

ULC Sermon Study Resource
Dead Guy Summer // Athanasius
Pastor Marcus
June 25, 2023

Prayer: Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

Icebreaker: What is your favorite summer vacation spot?

Reading: Colossians 1:15-23

Outline:

- I. The Firstborn of Creation (v. 15-17)
 - A. "Firstborn of creation" is not referring to the Son as created, it is referring to his status. Everything came into being through him and for him. He was before it and it all holds together in him. In a word: He is God.
 - B. Athanasius opposed Arius's teachings that the Son (Jesus) was a lesser God. Jesus's divinity matters because, if Jesus isn't truly God, what ability does he have to recreate, reconcile, and restore all things? Because he is God, we can be confident he has already done so.
Q: Do you ever find yourself confused with the status of Jesus's divinity? Why?
- II. The Firstborn from the Dead (v. 18)
 - A. Although Jesus is truly God, he still was able to die. How can God die? Athanasius answers this by explaining that The Word (Jesus) took on a body capable of death so that the corruption of human beings could be undone. Dying was the only way for the corruption to be undone.
 - B. Jesus's humanity reminds us that everything he does is *for us*. He lived our life, died our death, and now gives us what is his.
Q: How does knowing that everything Jesus does is for us impact you?
- III. Reconcile You to God (v. 19-21)
 - A. Why was Jesus incarnated in the first place? So that he could reconcile us to God. As said in the Nicene Creed, "who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man."
 - B. "He did it all for you. He did it to bring you back to the father. He did it to reconcile all things, making peace by the blood of his cross. This is the truth at the center of the Church's teaching. This is the heart of our theology. Jesus came for you." -Pastor Marcus
Q: How does knowing that Jesus was incarnated for you impact your faith?

Reflection/Application Questions:

- 1) How can we make sense of Jesus's divinity and humanity for non-believers?
- 2) How can we remind ourselves of Jesus's humanity when his divinity is so often focused on?
- 3) How did Jesus truly live our imperfect lives when he was perfect?
- 4) How can we remind ourselves that Jesus came to the Earth for us?

Suggestion for further study:

- Hebrews 4:15 Q: How does this verse help you understand how Jesus lived the same lives as us?
- Hebrews 1:3 Q: How does this verse illustrate Jesus's divinity?

Closing Prayer:

Gracious God, thank you for sending your Son to serve us in everything he does. Thank you for giving him humanity while also preserving his divinity. Teach us to continue to put our faith in Christ's humanity and divinity, just as Athanasius did. Draw us closer to you in times of confusion, and continue to strengthen our faith. Amen.