

A Sermon on Christ for Atheists

by Paul Washer

It is a great privilege for me to be here this evening with you. And in a way it is a great blessing that you cannot see me, some of you. And it is for this reason: You do not need to see a man; nor do you need to see the movements of a man. You need to see Christ. And we need the power and the movement of the Holy Spirit. When we cannot see much of a man, that does not limit us. But without a vision of Jesus Christ we are ruined.

I'm not here tonight to talk about men, or to talk about church, or religion. For all those things have their failures and flaws. Every one of you can stand up and make accusations against these things. Men are weak and sinful. Religion is sometimes weak and failing. But Christ: there is no one like Christ. He's the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He's the Son of God. He is infinite perfection. He is strong. He is mighty. He has never failed. And He has fulfilled every promise He has ever made. You have no argument against Him. For there is no one like Him. He and He alone is the Savior of the world, and the Christ of God.

This evening you need Christ. You need a vision of Christ. If you're here this evening and you consider yourself to be atheist, I know this: One small glimpse of Christ, and your atheism will be destroyed by His power. And if you are a believer here tonight, and you are struggling with sin, and you lack zeal and motivation, one glimpse of Jesus Christ will give you all that you need to live the Christian life. So it's all about Christ. What do you think of Him? For that is the very basis of God's judgment of men. While it is true that one day you will stand before God and be judged with regard to your sin, you must understand that the greatest question on that day will be this: What think ye of Jesus Christ? What have you done with Christ?

Now let's open up our Bibles to the book of Colossians 1:16-22. "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. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 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. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, 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. And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 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."

Let's pray. Father, I come before You this evening with a great and a heavy burden. Lord, I know that I am taking upon myself a task that I cannot complete. It would be easier for me to count the stars in the heavens, or to number these grains of sand on the seashore. But to describe the greatness, and the glory, and the power of Your Son goes beyond all human invention. No words can express Him. No intellect can grasp Him, whether they be human or angelic. That You have exalted the name of Your Son above all things, so that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord. And it will be for Your good pleasure and Your glory.

Father, we are filled with religion; we are filled with knowledge; and we are filled with apathy, and the lack of the fear of the Lord. But Father, one glimpse of Christ, one glimpse of His power and His glory, one glimpse of Your love and His face, will make our sleeping go away and fill us with joy unspeakable. Lord, we need Christ. We don't need a man. We don't need a preacher. We need Him. Lord I pray, let me stutter, let me speak as a mule, let me fall from this platform; but O God, that men might catch a glimpse of Jesus Christ. His power. His glory. That they might be humbled by that, and saved by that heavenly vision. O God, rend the heavens and come down. Speak to men. In Jesus' name, amen.

Now look in verse 16. "For by Him all things were created." It doesn't matter who you are tonight. You may claim to be atheist and agnostic. You may be a hater of all religion and even a hater of God. The very mention of Christ may set your blood to boiling. You may consider yourself an enemy of the cross. But know this, Jesus Christ created you. And in that, He has a claim upon you. He is your Maker; and by virtue of that, He is also your Possessor, your Owner. And not only does He take ownership, but He is also Lord. You say, "I do not see that. Where is His throne?" Know this, that God has appointed a day in which He will judge every man, through this One who was crucified by wicked men—Jesus Christ. His throne is coming. His judgment is near. And on that day when He judges, everyone will recognize His right to judge because He is judging the very thing He has made.

Do you also realize the absolute arrogance of seeking to live independently from Him? The Bible says He made you. And not only that, but He sustains you. It is the great truth of Christianity that God created the world. But He did not leave it to itself. He sustains the world. In the same way know this, God created you and He sustains you. The next breath you take comes from Christ. Your heart beats in the next few minutes only because of Jesus Christ. Can you see how insane it is to seek to live independently from Him? Imagine a man laying in a hospital, and he's unconscious, and he is connected to a life support system - several tubes that keep him alive. And every once in a while, the man wakes up, and like a wild animal, he grabs at the tubes, and he tries to pull them out of his arm. He tries to destroy the life support system. He must be laid down in the bed once more and tied down, because in his fit of insane rage he is going to kill himself. That is the perfect description of man without Christ. Like a wild animal, like an insane man, you seek to live separately from the very One who is the source of life.

But the Bible says, "By Him all things were created." But not only that, this prepositional phrase "by Him" can also be interpreted "in Him". That all things were created in Christ. Now what does that mean? Reality is found in Christ alone. Everything outside of the person of Jesus Christ is false. It is wrong. It is without meaning. It has no reason. It is absurd and insane. So is the life lived outside of Christ. It has no meaning. It lives in an unreal world, a delusion. Look around at your world. Look what you see. Everything is a vain delusion. From business to advertising to the media, it is all a delusion. It will all pass away. Yesterday I was born, today I stand here, tomorrow I die. And the same can be said of you. And to chase after any thing except that which is eternal is absolutely insane. To give yourself for those things that will pass away is an absurdity. To live for anyone other than Christ is to set yourself outside of the will and good pleasure of God.

There's something that you must understand about God the Father. His Son is everything to Him. Every thing the Father has ever done, He has done it for His Son. He created the world in His Son. He reveals Himself to the world through His Son. He redeems the world through His Son. And He

judges the world through His Son. And He has done it all for the glory of His Son. God has a correct view of things. For you to consider unimportant what God considers most important, is absolutely insane. I said something the other night, and I will repeat it now. I can tell you who your God is, by just asking you one question: What do you think about most? What fills your thoughts the most?

Do you see how insane we are? We look in the mirror at our own image more than we look to Christ. We worry about things in this world more than we concern ourselves with Christ. And yet, I can assure you, Christ is foremost in every thought of God. And Christ is foremost in the thoughts of every being that finds its dwelling place in Heaven. This is proved in the next phrase. It says, "For by Him all things were created, both in Heaven and on earth." The world is important to God. Men are important to God. But be careful that your heart not be lifted up in arrogance, because the world of men is not the only thing that God possesses. It is not even the greatest of His possessions. For all of Heaven belongs to God. And we know from Scripture that there are countless splendid created beings, who exist in Heaven for only one purpose—the worship of God.

Dr. Tozer, many years ago, said something very important, and we will do well to listen. "If all men on the earth were to suddenly become blind, it would not diminish the glory of the sun, or the moon, or the stars." In the same way, if all men were to be atheist, it would not diminish the glory of God. If He lost the entire world, if every man turned away, if there was no redemptive plan in the heart of God, He would still be worshiped throughout eternity by an infinite number of created beings more splendid than ourselves.

"By Christ all things were created, both in the heavens and on the earth, visible and invisible." In these two words we find one of our greatest problems. We trust our eyes, we trust our senses, more than we trust the Word of God. You live based on what you can see. You live based on what you can feel. And, most importantly, you live based upon what other men tell you. And you do not realize that the invisible world is more a reality than the one you can see. This is not the reality. The reality is that which is set before us in the Word of God. It is what Christ has said; because one day, all of this will pass away like a vapor. Like a piece of cloth that will be rolled up and taken away. Like dry wood, it will be burned up. And on that day, you will know what is truly real, and the Word of God will be vindicated. And some of you will rejoice in that. But others of you will realize that you've lived for a wrong thing, and you have lost all things.

Now look at this. It says also that He created thrones and dominions and rulers and authorities. This becomes so clear in the book of Psalms 2. The nations rage like wild animals against God. We can see that every day in our world. It seems that every law that is passed in my country is against the law of God. That men work with all their might to fight against the only One who is true. That everyone does what is right in their own eyes. But the Bible says that God in Heaven laughs. Not simply does He laugh, but He mocks, because God says He has set His King on His holy hill, and no one can change that. And then He advises the greatest men on the planet to kiss the Son; to be reconciled to the Son; to worship the Son. This is what Jesus demands of the world. This is what God demands of the world. You say, "What right does He have?" It's His world. Abraham Kuyper said this a long time ago: "When Jesus Christ returns, He will stretch forth His hand upon the world. And He will say, 'Mine! Mine! Mine! Mine! Mine! It was made by Me, and it was made for Me.'" And seated upon His throne, God Himself will see to it that every knee bows, and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord.

He goes on and he says, "All things have been created through Him and for Him." This is a powerful summary of what the apostle Paul has been saying. Everything is about Christ. Absolutely everything. Now let's look for a moment, "It was created through Him." We've already talked about this, but let's talk about it again. Do you realize your absolute dependence upon Christ? Do you realize that the man who calls himself an atheist, and who clenches his fist and shakes it at God, and curses His name with great blasphemy, he can only do so by the power of the very God he curses. And if that God were to take away his life, he would not exist for one tick of the clock.

All things were created through Him, and all things were created for Him. Now again, look for a moment at the mind of God. Let's say that God is seated in one chair, and you are seated beside Him in another. And all of creation were standing around you, listening. And a great angel walks up to both of you, and asks this question to God: "Dear God, what is the reason behind absolutely everything you do?" And God says this: "My Son Jesus Christ. Everything I have ever done, I have done for Him. Everything I will ever do, I will do for Him. For Me, He is absolutely everything. And apart from Him, there is nothing. And if anyone, angelic or human, wants anything to do with Me, they must feel the same way about My Son." As you hear this answer, you begin to tremble. And then the question is given you: "What is the reason behind everything you've ever done?" And you say, "Me. I am the reason."

Now let me give you something of philosophy here. A rational creature will always have a reason for the thing that they are doing. They will always have an end or a purpose for what they are doing. And it is assumed that a reasonable creature will always choose the greatest end or the greatest purpose for what they're doing. So what is God's highest purpose for everything He's done? What is God's great good? His Son—whose glory is incomprehensible, and whose worth is infinite. And then you, your reason, the thing you've lived for, has been you. A speck of dust floating down on a map of the world. Or even worse, you've degraded yourself. You don't even live for you anymore. You live for work. You live for money. You live for your own beauty. You live for the reputation and opinion of others. And then what is most pitiful, you lived to gather things. You gave more time to thinking about the shoes you buy, and the car you drive, and the way your hair is prepared, than you do the Son of God. Tell me that's not insanity. It is the greatest of all contradictions.

Now it says here, that all things were created through Him and for Him. I wish that the Lord, at this moment, would expand my heart. I wish He would increase my intellect. I don't want to leave this phrase "for Him". I want to prove to you that if you do not live for Him, you are absolutely, completely insane. 1 John says that this world is passing away. Another way to interpret the Greek there is that it's being pushed out. Like a huge tractor pushing everything of this world over a cliff. And only the man who does the will of God will remain forever. Are you that man? Do you have the mind of God? Do you see reality the way He sees it? Christ is most precious to Him. Is He most precious to you?

Now we go on. It says in verse 17, "He is before all things." The primary idea here is His eternity. His eternity. He is not only the Son of God, He is God the Son. Before the mountains were formed, He was there. Before the valleys were cut through the ground, He was there. It was all done by His hand. He is from everlasting to everlasting. When the mountains were born, He had been from everlasting. And when the mountains have eroded to nothing, He will still be toward everlasting. He did not begin with the birth of Jesus to the virgin Mary, but He has always been. And know this,

He has always been God's delight. I hear people say sometimes to their children, when their children ask, "Mommy, daddy, why did God make me?" And parents will often say, "Well, He made you because He was lonely." Know this, that is blasphemy. God has never been lonely. He has always existed in perfect delight. He has never had a need, but He has existed in perfect communion in the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father was the delight of the Son; and the Son, the delight of the Father. They did not create the world because of some need, but they created the world out of their superabundance.

Although the meaning is eternity here in this phrase, it also refers to priority. Priority. And the question is this: Does your priority conform to God's priority? The priority for God the Father is His Son and His Son's glory. Is that your priority? The Bible commands us to be very specific in the way that we live. For it says, whether we eat or drink or we do anything else, we are to do it for the glory of God. If someone understands this truth, it will create great conviction in them. Why? If you honestly evaluate your life, you know two things about yourself. And they are this: You have not loved God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength; and you have not glorified God in all things, and to a perfect degree. Now do you see why you need a Savior?

You see, many people will say, "Yes, I know I have broken some of the Ten Commandments." Even in that, you show that you do not understand. You and I have broken all of the Ten Commandments. But there is something far worse; something that is far greater, against God, that we have done: We have not loved Him. And we have not glorified Him. For although we knew God, we did not glorify Him as God, nor give thanks. But we turned from the glory of God, and became lovers of self more than lovers of God; and lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

"He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." In a sense, it is a very positive thing when societies and cultures begin to fall apart. Because when they begin to fall apart, it destroys the delusion. People think that they can create societies that will be utopian without God. If you know anything about history, you will understand that the late nineteenth century and the twentieth century was what that was all about. In the late eighteenth century, and then in the nineteenth century, and the twentieth century, those were going to be the centuries when man truly became man. And by his own strength, he was going to create a society where there would be nothing but goodness. And he claimed to be able to do this without God. But everything has fallen apart.

As I've gone through Holland, I have seen some very beautiful places. When I look in a book of tourism for Holland, I see extremely beautiful places. But that's not Holland. Take me to the streets where women prostitute themselves; where children are full of drugs and alcohol; where families are falling apart. Husbands and wives, in anger, ready almost to kill one another. Immorality rampant in the streets. Only in Christ do all things hold together. There is no utopia apart from Jesus Christ. And not Jesus Christ as a helper of men, (that will not create a utopia) but Jesus Christ as the King of men. Jesus Christ as the Object of the worship of men. Men living in absolute dependence upon Jesus Christ. And men recognizing this one great divine truth: That Jesus Christ is everything!

Is your world falling apart? Good. This may be the very thing that turns you to Christ. Do you look around at your world and see it falling apart? Good. This may be the very thing that turns you to

Christ. It is better to wake up now while salvation is still offered, and to be healed by the Son of God, than to sleep until that great and final day, when you will be awakened. But it will be too late. Trust in Christ. Throw yourself upon Christ. You say, "I have religion! I am a religious man. I am a churchman." Sir, none of that will help you. None of that will give you life. None of that will take away your sins. None of that will fill you with joy unspeakable. It is only Christ. Christ. The Person of Christ. Not the idea. Not the concept. Not merely the doctrine. But the Person of Jesus Christ, crucified for the sins of sinners; raised from the dead by the power of God; ascended to the right hand of Majesty upon high; reigning for ever and ever, and able to save to the uttermost those who to Him. This is the Jesus of whom I testify. He doeth all things well.

Let's pray. Father, I come before You in the name of Your Son. The Centerpiece of glory. The highest Mountain among mountains. The One before whom all the universe, everything visible and invisible, bows. O God, at this moment it's almost as if I can hear a mighty chorus of angels without number, and saints glorified without number, worshiping the name of Jesus. O God, set our minds, make them correct, pull us in, that we would join that mighty chorus, not only with our words but with our lives. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. At His name every knee shall bow, and tongue confess. Father, we praise you and we worship you and we adore you, for the One whom You adore—Your Son. All praise, honor, glory, riches, and blessing be His. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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