

NEW YEAR CHALLENGE 12-29-19
CONSIDER WHAT IT MEANS WHEN WE SAY JESUS IS THE FIRST AND THE
LAST ON THIS LAST SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

Revelation 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Revelation 1:9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

Revelation 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

Today marks the last Sunday in the calendar year. Next week will be the first Sunday of the New Year.

Many have said of the new year, out goes the old, in comes the new.

As we end the year and begin the New Year, many people take inventory of where they have been and then look at where they would like to go in the new year. It is a time of goal setting.

So many people make plans, set goals, but this morning I would say that if Jesus was not a priority in your life you missed everything. Jesus should be front and center in your life.

He is called the first and the last the beginning and the end.
He is called the Alpha and Omega.

Consider what the Bible means when it calls Jesus the First and the Last.

As we consider that this is the last Sunday of the year and soon we will celebrate the first day of the New Year, let us consider what it means when the Bible says Jesus is the First and the last.

I have simply three points to make about this statement.

I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last:

Consider this Morning:

I. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE MEANS WHEN IT SAYS HE IS FIRST?

II. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE MEAN WHEN IT SAYS HE IS HE LAST?

III. IF HE IS THE FIRST AND THE LAST WHAT SHOULD HE BE IN THE MIDDLE?

*Consider:
JESUS IS THE FIRST AND THE LAST.*

I. CONSIDER WHAT IT MEANS WHEN THE BIBLE CALLS HIM THE FIRST.

1. *Jesus was before all things because He created all things.*

The Bible describes Him as the first .
All things were created by Him.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

John 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Imagine, our creator entered this world and took on the form of a man.
He was born in a manger.

Colossians 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

Colossians 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Jesus is the creator. There is no one like Christ.

Imagine, He knows the number of hairs on your head.

He knows all things.

When He came to earth, He was able to give sight to the blind.

He was able to heal the sick.

Give the deaf their hearing.

He could still the storms.

Our creator veiled Himself of all His glory and took on the form of a man.

First came to this church as Pastor, I became alarmed at how many people would profess salvation but we were seeing no lasting change in their lives. They would pray the prayer but nothing seemed to happen.

Why is this happening? Not seeing the pattern that Paul the Apostle talked about.

People didn't seem to get the same thing that I got.

Then it struck me one night when Selwyn Schmitt & I went out soul winning. Visited a fellow, who when I questioned him knew all the right answers, but was honest enough to say that he was not saved. Some people will just say they have it when they don't. This fellow was honest enough to admit he didn't.

He believed Jesus Came and died for our sins.

He believed Jesus was resurrected.

He even in his past prayed the sinners prayer and asked the Lord into his heart.

Then I asked do you believe you're saved and he matter of factly said, No.

Then I read the gospel. I Cor. 15:

I Corinthians 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

I Corinthians 15:2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

I Corinthians 15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

I Corinthians 15:4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

I said to the man, I appreciate your honesty, but I must confess I am baffled by the fact you say you believe in Jesus but you know you're not saved.

But the Bible says that if we believe Jesus Died was buried and arose we will be saved.

Then I read it to him again.

If we believe Jesus died "(According to the Scriptures..)".

If we believe Jesus was buried and arose (According to the Scriptures).

Then I said, is there anything in this Bible that you do not believe?

He said, I believe most of it, but the first part of it, I can't believe that.

Who is this Jesus?

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

John 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Jesus was the creator who took on flesh. This is what the Scriptures say about him. If you do not believe this is who came into the world, how can you be saved?

He is the first, meaning, He was here before there was anything else.
Why? Because He created everything.

Any other Jesus is an imposter, or a figment of your imagination.
So that Jesus can not save anyone.

What else does it mean when Jesus is called the first?

**2. IT MEANS HE DESERVES TO BE PUT FIRST PLACE IN ALL THINGS.
HE HAS A PLACE OF PREMINENCE.**

Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Is Jesus preeminent in your life? He should be.

In all things He should have the preeminence.

A while back I was approached by the largest manufacturer of pianos in the world. They asked if I would like to carry their line. This is the most prestigious of lines.

But they said if I carried their products I would need to have my own brick and motor store. I said no I can't do that. The reason I can't do that is because I am a Pastor and servant of the Lord first and need to put Him first.

Why?

II Timothy 2:4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

I must put Jesus first and not some side business. Jesus will let me do a side business as long as I put His business first. Paul had a side business of making tents. But that business helped his ministry and did not hinder it.

Some Pastors are into hunting. I don't hunt.

Some Pastors play golf. I don't play golf.

Some Pastors fish. I don't fish.

The difference is other pastors have to pay for their hobbies.
My hobby pays me. My hobby is my piano business.

The Bible says,

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

I work and have a side business, but I can do it or not do it.
I can go into the store or not go in. I work by appointment. I probably lose a lot of money that way, but that is the way I have to operate.

Concerning my business. If the Lord tells me tomorrow to stop doing it, I can. Why?

SO JESUS CAN HAVE THE PREEMINENCE. SO I CAN PUT HIM FIRST.

When we have revival meetings I take off the whole week.

When Mrs. Schmitt passed away and we had the funeral during the busiest time of the year for my business, I didn't go in.

By the way, for 3 years that company I was talking about would not let me carry their products. Just two months ago they changed their minds.

By the way, how do you show He is preeminent in your life?

I THINK SETTING ASIDE THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK TO WORSHIP HIM IS A GOOD WAY.

Carl Shanosk with Job where he had to work on Sundays.

I THINK MAKING A CHECK OUT TO HONOR HIM THROUGH TITHES AND OFFERINGS IS A WAY.

I THINK BY NOT LETTING ANY HOBBIES, JOBS, OR ANY WORLDLY ACTIVITY COME BEFORE HIM SHOWS HE HAS THE PREEMINENCE.

We are in this world, but we do not have to be part of the world.
We are in this world, but we should not be conformed to this world.
We are in this world, but we should not love this world.

Does He have the preeminence in your life? This is what it means:
HE IS THE FIRST.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN WHEN THE BIBLE SAYS HE IS THE FIRST?

3. HE IS CALLED THE FIRSTBORN MEANING HE INHERITS EVERYTHING FROM THE FATHER.

Colossians 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:
Colossians 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:
Colossians 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.
Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Jesus is the Firstborn from the dead and is the head of a whole new people called His Church, His bride.

The first born receives the inheritance, the family name, the family estate.

Jesus has inherited everything from His father in heaven.

Now all those who receive Him also become sons of God.

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

John 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

In Christ we become new creatures, a whole new race of people.
This race is called the sons of God.

Adam was the first man and in Adam we all get our flesh and blood life.
We become sons of man.

In Christ we all get our spiritual life and become sons of God.

When the Bible says He is the first, it means:

He is the creator.

He is preeminent.

He is the firstborn of a new race. Sons of God.

II. CONSIDER WHAT IT MEANS WHEN THE BIBLE SAYS HE IS THE LAST.

1. THAT WHICH IS PRESENTED LAST IS THE MOST IMPORTANT.

You have heard the expression they saved the best for last.

The finale is supposed to be the best.

In a wedding the Bride and Groom are introduced Last.

In a fireworks display it is the last display that closes everything out.

When the Bible says Jesus is the 1st and the last, the Last signifies that which wraps everything up and is the conclusion of it all.

He is what everything else is building up to!

2. WHEN WE THINK OF THE LAST WE WOULD THINK OF ENDURANCE.

You heard of the last man standing.

Jesus never changes.

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

That which lasts is that which is most valuable. It never changes, it endures.

Reason gold is so valuable is because it lasts, it endures, it does not change, rust, or get corrupted.

Jesus endures and does not change, and therefore will last and last.

This world is in constant change and turmoil. We think that is good. It is not.

Constant updating and changing, and we think the newer is better. It is not always better! The reason you need to update something is because there were errors in what was before it. Since there is nothing in Christ that is erroneous or filled with error, He is the last and final edition and need not to be updated.

So in this world, II Timothy 3:7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Jesus is called the beginning and the end.

The first and the last.

The Alpha and Omega.

The same yesterday, today, and forever.

We think we are an advanced people. We are in the computer age.

We are not advanced. We are in an age of constant corruption.

When I think of corruption I think of rust, decay, corrosion.

It drives me crazy when people change for change sake.

I love being a preacher because the truth of the word of God never changes.

I Peter 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

When I find something that works I don't want to change it.
You heard if it is not broke don't fix it. That is my Philosophy.

Marion Schmitt with finances., she tried to resign I ignored her.
She was doing just fine. Why change?
In fact till the day she died I never accepted her resignation so as far as I am concerned she is in heaven today balancing our books.

How many years we have been told to replace our furnace. We know it will not last forever, but it certainly has out lasted any new furnace we could get.

The word processor I use to write my sermons with, I purchased in the 80's and I still use it today. Why change when it works fine.

I still use a Music program I purchased in the 80's.

We live in a corruptible world.

The newer things get the quicker they corrupt.

Everything in our world is throw away, nothing lasts, nothing can be fixed.

This has led to a corruption in every area of our society.

MARRIAGES DON'T LAST.

BUSINESSES DON'T LAST.

Stephens Ford was told by Ford they needed to update. So after close to 100 years in business they were forced to close their doors. Is that progress? No thats a world of corruption as far as I am concerned.

Corruption is what happens when there is constant change.

Wood rots and corrupts.
Metal corrodes.
Garments grow old.
The grass withers.

BUT JESUS CHRIST NEVER CHANGES.

HE IS THE FIRST AND THE LAST.
HE IS THE BEGINNING AND THE END.
THE SAME YESTERDAY TODAY AND FOREVER.

And all those who give their lives to Him will someday receive a glorified body that will last forever!!

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN WHEN THE BIBLE SAYS JESUS IS THE FIRST AND THE LAST?

III. IF JESUS IS THE FIRST AND THE LAST WHAT SHOULD HE BE IN THE MIDDLE?

***HE SHOULD ENCOMPASSES EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN.
He should be the center of your life.***

Jesus is the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

But He is to be the center of everything. A-Z means He is everything!

Matthew 10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

Matthew 10:38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

Matthew 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

The first and greatest commandment is this:

Matthew 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Matthew 22:38 This is the first and great commandment.

If Jesus were not God in the flesh how could He ask us to put Him first?

How does He encompass not only being the first and last?

How does He encompass being everything in between?

Colossians 3:11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

How is He all in all? He is the center of our spiritual lives.

He told his disciples.

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

Paul put it this way.

Philippians 1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Colossians 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Colossians 3:2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Colossians 3:3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

On the cross of Calvary, Jesus Purchased us to Himself.

Either you live for Him and serve Him
or you live for self. WHO DO YOU LIVE FOR?

Oct 27th 1974 I went to a little church and was challenged to live for the Lord. That morning I gave my heart to the Lord and everything changed.

That was the day I started to live for Christ.

That is when Jesus became the First and the Last in my life.

The Alpha and Omega.

The beginning and the end.

He received the preeminence from me that day!

Is Jesus the First and the Last in your life? I hope he is!