

Ephesians 1: 22 & 23a; “Christ – Head over All Things”, Message # 9 in a series entitled – “The Exceeding Greatness of His Power”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on October 15th, 2023, in the Morning Worship Service.

In this message I would like you to think with me about what the Father’s giving Christ to be head of all things to the church involves. It involves, 1st of all – The Father’s giving Christ to be Head to rule over all things in His Church and to defend her. And 2nd – It means the Father’s giving Christ to be Head to love, nurture and cherish her. It was the Father’s purpose from the beginning, even from before the foundation of the world, to give His only-begotten Son to be her Head. It has always been His intention, through His Son, to lead her into all the different advancing stages of glory that He has died to purchase for her.

1st of all – The Father’s giving Christ to be Head to rule over all things in the Church.

“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church.” We see here that it was the Father’s purpose to sum up all things in Christ as it says in Ephesians 1: 10, in the American Standard and the New American Standard translations. In the ESV it says – “As a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” But the central focus of the Father’s purpose was, has been, and is, to give Christ to be head over all things to the church. In the Father’s appointment He gave Christ to be the only head of the Church to rule over her. Like in the physical body of a man, the head commands, and tells the body all that it should do. And even so, Christ commands and tells us all that He would have us to do for Him.

The spiritual body of Christ, the Church, does not fight what her head is telling her to do. She wants to do all that He commands. Christ was given as the Church’s only Head to rule over her in righteousness. Isaiah 32: 1-4 – “Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, And princes will rule with justice.” “A man will be as a hiding place from the wind, And a cover from the tempest, As rivers of water in a dry place, As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” “The eyes of those who see will not be dim, And the ears of those who hear will listen.” “Also the heart of the rash will understand knowledge, And the tongue of the stammerers will be ready to speak plainly.”

Now, who is this speaking of? Who is the king who will reign in righteousness, and who are the princes who will rule with justice? Certainly it was not Hezekiah of that day, and the princes who ruled with him. They fell so short of God’s glory, even the righteous persons among them. No, this is speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles as His princes. He who gave them His word, would rule His Church by His word which He would give to them. He would righteously rule over this spiritual kingdom and people, the Church. It would be composed of Jews and Gentiles according to God’s calling them to Himself. And we know that this is true, by the description of the King Himself. No mere man can be a hiding place from the wind and a cover from the tempest. But our righteous Head can be this, because He is both God and Man; two natures in one blessed Person.

The Lord Jesus Christ, even from the days of His earthly ministry, would come to be seen as a Man who would be a hiding place from the wind of the Father’s anger, and wrath against sin. He can be seen you as a cover from the tempest of Satan’s attacks. He can be seen by you as your defender if you are experiencing spiritual oppression. When you are being persecuted for righteousness sake, you remember that He endured the storm of the Devil’s malice and hatred on the cross, on your behalf. And He overcame him so that you might know His protective care over your soul.

Christ’s right to rule as Head over all things to the Church, both Old Testament and New, was determined by the Father establishing Him as a King, ruling over a Mediatorial Kingdom in His people’s hearts. There is a Kingdom over which God has always ruled; His essential and eternal Kingdom, and rule over all men and all things. And then there is the Mediatorial Kingdom which the Father has given to the Son. You will see this better if you will turn over to 1st Corinthians 15: 20-28. “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” “For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.” “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.” “But each one in his own order: Christ the

firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming." "Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power."

"For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet." "The last enemy that will be destroyed is death." "For "HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET." "But when He says 'all things are put under Him,' it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted." "Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." Now notice that these verses are set in the context of the resurrection. Christ is the first fruits of the certainty of the resurrection of the dead that is coming. He is the first fruits of the great harvest of all people being raised from the dead on the last day.

Each one in his own order; first Christ, then those who are Christ's at His Coming. Then comes the end. You need to see this; there is only one Second Coming of Jesus Christ. And then comes the end. If there is only one Second Coming, and then the end, then there cannot be any Millennium after Christ returns, as some would have us believe. His coming is the end of the world. And when that end comes, it says here, that He will deliver up the kingdom to God the Father. At that time He will put an end to all rule and authority and power; that is, all those national authorities that have ruled upon the earth.

For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. And the last enemy that will be destroyed is death. And that will take place at Christ's Second Coming. When Christ comes back, then death will be destroyed. That's the logical conclusion here. And then Paul goes on to explain here that the Father has put all things under Christ's feet. But when He says that all things are put under Him, it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. The One excepted is the Father. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. This implies that all things are not yet presently all subject to Christ.

I think that this couples with the verses in John which says that the Father has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son as they honor the Father. (John 5: 22, 23) I think that we should think of it in this way. It is not as though the Father is not co-equal with the Son, or the Son with the Father. But in terms of the Mediatorial Kingdom, the Kingdom given by the Father to the Son, the Son is the Head over all things to the Church. You and I need to see that connection. It's good for us in terms of our salvation, and it's good for us in terms what we believe in eschatology.

We need to learn about last things, like Paul talks about here, and to understand them correctly. So Christ has a right to rule as Head over all things to the Church, in both Old Testament and New. And this was determined by God the Father's establishing Him as a King ruling over a Mediatorial spiritual kingdom in people's hearts. Those who believe in Him, as it says back there in Isaiah 32, will not have dim spiritual eyesight. They will see the truth about the kingdom of God being entered into, by faith in Christ. Their ears will listen and they will be able to spiritually hear because they have been born again.

All who truly have faith in Christ, come to understand knowledge. That is, they understand the knowledge of the gospel. They understand that salvation is not by works of righteousness which they do, but according to His mercy He saved them. They realize that they have been saved through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3: 5) They know that this came about by the Father's sending the Son into the world to be the only Mediator between God and men. He came into this world as a King, and He went to the cross as a King to die for them.

Turn with me over to John 18, verses 33-37. Here we find Jesus before Pilate, and it says – "Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' "Jesus answered him, 'Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?' "Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew?' "Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me." "What have You done?" "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world." "If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now

My kingdom is not from here.” “Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘Are You a king then’ “Jesus answered, ‘You say rightly that I am a king.’ “For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.” “Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

You see, the Lord Jesus was ruling as a King even in His state of humiliation and suffering for righteousness and truth so that we could be saved. His kingdom was not from this world but was, and is, a spiritual kingdom which is inherently in Himself. He is our living risen Head. He brought that kingdom of heaven down to earth, in the Person of His Son, so that we might be saved. The Father gave Him to be head over all things to the church, so that we would acknowledge God’s righteous rule over us. We do that by declaring Him to be not only our Savior, but also our Lord. This leads me to ask – Do you believe in Lordship salvation? Because this is what the Bible teaches.

Do you consider yourself as a Christian part of Christ’s spiritual body the Church? Will you have Christ to rule over you in relation to your submitting to the government of a local church? Will you become a member of this church realizing that Christ through His Church will defend you from all of your greatest enemies, and establish you in His truth through this living holy means of being a part of this local representation of His body. You are a part of the Universal Church if you have believed in Jesus Christ. But when you see Him as your Head, then you express this to Him and to others in the local church by joining with them. And what a blessing this is!

2nd – Let’s consider the Father’s giving Christ to be Head to love and nurture the Church.

“He gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body...” So we have the metaphors of the head and the body which are given to us here in reference to Christ and His Church. This shows us that there is a loving spiritual interaction between Christ and the Church which is well pictured in an earthly sense by marriage. Ephesians chapter 5, verses 28-32 – “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” “For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.” “Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.”

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.” “So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.” “For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.” “For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.” “FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.” “This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

So the apostle Paul delineates for us here, that in a marital relationship, that the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the Church. And He is the Savior of the body. The body is a spiritual word picture for all of God’s elect people who are spiritually “in” Christ. And they are united to Him in their spirit by faith. So “the body” is all elect persons, all believers in Christ in Old Testament and New Testament times. But since Christ rose from the dead, this truth is so much more apparent because Christ came in the flesh and accomplished redemption. And we have been given all of the New Testament Scriptures to tell us more about our relationship with Him. So, all of the believers in the Church Universal are a part of this body. And this Universal body on earth is composed of local churches of individual believers. Each local church is spoken of individually, by the apostle Paul in his letters, as a body with members, spiritually speaking. (A local representation of the greater body of Christ)

In the Universal Church, Christ is the head of the body and the body is composed of all those persons who have been chosen of God, both in heaven and earth; the whole family of God. The church on earth is composed of visible saints who hopefully belong to an individual local church of believers. They voluntarily become a member of that body of believers, usually in relation to the

ordinance of baptism. But Paul here, in these verses that we are studying, is saying that the Universal Church of visible saints, here on earth, is best seen in those believers who become members of a local church. The Church on earth is to be subject to Christ as her risen, living Head, even as earthly wives should be to their husbands, in this holy way.

The practical implication of this is that husbands should love their wives in a Christ-like way, by giving themselves for their wife, even as Christ laid down His life for the Church. When Christ laid down His life for the Church, He did so out of His great love for her. He gave Himself for her so that He might sanctify her. He sanctifies her so that He might set her apart to Himself. His work in sanctification is done by His Holy Spirit, to give her His grace, and to show her His love, and is meant to lead her into greater holiness and righteousness.

It is this kind of headship which will enable her to love Him and to serve Him with all of her heart. She wants to cultivate her relationship with Him. She will do this in accordance with the truth of the word of God. He sanctifies her and cleanses her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy. But in order that she might attain to this goal, it says in verse 29, that Christ nourishes her and cherishes her.

He gives His church the spiritual food of His word, and He conveys His love to her by the influences of His Holy Spirit. He conveys His love to all the members of His spiritual body the Church by conveying life and light to them. And in this wonderful way of His working and leading, He helps them experientially to have close fellowship with Himself. And all this is cultivated by us in prayer to Him and by our meditation upon His word. He will draw near us to encourage and strengthen us, oftentimes when we least expect it.

Song of Solomon 5: 1 and 2 – “I have come to my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk.” Eat, O friends! Drink, yes, drink deeply, O beloved ones!” “I sleep, but my heart is awake; It is the voice of my Beloved!” “He knocks, saying, ‘Open for me, my sister, my love, My dove, my perfect one; for My head is covered with dew, My locks with the drops of the night.’” In these verses you can behold a picture of Christ as the Head of His Church coming to have close and intimate fellowship with His beloved, that is, with us individually as a believer.

He is pictured as coming to the garden of your heart, having gathered His myrrh with His spice. The gathering of Christ’s myrrh with His spices is His gathering, His collecting to His own mind, all of the sufferings and service which you have gone through on His behalf. He thinks about all of your tears and perplexity of mind. He clearly understands all the difficulties and perplexities that you are going through. After He gathers His myrrh with His spices, He then becomes your Advocate with the Father. He intercedes on your behalf before the Father, so that all of your sins can be forgiven and your prayers can all be heard.

The honey and the honeycomb which He gathers is His noticing and remembering everything sweet in relation to your love to Him. He knows all of your inward feelings of love for Him. And He knows what He has done for you at the cross. He thinks about the outward manifestation of your love to Him, in relation to your devotion and good works. And these things are like the honey and the honeycomb to Him. He drinks in the wine of your love for Him in your reading of the Bible and committing it to your heart. He recalls all of your prayers to Him that you might keep His commandments.

He drinks in the milk of your real obedience to the simple truths of His Word, when you are a younger Christian. He knows whether you are holding fast to those truths when you are an older Christian. And so He becomes a partaker of these spiritual realities in your heart, and in your conduct, each and every day. He takes notice of all your prayers in relation to all of these things. My dear Christian brothers and sisters, I pray that you will take notice of this. His nourishing and cherishing of you individually, as a spiritual Husband does His wife. And that He is the Head over all things to His Church, and you in particular.

