

# KING OF KINGS LUTHERAN CHURCH



## Colossians 2:9-10

*You Are Not Crazy If You Believe . . . that Jesus Is God*

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**For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.**

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When things are running smoothly, it is amazing what you can get done. A few weeks ago, I took my wife's parents back to the airport. We left at 5:00 a.m. to go to John Wayne airport. When I got in the car, I synced my Bluetooth to the car radio and as we left I started the first song I had on a playlist. I happened to notice that the song didn't end until I was on I-5 for a while. Later that day, at about 5:00 p.m., my wife asked me to run to the grocery store for her. When I got in the car, I thought it would be an interesting experiment, so I synced the Bluetooth and started the same song. To get to Ralph's you turn right out of the parking lot, go a half mile, turn right again on Euclid and go one and half miles (total of 2 miles). Guess how much of that song I got to listen to on my two mile drive. All of it; *and* almost all of the next song before I go to Ralph's. The road around here work great, but add rush-hour cars, 8 stop lights, and suddenly I cannot travel as efficiently and smoothly as with very few other cars on the road.

When we take the message of the Scriptures as God intended, it works perfectly. We receive, by God's grace, countless blessings and promises. Life doesn't become perfect; but we have the comfort of knowing God is with us and loves us even as we live in a sinful world.

But the devil is always eager to make a mess of God's intended comfort. An effective attack has always been to attack Jesus. In history and in our day, the doctrine of Christ as true God has been an easy way for the devil to rob people of the hope that our Savior would give to us.

Historically, Arius was the great false teacher who said that Jesus was less than God. Refuting him led to the writing of the Nicene Creed, which is still used today to teach the doctrine that Christ is true God.

Today, the teaching is still around. Some, such as the Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses deny the divinity of Christ in a way that Arius did. But equally as dangerous and often far more subtle is the misunderstanding and influence of our society and culture. Jesus is made to be just an example or a great teacher who shows us how to love and treat others.

The danger lies in the fact that Jesus is an example and he is the greatest teacher the world has known or will know. As he washed his disciples' feet he made it clear that he was leaving an example: **"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you"** (John 13:15). The selfless love of Christ that allowed him to put others ahead of himself is something for us to imitate. He prayed for his Father to forgive the people who were nailing him to the cross; we should be quick to forgive and love those with whom we have differences and not make excuses for our cold shoulders and rude behavior. He talked to the Samaritan woman at a well (John 4). In spite of her sinful life and the fact that she was a Samaritan, Jesus had time for her. We should be ready to speak to sinners and people who are much different that we are about God's love. He went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee to rest. But when the crowds followed he didn't say he was too busy or tired, but taught them, healed the sick, and even feed over 5,000 because he didn't want them to be hungry.

Jesus was an equally great teacher. The Parable of the Prodigal Son makes it very clear what we are like, and what God is like. Read the Sermon on the Mount the next time you try to excuse a lustful thought or an angry grudge. Jesus was very clear about labeling sin as sin — in a way that hits each of us on the head. Listen to Jesus' few words about the widow's tiny offering to

learn how God views our offerings to the church. Or read the parable of the Wedding Banquet to understand how much God wants us to be part of his heavenly banquet, sending his servants to preach to any and all who will listen.

Jesus certainly was an example and a teacher beyond compare. The problem arises when that is all people allow him to be. For I have not followed the example to his love. Some tasks seem beneath me or I am too busy to do them — even as I know Jesus washed his disciples' feet. Some grudges won't die in my heart — even as I know Jesus quickly forgave the ones with hammers in hands to pound nails into his hands and feet. Some people are just too different from me and I cannot bring myself to associate with them — even as I know Jesus sat with a Samaritan, from a race of people that the Jews hated.

Neither have I always heeded Jesus' teaching about the importance of prayer or believed what he taught about my offerings. In moments of weakness I even struggle to believe that God could love a sinner — like me.

I have not followed the example of Christ or heeded all his teaching. If he is just an example and teacher, he has failed to save me because I'm still this sinful mess.

Our text tells us that Jesus is more. **“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.”** Jesus is God himself! The mind doesn't grasp how it can be true, but the Bible is clear — the fullness of God was in the body of Christ. And with that proclamation, I realize that I have a Savior.

Jesus didn't just teach and set an example, but he personally dealt with sin and the punishment that sin deserves. God himself suffered and died on the cross so that the punishment for my sins would be taken away. God the Son satisfied God's anger at sin. Through faith in Christ, the benefits of the completed work of Christ are given to me and to you. Our sin is washed away and our eternity is secure.

And our text tells us why it is important that God himself did this for us. **“And you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.”** God didn't just set an example or teach you the way, God made you full in Christ. Living with our sinful flesh, we don't fully enjoy or see the benefits of this fullness. Paul writes later in Colossians that **“Your life is now hidden with Christ in God”** (3:3). By faith, in spite of our sins, we know that Christ has fully saved us. He views us through his cross as forgiven and dearly loved children. We don't need to be punished for our failures.

Christ has so forgiven us that through faith even our humble and weak efforts to serve him are sanctified and holy. In grace, he uses us to serve other others and is pleased with our efforts — even though we fall short of perfection. What you do matters to God as you serve and love others. The example of Jesus and the teachings of Jesus take on new meaning as we realize that our efforts don't save us; Christ has done that! But our efforts reflect who we are in Christ.

The true teaching of Christ as true God who is our Savior sets us on the path of freedom and meaningful service. Yes, we will still endure hardships and display weaknesses in this life. But in Christ we find the true joy of forgiveness and the inner strength to use our gifts to serve our Savior.

But making Jesus into someone else is like adding traffic to our roads. They become inefficient and clogged. And so Jesus as just an example or teacher, not true God, doesn't allow people to live life at full speed. Sin continues to choke and death continues to terrify. You are not crazy if you believe the truth that Jesus is true God who has saved you. You are one of the few who has found real strength for this life and true hope for eternity. Amen.

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Pentecost  
June 14, 2015

