Are you going to heaven? Yes. Do you know Jesus? Do you love Jesus? Yes. Are you going to heaven, therefore? Yes. Why? Because he is there before you.
Does he lie? Has he deceived you? Is he not the firstborn from the dead? I have a right hand of the Father waiting to take you home to himself. If that is true, then brother and sister, you will be with him where he is.
Christians should have hope and confidence. Not to say we always feel that way. We certainly don't. But we should have it. We should believe it. We should hold on to it. We have our life in him.
[23:50] We have our family in him. And very, very briefly, we have also, you could say, our future. Our future reign with him.

He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. That in everything he might be preeminent.
When all is said and done, he will bring all things to the conclusion. I think of the end of Psalm 102. Again, Hebrews 1 tells us that Psalm 102 concerns the Son of God, speaks of the Son of God, that he will, as it were, wrap up a garment.
All of time, all of creation, be wrapped up at the end. All things will be complete and find a completion in him.
Why? So that he will be preeminent. He will be over the whole of time and space. That in him we find the new creation beginning.
[25:00] That through him we find the recreation, the new creation, the new heavens and the new earth finding that they are beginning. That in everything he might be preeminent.

Brothers and sisters, he is our head just now. Yes? Brothers and sisters, he is our life just now. Yes? Yes? Because he lives, we live with him as we heard just now.
But also, in the future, we will also, not just be part of his body, the church, not just have life with him, but we will have life forever because of him.
What does it mean that we will live with him? Well, it means we'll spend all eternity in the very presence of the Lamb. He will be preeminent in all things.
He will be the eternal King. He will be preeminent. He will be the eternal, bright, shining light of heaven, new heavens and new earth.
[26:04] He will be preeminent. He will forever be the firstborn from the dead, the Lamb resurrected, the great high priest, ever man and ever God.

He will be preeminent. There are some perhaps who disagree here, but I don't see otherwise. But he will forever, and indeed does now and will forever have in his body the marks of his love for us.
He will be preeminent. And from an ageless, ageless eternity ahead, as we spend aeon after aeon, and countless eternity after eternity, you can't put numbers to eternity, as we will just be with him, he will be preeminent.
As he receives and glorifies, he will be preeminent. As Father, Son, and Spirit exist with their beloved, beloved people, time without end, he will be preeminent.

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As he gathers his people soon home to be with him, as the head comes back to collect his body, as the Savior comes back to collect the ones he has saved, as the King returns, not as servant King, but now as he returns as conquering King, to rescue his people, he will be preeminent.
[27:42] Friends, and some online perhaps, you've heard all this before. You've heard it before. Preachers and ministers, we all, at the end of the day, we all say the same thing.

Some of us have different styles, and some of us are easier to listen to in our verse. Absolutely. We all say the same thing. It is Jesus and him alone.
It is Jesus or nothing. We either will one day be with him, reigning with him, or when that final day comes, we will never see him again.
We either live forever with him, or live forever apart from him. With him, there is joy eternal, hope eternal, love eternal, peace eternal.
A future forever without him is hell. It is eternal suffering, sadness, loneliness, horror, regret, anger, everything else.
[28:54] Every single time you get to hear the gospel, every single time you hear a minister, or whoever else preach, every single time you talk to a Christian friend, every single time you go to read the Bible, every single time you come together on a Sunday, this is God being gracious to you and giving you one more chance to hear the word, one more chance to respond to that.

Make no mistake at all about it, He is patient, and He is good, but patience does not last forever. The day will come when the end will come, and He will come to look after His body.
He will come to gather us to Himself. Anyone outside of that, He will not gather in. Whilst you have chance, and this is your chance, make sure you know what it is to have Jesus as preeminent in your life, to be the top reason, your top hope, your top joy, but He is it for you.
Please, please don't waste any more time, but He will be preeminent in your life, preeminent in our congregation here, preeminent in all that we seek to be and to do.
Let's bow our heads now, a word of prayer. Lord, we thank you for the goodness you show us eternally again and again. Thank you for the goodness of your word. Thank you for your kindness shown to us and the nature, the work, the life of your Son.
[30:27] He who reigns and rules at your right hand as you put his enemies under his feet now. The day will soon come, indeed is coming closer we think, when all will be wrapped up, all will be concluded, and He will return to us.

Until we see these days of glory, Lord, surround us and be with us. Blessed once more, we ask for this congregation and your people here. Pray for any here who as of yet cannot say that they know nor love the Lord Jesus as friend or king or saviour.
Lord, they would not waste any more time. You would work in them even today to bring them to yourself. Look after us and keep us and surround us. If it's your will, take us again safely together with us even to hear a word once more.
Let's go all these things in your name, for your sake alone. Amen. Let's conclude with that great family psalm. Psalter, Psalm 133.
Psalter, Psalm 133. Psalm 133. Psalm 133 on page 424.
[31:37] Behold, how good a thing it is and how becoming well together such as beaver in our unity to dwell. Like precious ointment on the head, but down the beard did flow.

Even Aaron's beard and to the skirt stood off his garments go. Psalm 133. The whole psalm to God's praise. Behold, behold, how good a thing it is and how becoming well together such as brethren are in unity in unity to dwell.
In unity In unity to dwell. to dwell. to dwell. My precious ointment on the head that down the beard did fall.
He gave their own spirit and to the skirts Dead of his garments go!
Dead of his garments go! of his love A sermon to the Jew that taught all Zion hills descend For there the blessing God commands life that shall never end life that shall never end life that shall never end The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and forevermore.
[33:58] Amen. Thank you.

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