

Gospel Ambition
Ambitious to Know Christ and to Make Him Known
Colossians 1
Sermon Outline

Introduction: 19th Century Dutch theologian and statesman Abraham Kuyper said, “There is not a square inch of the entire creation about which Jesus Christ does not cry out, “This is mine! This belongs to me.” Why and how do we share his ambition?

I) Why should we share Kuyper’s ambition?

A) Because the real Jesus is much bigger than we think

B) Because the real Jesus isn’t like any other authority we know

II) How do we make this Jesus known?

A) We go everywhere

B) We contextualize

C) We get help

D) We hope

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) Look at Colossians 1:15-20—what many scholars have called a hymn of Christ. List all the things that it declares about Jesus Christ. Take careful note of every phrase. What notions are confusing? Which are new? Which stir your heart to praise?
- 2) Many in our time are ‘allergic’ to authority—whether it is political or domestic or religious or academic authority. For this reason the sweeping authority given to Jesus in Colossians 1:15-20 can be disturbing. Is it disturbing to you? Why?
- 3) Reflect on the remarkable way in which Jesus exercises his authority: He serves as he rules, healing, feeding, dying. He invites us to “take his yoke upon us,” for “his yoke is easy and his burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30). His authority is not authoritarian—not the authority of rules and ideas but the authority of a person who loves. Do you have difficulty believing this? If so, why?
- 4) Knowing that Jesus is Lord of all means recognizing that no legitimate work is more or less spiritual than any other legitimate work. Do you have difficulty believing this? If so, why? If you do believe it, how does your life prove that you do?

- 5) Reflect on the following: “If we spend most of our time in business suits or hospital togs or sports uniforms or whatever it is that teachers wear, and the only picture we have in our minds of Jesus is a figure in sandals and flowing robes, we won’t bring Jesus to work with us. Or, if we do, it will only be to inject something ‘spiritual’ or relational into the work place. But Jesus doesn’t just care about and mean to rule the people at work. He means to rule the work itself—its goals, its priorities, and its methods—and it is only a matter of time before he will.”
- 6) How to you “contextualize” Jesus at work, or with your neighbors, or at school?
- 7) Read through Paul’s prayer in Colossians 1:9-12, reflecting on it as a prayer about bringing the cosmic Jesus into every context of life. Spend some time praying that prayer with reference to the various contexts in which you presently find yourself.
- 8) Make plans to get together with a Christian who labors in a context that is similar to your own (raising small children, law, medicine, teaching, business, the arts, etc.) and to talk together about the problems and insights you have about bringing Jesus into that context.