

“GLORIOUS POWER UNLEASHED”

Colossians 1:11-20 November 23, 2025

In 2011, a comedy movie debuted called "**Bad Teacher**". I haven't personally seen the film, but the central character is Elizabeth Halsey, played by actress Cameron Diaz. Halsey is a lazy and immoral teacher at John Adams Middle School in Chicago. She curses at her students, drinks heavily, takes drugs and lets her students watch movies so she can sleep through class. Her game plan is to quit teaching and marry her wealthy fiancé, Mark. However, that plan backfires when he learns she is only after his money and promptly dumps her.

Halsey is a really bad teacher and not just because of her teaching methods. In an attempt to improve her situation she comes up with an embezzlement scheme, poisons a fellow teacher, steals the answers for a state exam, and practices blackmail. Her character is self-centered, manipulative and borders on socio-pathic. Not a good teacher or person!

I am not saying the situation in the church of Colossae, whom Paul wrote this letter to, is full of bad people, but it certainly was struggling with some bad teaching. At this point Paul is in prison, so he is unable to visit the church and set things right. Instead, he crafts this pastoral letter to correct, refute and challenge the errant instruction going around.

We can deduce from the letter's content that the main issues were over who Jesus is and what he did. In a counter response to the bad teaching, the Apostle Paul writes some of the most beautiful words about

our Lord and Savior. In fact, in its Greek language it is written in hymn form, a beautiful hymn of praise. What an appropriate piece of scripture for the Christ the King Sunday! It helps us to understand who Jesus is and what Jesus has done and the difference this teaching makes in our lives.

I. JESUS IS THE POWER OF ATTORNEY

Did you hear the story of the Mom who said to her daughter, **“Honey you have done such a great job keeping up with your homework and chores around the house. Now that you’re getting older how would you like an increase in your weekly allowance?”** The daughter thought for a moment and replied, **“Sure raising my allowance would be great mom. But what I really want is the power of attorney.”**

That daughter is wise. While increasing her piggy bank is nice, the power of attorney is real power. We know the Power of Attorney (POA) is a legal document that gives one person the authority to act on behalf of another person in private affairs, business, or other legal matters.

In one sense, **Jesus is our power of attorney**, you could also say he is our power of eternity, but that’s for another sermon. What’s important is there are two exercises of his power that have blessed us.

One, Jesus Strengthen us. Paul prays, **“May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from HIS GLORIOUS POWER, so that you may have all endurance and patience and joyfully giving thanks to the Father...”** It is difficult for us self-empowering people to grasp, but the church does not exist by our efforts alone. It is Christ who empowers us with fortitude, patience, and joyful thanks. These gifts give

us the ability to bear up under pressure, to suffer the unpleasantness of others, and to turn hardship into glorious joyful victory. Jesus is giving us the power to form an indestructible character that bears witness to his glory. We would be crushed attempting to live out faith without the strength of Christ.

Secondly, Paul tells us, “...who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” In case you didn’t know the words inheritance, rescue, transfer, and redemption are all legal terms. Jesus has the power of attorney, and he used that power to bring us from darkness into the light, to free us from slavery to freedom, to rescue us from the power of satan to empower us with the Spirit of God. Through the victory of the cross, Jesus has transferred us into his kingdom, making us heavenly citizens who are now entitled to all the rights, responsibilities, and inheritance with all the other saints. Now that’s power! When we see what Christ has done on our behalf how can we not offer joyful thanks. Jesus made a power play, and we are the beneficiaries.

II. JESUS IS IN FIRST PLACE

The comic duo **Abbott and Costello** had a famous baseball routine called “**Who’s on First.**” It was funny because there is mass confusion created by wordplay misinterpretation. Abbott and Costello had plenty of words to say, but they were not understanding each other. Well, Paul wants

no misunderstanding in the church about **who's on First** – Paul emphatically states it's Jesus. Not only is he on first, but he owns the ballpark, the city it sits in, the state, the nation, the world, the universe, well we could go on, but you get the picture.

Notice, Paul gives Jesus these majestic titles, **“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of Creation, the Head of the Church, the firstborn from the dead...so that he might come to have **FIRST PLACE** in everything.”** Jesus is in first place and there is no place above him. Just in case we think this is a bunch of theological jargon that doesn't matter, look at the impact it has had through history.

For instance, this Sunday is called **Christ the King Sunday**. Do you know where it started? It was established in 1925, 100 years ago, by [Pope Pius XI](#) to combat growing secularism and political ideologies like fascism, particularly the regime of Benito Mussolini in Italy, by reminding Christians that their ultimate allegiance is to Jesus Christ, not earthly rulers. The feast's purpose is to emphasize that while human governments are temporary, Christ's reign is eternal and universal.

Nearly a decade later, a group of dissenting **Protestants in Germany, the Confessing Church**, refused to join the collaborationist "German Christians" in their effusive praise of Nazism. Instead, they issued the **Theological Declaration of Barmen**, which is in our Book of Confessions. That document courageously asserts: **"We reject the false doctrine, as though there were areas of our life in which we would not belong to Jesus Christ, but to other lords."** Some of the signers of the

Barmen Declaration, paid with their lives.

The message of Christ the King is still timely. It stands against any secular movement that claims exclusive influence over the hearts and minds of God's people. To claim Jesus is First is an assault on every kingdom, ruler, and so-called power in the universe. Our faith is less about religion and more about our allegiance to who's on **First**.

III. JESUS IS THE GLUE

Ray Stedman wrote, “Stanford University is the site of a **linear accelerator**, a mighty two-mile long atom smasher. It is a great lever with which scientists try to pry the lid off the secrets of matter and discover what is in the miniature world of the atom, the neutron, and the proton. Linear accelerator scientists have discovered a complexity they never dreamed of, and they have found particles that they cannot even invent enough names for. But one thing they are consistently discovering is that there is some strange force that holds everything together. They do not know what to call it, and they do not know how to identify it. They talk about a kind of cosmic glue that holds things together.

Isn't it fascinating that here in scripture, 2,000 years before any atom smasher was invented, we have the exact kind of terminology used of Jesus! Paul wrote, “**...all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things **HOLD** together.**” If you want a name for the force that holds the universe together it is very simple: His name is Jesus. Jesus is the glue that keeps everything from

flying apart. If you want further scientific evidence of this all we have to do is look inside our own bodies.

There is a protein in our bodies called laminin. I'm not a scientist, but in layman's language, the purpose of laminin in our bodies is to hold our cells together. Laminin literally keeps us from falling apart. Now here is the really cool part. If you look at **laminin** at a molecular level, the stuff that hold us together, it looks like **a cross**. A coincidence, possibly.

But this Jesus who holds the universe together, and our bodies together is the same Jesus who came to earth to hold our relationship with God together. **“For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 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.”**

We could say Jesus is the superglue of the universe, both the visible and the invisible, both the cosmos and our individual bodies, both our souls and this community we call Church. The great purpose of Christ is bringing that which exists together in perfect harmony. Sometimes, when the struggles of life are getting us down, and we feel like we are falling apart, lean into the one who's keeping it all together.

In an article in *The Chicago Sun-Times*, Catholic priest and sociologist, **Andrew Greeley**, comments on our need to create Jesus in our own image. He writes, “Much of the history of Christianity has been devoted to domesticating Jesus — to reducing that elusive, enigmatic, paradoxical person to dimensions we can comprehend, understand and

convert to our own purposes. So far it hasn't worked."

"He concludes that whatever Jesus you come up with, if your goal is to find one who comforts you, or who tastes right, *and you find him*, you can be certain he's no longer Jesus. At least not the Jesus of the New Testament."

Christ the King Sunday challenges any single image we have of Jesus as being far too small and one dimensional. Paul tells us the risen Christ is the one who holds it all together, Christ has the power of attorney to change our past and our future as citizens of heaven, and Christ has first place in all of life. Our response can only be one of praise, joy, and humble service. Don't let bad teaching distract your faith from knowing who Christ truly is and what he has done for us all.

In Wittenberg-Lutherstadt, a large statue of Christ stands in front of the Castle Church. Today, it is patched and repaired: for, on one Sunday afternoon long ago, a group of Nazi youth beat the statue to pieces with clubs. They painted the following words on a nearby fence: "**The reign of Christ is over.**"

Later, a Christian youth group saw what had been done. They repaired the broken statue. Then, taking the same paintbrush and paint can the Hitler Youth had used, they added three letters to the Nazi message: "a-l-l." The slogan on the fence now read: "**The reign of Christ is over all.**" May that same Christ reign in your hearts today and always. **Amen.**

First Presbyterian Church in Hawley

Sunday, November 23, 2025

Second Scripture Lesson

Colossians 1:11-20

11 May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, so that you may have all endurance and patience, joyfully

12 giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light.

13 He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son,

14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation,

16 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.

17 He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

18 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.

19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

20 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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be To God.