Colossians 1:15. I'm going to change all the pronouns into nouns. *Christ is the image of the invisible God. Christ is the firstborn of all creation. Through Christ all things were created: things in the heavens and on earth. He created the visibles and the invisibles, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things have been created through Christ and for Christ. Christ is before everything, and in Him all things hold together. Christ is the head of the body which is the church. He is the beginning. Christ is the firstborn from the dead. Why? So that Christ will come to have first place; that is, preeminence in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him.*

I'd like you to note this: it doesn't say what the fullness is. Fullness is a proper noun here. For it was the Father's good pleasure. It was a good pleasure. It was actually…we'll read it this way. It was the pleasure of the fullness to dwell in Christ. *It was the pleasure of the fullness to dwell in Christ.* The fullness had the pleasure to dwell in Christ. Whatever there is that is fullness, that fullness was pleased to dwell in Christ.

Now, I don't utter a word of this that I don't mean, and I'm going to ask you to take to heart everything I say. I'm going to ask you to recast your life around everything that is said here, because the subject before us is the first place…the preeminence of Jesus Christ in all things. Now it was the good pleasure of fullness to dwell in Christ. You and I are here to learn just one thing. *The preeminence, the centrality, and He is the center.* He is the supremacy and preeminence of all things.

Now, that stops everything in the universe. If that's true of the Father, who made sure His Son would have preeminence in everything, then it is the Father's intention that Jesus Christ will have first place in you. Now I don't know how to emphasize that except this must become the habit of the life of the church and the churches: that Christ takes preeminence first. Christ taking preeminence in the universe also means Christ coming to have preeminence in your life and mine.

That means that a people, wherever they go, whatever they do, whatever they face, the first thing they do is Christ. You come to Christ, and then you work from there out. If you have troubles, you don't start with yourself; you work with Christ. If the church is the church, whatever she says, whatever she does, she starts with Christ. Sometimes we get something in the mail, sometimes we open a news article or a new Christian magazine, and there is this big two-page conference on healing, conference on power, conference on end things, conference on worship, conference starring so and so and so and so, who are going to bring us the word of God today. *I have never heard of a conference on Christ.* I never have. Have you ever heard of a conference on Christ?

I would like to have a conference, a national conference, maybe $50-100,000 worth of advertisement in which there would be absolutely nothing spoken of but Jesus Christ. If I were to speak at that, I would bring the message I'm bringing to you here tonight: that Jesus Christ was to become, by the will of God, preeminent and first in everything. That means Jesus Christ has the gyroscope of the universe: coming this way or this way…it always centers on Christ.

There are those other than us in this room who actually know what Jesus Christ's place is in all things, and when I say all things, I mean *all things*. What does all things include? It includes all things. Even creation is clearer about the place of Jesus Christ than we have established it in our day. In fact, this is to bring us back to rekindle the flame. Second Timothy 1:6: that flame is the flame of Christ in our hearts. Christ first in your problems, in your family, and in your life. Christ your morning; Christ your everything. We start there, and we work from there. Christ is to be first place…first place where?

I need to go through the entire Bible. Number one, it was God's will and His purpose that Christ be first place, preeminent, supreme, central. So the first person involved in any of this is the one who is living right now in the eternals, and we didn't even exist yet. But the Father took pleasure and wanted to make His Son first in everything. So He gave all things to have subjection to Jesus Christ. The first one is the Father, and I would have to go through the New Testament at least to see what the Father felt about His Son. John's 17, John 13, John 1, Matthew, Mark, Luke, Romans-every place we see the Father determined that He has a Son, that is first place in everything.

Now, that's too much. Just keep it in mind. Perhaps we'll come back someday, and we'll go through the Father's view of Christ as being first. The Father has glorified the Son so that He might have first place. Where and when? Alright, before I go any further, to those of you I'm speaking to now, to those of you who I will never meet, I think it's Ephesians 1:17 that says…it's a prayer of Paul. I pray that you might be given a spirit of wisdom and revelation, that you might have a spirit to come to a full knowledge of Jesus Christ, a revelation…a spirit of wisdom, and a spirit of revelation, that you might come to have a knowledge, an experiential knowledge, of Jesus Christ.

We cannot get anywhere in this world without revelation. The Lord spoke to the Pharisees and said, "You search the scriptures, and in them you might have life, but you will not come to me." They had Scripture, but they did not have Jesus Christ. They lacked revelation. *All of us lack revelation.* If we have revelation, we have insight into Christ that goes deeper than the human mind can get from reading Scripture. An ignition deep within you says, "Wow"... something in you... and suddenly, sometimes in a flash from one end of time and eternity to the other, you have a revelation. You will never understand the preeminence of Christ, and neither will I, until you and I have a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Galatians, Paul said, "How did these things come about in your life?" And it was, he said, "By hearing, by faith." And in Romans, Paul said, "You have heard, and therefore you have believed." I have something new I want to say to all of you, and I'm taking my stand here. The church will not last without revelation. She'll dry up. And revelation comes by hearing. Now then, just as soon as hearing comes, so does faith.

Now, that's strange, but there's no exception. First, you have hearing. Hearing gives you revelation. Revelation gives you faith. We are believers; therefore, we cannot believe anything worth believing except by revelation. Therefore, tonight I speak to you so that you too might hear, receive in revelation, and then believe in a spiritual mode that Jesus Christ is preeminent in all things.

Where is He preeminent? Well, first of all, He's preeminent in all of us as believers if we have revelation. So, here we go. Let's have a revelation this week. What is that revelation? That revelation is Christ…Christ…Christ…and nothing but Christ. A revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, when did His preeminence start? His preeminence started when there was nothing but Christ in the Father, and there wasn't anything else, and there weren't…and you've heard me say this… There weren't any molecules, weren't any angels, and there weren't any principalities or powers; the only thing that existed was God the Father, with Christ in the Father, and that's all there was. From that point on, the Father chose that His Son would be preeminent, central, and supreme.

How can we possibly understand that which is before, and "before before?" How can we possibly understand when there was nothing but God? If there's nothing but God, then there's not just God and nothing. There is God. Therefore, everything there is, He is all. Now, saints, get a hold of this, because God likes being the All. Now, He may have created, but He never got over being the All… and He never will. He still has it in His heart, in His will, and in His very being. He likes being all the All, and all there is is Him, and in Him is Christ.

Now then, something is hidden in God before anything else, and there is a mystery. So there's God, and Christ in God, and there's a mystery. Nobody knows what it is. Nobody even knew; not only didn't they know, but they also did not know that they did not know. They had no idea that there was a secret hidden in God. It was not known to angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things visible, nor things invisible. It was not known to the Jew. No one knew it until the fullness of time came. Then a secret that was hidden in God was made known.

What else is preeminent in the "All-ness" of God? All there is of God, Christ Jesus, our Lord, is the preeminence of that all-ness. Now we have two very mysterious passages of scripture. Titus 1:2 and 2 Timothy 1:9. Now, try to listen to this. The Greeks can't say eternity, so they say eon upon eons. That's how they say eternity. One age after another, age after another, age after another, and that's eternity…but these two scriptures don't say that. There was an age. There was an eon before eons. There was an age before ages. Something existed before eternity. Before eternity rolled out…there was Christ.

In both these passages, you have eons before eons, and in one of them he says, "These are the rich promises given to us by God. Even before the foundation of the ages, before anything, these rich promises of Christ are given to us." You and I have an inheritance from an age before eternity rolled out. What was going on in the age before Jesus Christ was everything…He was supreme before the face of the Father. He was now. There is a passage in John 17 and in John 13, and this is what it says. The Lord Jesus is about to be crucified, and He said, "Father, I was with you, and you've glorified me, and now I'm going back. I'm going to return to where I originated." So, let's talk about the origin: there was a time, before time, when the Father and the Son were there, and the glory was there. If you've ever wondered what glory is, glory is Christ.

Now, we're going to move up just a little bit further, and that is, Christ before creation. Christ *before* creation. Well, wasn't that before creation? No, that was when He was all. Now we're coming to a time that is before creation. What was there before creation? It's still Christ, but He's done some things.

Audience: Romans 16:25- 26 - *Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past. But now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to the obedience of faith, to the only wise God, and Jesus Christ be the glory forever.*

Audience: Romans 8:28 - *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. He who did foreknow also predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

There is something that happened before creation, and that is, that you were foreknown. You were elected. You were called, chosen, and justified. All of this happens before anything else, and it happens in Christ. What is the center of this choosing? It is Christ. In fact, Christ is not only preeminent in the choosing; if you can understand my words, what happens in the choosing is Christ. I'm not talking about the act of choosing; I mean the content of the One who is doing the choosing. He, His content, and His choosing are all one and the same.

What is going on in Him at this time is pure. There is no sin; there is nothing but Him. The choice that is made is Christ Himself, for *we have become the very righteousness of God the Father*. He established in us before that we might not *have,* but that we might *be* His very righteousness. He is made unto us wisdom, and out of that wisdom has come sanctification and redemption…that is yours before the foundation of the earth.

Now, I'm going to ask you a question. By the way, I'm going to give you a hint. If I ever ask a question, nine times out of ten, the answer is Christ. Are you redeemed? Not exactly. You *are* redemption. You are, and it has been given to you in Christ to *be* redemption. Are you sanctified? No, you're not sanctified; you are sanctification. This happened before creation, so we have been given wisdom out of which comes our sanctification and our redemption. All this before creation.

This is why Jesus Christ must be preeminent in all our lives. If He is central, there is wisdom. He has given unto us…wisdom. Out of that wisdom has come righteousness, redemption, and sanctification…Not exactly. He has made us, in Christ, sanctification, redemption, and righteousness. This is the preeminent position of Jesus Christ in all things. God has made us, in Christ, redemption, righteousness, and sanctification. We walk around in Him before the foundations of the world in a state of sanctification, redemption, and righteousness, and that will not change with creation. It's stuck out there; one and forever.

Now, is it possible for the Father Himself to show Himself to us visibly? The answer is no. God is spirit. So can the Holy Spirit make Himself physically visible to us? And the answer is no. Two

members of the Holy Trinity can't do that because, by their very nature, they are invisible. What about the third? Before creation, He became the first to show God physically. There is only one, only one. He is not only preeminent here, but more than preeminent. He is solo. He is the only one who can show us the Lord.

If you want to see the Father, you know where to look. If you want to understand who the Holy Spirit is, who has come to us as believers, you look to Christ. He has become the image of the invisible God. He is also the firstborn of creation. Creation hasn't gotten here yet, but listen very carefully. Creation is just about to start. In fact, creation is referred to as a birth. Creation is about to be born. And who will have first place in creation? The very first thing that is seen before angels, principalities, atoms, molecules, or anything else; the first thing that will emerge out of creation will be Jesus Christ. He has first place in the creation that He's about to create. He is the firstborn of creation. And let me tell you something else: He will be, and maybe even was. He was the first from the dead. No, but nobody's died yet, Gene; don't be too sure. *Slain* from the foundations of the world, and He is the first to come out of death.

I am very, very pleased to know that my relationship to my Father and to my Lord Jesus Christ is so close that when I hear that He is now the one who came out of the dead, I can know that I will one day also come out of the dead. Right? No! Because wherever He came out of that, it's the very same place I was put before the foundations of creation, and that I have been given in Christ. Redemption, sanctification, and righteousness that are already mine. So if He died wherever it was, I died with Him. And the difference between His coming out of the dead and my coming out of the dead and your coming out of the dead is the blink of an eye. For that He might have preeminence in all things, including you in life and in death.

You've often heard me say, He didn't say, “I'm going to be the Alpha,” and He didn't say, “I'm going to be the Omega.” But He is Alpha and Omega at the same time. He's the beginning and the end at the same time. This is the declaration of a revelation that is given to us in the book of Revelation: that Jesus Christ is the beginning of creation. It is not that He was at the beginning of creation; it is that He is the beginning of creation. He is the firstborn of creation, and He is the beginning of creation. All creation woke up, turned around and looked, and there was the Son of the living God. Then the angels came; Job said that they came there and rejoiced in what they saw when they were born, and they sang in the very midst of that creation. Here He is: your Lord and mine. Your Lord and mine. Take a real good look at Him. He is preeminent in everything. Christ is preeminent in everything.

When you wake up in the morning, who is preeminent? I'm going to tell you: I don't know, but I tell you who will be. Many years ago, a brother said to me, "I just want to lock myself in a room and get alone with the Lord and study the scriptures so that I can be worthy to speak." I just told you what's in the heart of every one of you. Every one of you likes to get alone with the Lord, spend time with Him, and spend time with the scriptures. It is not necessary, but some things are

necessary: He becomes first place all day long, all afternoon, and all evening. Let me tell you something about saints. That is a stronger life than being cloistered in a room by yourself.

I think that every one of us feels that we're not quite worthy; we're ashamed. We don't have enough of the Lord; I'm not worthy of being one who brings the hearing. There is something you CAN do: be absolutely determined that He gets the first moments of your mind every morning, and that you never back up from that. That He gets your spare time in the car. That you sneak in some Scripture and turn that Scripture to Christ. We're all busy, and yes, it would be marvelous if we all had a way to get alone with the Lord and do exactly what the monks did. The presence of God is not the ultimate end. It is Christ in you as the preeminent one in your life.

Please listen to this. I'm in verse 15. Lord Jesus, I've seen the Father because you made Him visible. Lord Jesus, You're the author of creation. All things were created in You, whether we can see them or not; they're inside of You. You have pocketed the entire creation. Lord, I am inside of You right now, but I'm above the dominions, the rules, and the powers. I'm above the invisibles and the visibles, for I am in You before any of these.

Oh Lord, You came before everything. Nothing was created unless You created it. Nothing exists unless You brought it into being. And now, You're making sure it all adheres together. Now, You have a body, and I'm part of that body…and I'm not part of that body by theory, either. You were beginning, and I was there. You're the firstborn from the dead…and we're second. Lord Jesus, you're going to have first place at absolutely everything. Lord, I'm pleased to dwell in You. I don't know what fullness means, but I'm so happy that fullness was happy. I will have no pleasure except Jesus Christ be my preeminence. I don't know what fullness is, but I will tell you this, Father. Your Son has it in Him, and I'm part of whatever fullness is. Amen.

Now, we're going to do it again, and I'm going to ask you to do this, because we're going to do this and make it practical. I am the image of Your God. I created you, and you were in Me. I created all things, and they are in Me. Go to the heavens that belong inside of Me. Go to the earth where you stand, and it's inside of Me. I have given you all the blessings in the other realms and on this earth, too. For all things were created by Me, for Me, in Me, to Me, through Me, and out of Me, for My good pleasure, and you are what I have chosen to be My inheritance.

I am first. Whether you choose to make Me first is immaterial; I'm first anyway. You can go with Me or against Me, but I'll always be first. It will never work out if I'm ever anything but first. First in your mind, first in your faith, first in your heart, first in your problems, first in your loneliness, first in your joy, first in your sorrow, first in the church, first in you. I'm first.

Now express Me with the other members that the world might still see Me - the image of the invisible God. Be pleased to live inside of Me as first. Know that the Father is pleased that I am first. That fullness was delighted to live in Me. All the riches of divinity have made their home in Me. I am first place in your life. Amen.