



MESSAGE GUIDE

For Oct. 26,
2025



Colossians 1:15-23
RICK GROVER,
LEAD PASTOR

COMPLETE 2: COMPLETE IN CHRIST

We are in our second week of a seven-week study through the book of Colossians called, "Complete."

1. WHICH OF THESE HAVE YOU THOUGHT WOULD HELP YOUR LIFE BE COMPLETE?

- Once I get married and have kids, my life will be complete.
- Once I get that promotion, my life will be complete.
- Once we move into our dream home, our lives will be complete.
- Once I finish my career and retire, then my life will be complete.
- Once I.... (something else like this).

2. WHEN YOU ACCOMPLISHED ONE OR MORE OF THESE THINGS, DID YOU FEEL LIKE YOUR LIFE WAS MORE COMPLETE OR DID YOU COME TO SEE THAT CHASING "COMPLETION" WAS MORE LIKE CHASING GOLD AT THE END OF A RAINBOW?

What we learn from Scripture is that finding "completion" in the things of this world is an allusive goal and we will never be complete until we are completely centered on Jesus.

In the first week of this series, we looked at the first 14 verses of the New Testament book of Colossian and this week we continue in the first chapter of Paul's letter. Colossians 1:15-23, which is called the highest Christological passage in the entire New Testament. To tie this into what was preached last week, the Apostle Paul wrote this letter to the church in Colossae, modern-day Turkey, to help this church re-center themselves in who Jesus is and what Jesus has done so that we can be fully alive in Him. There was an emerging philosophy in that period of time called, "Gnosticism." Gnostics believed that being complete (whole, mature, fulfilled) was based on what they accomplished and not on what Jesus accomplished for us.

Even in the church today, some people think this way. "I am more complete, my life is more full, more rich, more mature, because I am a good person. I'm more religious. I'm more spiritual. I'm a better Christian. I have arrived!" They have to keep up this illusion of their spiritual superiority, because if they fail, they discover their identity is not complete, and their lives come crashing down.



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3. WHEN HAVE YOU HAD MOMENTS OF THINKING THIS WAY?

Here's the key: Our lives are only complete when they are in the very One who is ultimately COMPLETE, Jesus Christ.

This is why Paul writes this incredibly rich, powerful section that: Jesus is completely God, completely man, and has completely given us our identity and fullness in Him. Let's take a look at these verses in Colossians 1.

He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation (Colossians 1:15, ESV). The word translated as "image" is the Greek word, *eikon*, where we get our English word, icon. An icon is a visible representation of something invisible. Here's what's interesting. In the Ten Commandments, commandment #2 is: You shall not make for yourself a carved image... You shall not bow down to them or serve them. (Deuteronomy 5:8-9, ESV)

Think of all the images that we could put at the center of our lives. An image of success, an image of importance, an image of happiness—representing those intangible, visible qualities of meaning, purpose, COMPLETENESS. But those are all images or icons that were never created to be at the center of our lives! In other words, they are visible representations that don't deliver on those invisible qualities of ultimate joy and completeness.

One author put it this way: "One has only the choice between God and idolatry. There is no other possibility. For the faculty of worship is in us, and it is either directed somewhere into this world, or into another." (Robert Coles, Simone Weil, 148-149)

But here's the one thing in life that is a true image—a true icon of a visible representation of what is invisible: Jesus the visible image of the invisible God. In other words, In Jesus we can see and know God. Paul writes, "He is the firstborn of all creation." In the ancient Greco-Roman world, the term "firstborn" carried the connotation of preeminence or supremacy rather than simply being the first one born in a family.

Verse 16, For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. (Colossians 1:16, ESV)

So, Jesus the visible manifestation of the invisible God who is supreme/preeminent over all creation is the very One through whom everything was created. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:17, ESV)

Because Jesus is God in the flesh, because He is the One who brought all things into existence, then everything in existence is held together—is complete—in Him.



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4. IS THIS TRUE IN YOUR LIFE? IF JESUS HOLDS EVERYTHING TOGETHER, HOW CAN YOU FIND “COMPLETENESS IN HIM?”

There are real pain and disappointments when our lives or things in our lives don't turn out the way we want. BUT... Even if you find the “PERFECT” spouse, even if you have two or three or more children, even if you reach your dream with your career—YOU WILL STILL FEEL INCOMPLETE IF YOU ARE NOT COMPLETE IN CHRIST!

“In him [Jesus] all things [including your life and mind] hold together.” That means the opposite is true as well: Outside of Jesus all things fall apart. Now, it is not wrong to have life goals, aspirations, and dreams, as long as they don't become icons of something visible that is a false substitute of what is invisible. Jesus is the only Icon—Image that is a true representation of what we ultimately need in our lives to be complete—and that's Him.

So, what about the church? What about us? Same thing. Our completeness, wholeness, fulfillment isn't in how many people we have, how many baptisms we have, how big our campus is, how many campuses we have. Our completeness is in the One who is (verse 18):

...the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. (Colossians 1:18-20, ESV)

All the fullness of God was in Jesus who reconciles us to Himself through the cross. So, what does this mean to us—those of us who are trying not to chase after the next “thing” that promises to give us satisfaction, fulfillment, completeness, but we STRUGGLE. What does this mean to us?

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. (Colossians 1:21-23, ESV)



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5. DOES THIS SEEM TO BE TRUE FOR YOUR LIFE? WHAT HAS KEPT YOU FROM BELIEVING THAT YOU COULD BE RECONCILED, MADE HOLY, MADE BLAMELESS, ABOVE REPROACH AFTER SOME OF THE THINGS YOU HAVE DONE?

And yet in the life, death, and resurrection of the very One who is the image of the invisible God, who is over all things, in whom all things hold together, He makes this possible! You are never beyond the reach of God. His arms are longer than any depth to which you have fallen. And that is why we continue in the faith (v. 23), not because we have a God who is watching us, just waiting for us to screw up again, but because we have a God who lifts us up and reconciles us to Himself.

Two takeaways:

1- **What next step will you take to center your life on Jesus who is the only One who can make you complete?** That means you reorient your identity from anything else that is an icon promising to deliver you fulness to Jesus Christ who is the only Icon representing in the flesh the God of the universe in whom we find our ultimate completeness.

2- **How will we as a church center ourselves on Jesus who is the only One who can make us complete?** That means we stop chasing the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow in thinking that if we were just bigger, if we were just “cooler,” if we just had more campuses or more of whatever, that we will have arrived. And we find our fulness, our completeness, in Jesus Christ.