



GREATER THAN • COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY • COLOSSIANS 1

Greater Than All

A guided conversation from the September 6, 2026 sermon by Kent Keller

SUMMARY

Kent Keller brought our Colossians series home to the passage the whole letter turns on. For months we have heard that Jesus is greater — than our circumstances, our suffering, our religion, our old life, our relationships, greater than ourselves. This week Paul tells us why it holds: Jesus is greater than all.

Kent walked through Paul's language a phrase at a time. He is the image — eikon, the word we borrowed for icon, meaning not a resemblance but the exact thing made visible. In him all things hold together — not once at creation, but this second, by an active hand. In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell — not part of God, all of it. And by the blood of his cross He made peace — finished, past tense, before we ever climbed toward Him.

Two claims cut deepest. First, the scandal: a Jewish baby, born in a backwater town to a peasant couple, is the one before all things and holding all things together. Second, the sufficiency: it is not Jesus plus works, not Jesus plus the law, not Jesus plus anything — just Jesus. Kent ended where the ancient church did, with Melito of Sardis: God has been murdered — and rose, and cried out, I am the one who destroyed death. I am the Christ.

PRAYER

OPENING PRAYER

Father, we have spent this whole series learning that Jesus is greater. Tonight bring it home. Show us the one in whom all things hold together, and let us stop white-knuckling the things we were never meant to carry. Meet us in this passage as it is, not as we have shrunk it. Amen.

START

ICE BREAKER

Before you knew much about Jesus, where did your picture of God actually come from — a parent, a fear, a church, a movie? In one sentence, what was that God like?

SCRIPTURE

KEY SCRIPTURES

COLOSSIANS 1:15 (ESV)

Colossians 1:15 (ESV) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

COLOSSIANS 1:16-17 (ESV)

Colossians 1:16-17 (ESV) *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. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

COLOSSIANS 1:19 (ESV)

Colossians 1:19 (ESV) *For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,*

COLOSSIANS 1:20 (ESV)

Colossians 1:20 (ESV) *and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

COLOSSIANS 2:6-7 (ESV)

Colossians 2:6-7 (ESV) *Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.*

DISCUSS DISCUSSION

01 NO LONGER GUESSING

Read Colossians 1:15. Kent said that for centuries people guessed at what the force behind the world must be like — distant, cold, indifferent — and then God showed up in a person you could watch eat, weep, and forgive an enemy. Where did your picture of God come from, and does it match the way Jesus actually treats people in the Gospels?

02 WHAT YOU'RE GRIPPING

Read Colossians 1:16-17 aloud, slowly on 'in him all things hold together.' Kent said it means held together now, this second, not just once at creation. What are you holding together by sheer force right now — a job, a diagnosis, a family — and what would change if you believed Christ was already underneath it?

03 THE SCANDAL

Kent called it the scandal of the gospel: a Jewish baby, born in a backwater town to a peasant couple, is the one before all things. He quoted Derek Kidner — 'He speaks and it is done, He commands and it holds fast.' Why is that claim still offensive? What part of your life would you rather keep Jesus out of?

04 JESUS PLUS NOTHING

Read Colossians 1:19. Kent was blunt: not Jesus plus works, not Jesus plus the law, not Jesus plus anything. He even mentioned Henry Cloud's summary of the sermon we have all heard — 'God is good, you are bad, try harder.' What have you quietly been adding to Jesus to feel accepted? Be specific.

05 TRY HARDER — BUT WHY?

Kent didn't say stop trying. He said 'by all means try harder, be better' — but understand what your effort is and is not doing. What is the difference between working to earn acceptance and working from acceptance you already have? Where do you feel that difference this week?

06 MAKES NO SENSE OTHERWISE

Kent asked the question that cut deepest: what is there in your life that makes no sense if Jesus is not who He said He is? He admitted his own life would be a string of foolish decisions if it weren't true. What in your life would look foolish — a decision, a sacrifice, a forgiveness — if the resurrection didn't happen?

07 CENTER OR CORNER

Read Colossians 2:6-7. Kent warned about the quiet danger — being one person at church and another at home — and joked that's exactly how you raise secular kids. Name one ordinary room of your life (your desk, your phone, how you talk to the people you live with). Is Jesus at the center of it or kept in the corner for emergencies?

08 PEACE ALREADY MADE

Read Colossians 1:20. Kent ended with Melito of Sardis: 'God has been murdered' — and then rose and cried, 'I am the one who destroyed death.' If the peace between you and God was made at the cross, past tense, not earned by your week — how would this group be a place where someone could stop auditioning for God's approval and finally rest?

APPLY THIS WEEK

Pick one. Do it before you meet again.

- 1 **Check your picture of God** This week, catch yourself assuming what God thinks of you. Then stop and read one page of a Gospel — watch how Jesus treats an actual person. Let that be the image, not your fear or your worst day.
- 2 **Loosen one grip** Name the one thing you are white-knuckling. Once this week, pray it back to the one who holds all things together — out loud — and take your hands off it for a single day to see what He does.
- 3 **Move Him one room** Don't try to crown Jesus over everything at once. Pick one room — your desk, your phone, your kitchen table — and this week live it as if He is at the center of that place, not in the corner.

Come back next week ready to say what happened, not what you intended.

REMEMBER REMEMBER

- ▶ If you want to know what God is like, you are no longer guessing — look at Jesus.
- ▶ In him all things hold together — right now, including the thing you are afraid to release.
- ▶ Not Jesus plus works, not Jesus plus anything. Just Jesus.
- ▶ The peace was made by the blood of the cross, past tense — you are not auditioning for God's approval.

Jesus is greater than all — and He is reconciled to you.

PRAYER CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, You are the image of the invisible God, and in You everything holds together — including us. You made peace by Your blood while we were still far off; we did not close the distance, You did. Let us stop living like the war is still on. You are above everything, sufficient for everything, the center of everything. Be the center of us. Amen.



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