

“All Things under Christ”
Ephesians 1:18-23
(Preached at Trinity, February 2, 2014)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Verse 15** we find Paul praising God for the faithfulness of the Ephesian Christians. They were pressing on in faith and love and their reputation was being spread abroad. Paul says, "having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you
2. When Paul heard that they were pressing on in faith and love his heart was filled with gratitude to God which drove him to prayer. The final verses of **Chapter 1** reveal the content of Paul's prayer of intercession for these believers in Ephesus.
3. First of all he prays for the increase of their experience of the knowledge of God. Then he prays that they might comprehend more fully the fullness of God's work in them – the hope of His calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance, and the surpassing greatness of His power towards those who believe.
4. Beginning with the second half of **Verse 19** the tone of Paul's prayer changes from a prayer of intercession for the Ephesian Christians to a prayer of praise directed towards God who raised Christ from the dead in glorious exaltation. His attention turns to the infinite power of God and the all encompassing reign of Christ over all things.
5. The exaltation of Christ is a glorious display of the mighty power of God.
 - A. I pointed out last time the incredible working of God's power in our redemption. Paul puts two words together that stress something above and beyond, exceedingly great, extraordinary.
Ephesians 1:19 NAU - "and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe."
 - B. In the second half of **Verse 19** Paul uses two more words to describe this power, only now he is talking about God's infinite power in raising Christ from the dead and exalting Him to His throne. They are different words but similar in meaning. Paul is stacking up words to express something that is beyond imagination. He is talking about mighty power that transcends anything in this world. Something extraordinary has taken place in order for God to redeem His people.
 - C. Although the mighty power of God in our salvation is beyond human words the best demonstration of it is seen in the resurrection of Christ and His exaltation to His throne of majesty.
The power at work in believers is resurrection power. The power for Christian living is resurrection power.
6. This morning I want us to contemplate God's glorious power demonstrated in Christ.

- I. We have to begin at the incarnation – God’s power in the birth of Christ
 To sufficiently understand our Lord’s exaltation we must first consider His humiliation.
 This is what Paul does in **Philippians 2**
Philippians 2:5-11 NAU - "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
- A. The nature of His humiliation – the Kenosis
 " but emptied Himself " κενόω – to empty or to make void or make as nothing.
1. Theologians have long debated the kenosis of Christ. Of what did He empty Himself? Most explanations fail because they tend to attack His deity.
 - a. Some say He emptied Himself of His glory – but this can never be He never ceased to be God!
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."
 - b. Some say He emptied Himself of His independent exercise of authority – but the Godhead has always operated in harmony – no part has ever operated independent of the other.
 2. The only way to thoroughly understand this is in terms of the incarnation alone in which God took upon Himself flesh and blood – God became man.
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."
 He left His throne of glory to walk upon the earth as a man. By the mighty power of God Jesus was formed in the womb of Mary.
 3. But He was never emptied of His deity – This never ceased, never changed
 4. Your theology about Christ must maintain both His deity and His humanity. Jesus possesses two natures, undivided and yet distinct.
- B. He was fully God, and yet He became a man – the ultimate act of humility. God clothed Himself in the clay of this fallen world.
 The Kenosis verse explains itself.
 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.
1. As a man He acquired all of the weakness of humanity. He became weary, hungry, thirsty, He felt genuine pain
 2. As a servant He came to serve in humility
 3. In His humanity He became a King without a throne.

- II. Although Jesus was humbled and left His eternal throne He has returned!
John 17:5 NAU - "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."
- A. Though He came to earth in a lowly estate He did not continue in this condition
1. Jesus Christ as a man died. He was buried. There was nothing supernatural here. Jesus went the way of all flesh.
 But the death of Christ was unique. He gave His life. He delivered it over to the Father.
Luke 23:46 NAS - "And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit." And having said this, He breathed His last."
 3. And once in the tomb death could not hold Him!
 Paul speaks of the mighty power of God displayed in the resurrection of Christ
 3. After that He accomplished the end of His humiliation He returned to the right hand of the Father where He sits upon His throne
- B. It is a throne of Majesty
Ephesians 1:20 NAU - "He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*"
1. "Right hand" refers to the place of honor, the place of majesty
Psalm 93:1 KJV – "The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, *wherewith* he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved. Thy throne *is* established of old: thou *art* from everlasting."
Hebrews 1:3 NAU - "And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high"
 2. He is high and lifted up – He dwells in the heavenlies.
- C. It is a throne of absolute dominion
1. Jesus rules over all of creation. Every element in the universe is under His sovereign authority.
Colossians 1:16-17 NAU - "For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."
 2. Nothing happens that is outside His sovereign dominion
Hebrews 1:3 NAU - "He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power."
 3. Jesus rules over every creature and every person. He is the Sovereign Lord over all.
Ephesians 1:21 NAU - "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named,"
Ephesians 1:22 NAU - "And He put all things in subjection under His feet"

- a. He is Lord over the spiritual realm. The angels bow before Him. The demons are under His dominion.
Luke 8:28 NAU - "Seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me."
 - b. Kings are under His authority. Jesus possesses all authority. After His resurrection He told His disciples:
Matthew 28:18 NAU - "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."
 - c. We don't make Him Lord. He *is* Lord.
 - 1. It is the duty of every human being to bow down – to submit
 - 2. The preaching of the gospel is the preaching of our Lord's Kingdom – His reign, His rule, His dominion
 - d. While the kings of this earth pretend to have independence Jesus Christ reigns with absolute authority.
Proverbs 21:1 NAU - "The king's heart is *like* channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes."
- D. To consider the throne of Christ demands a look to the end. The throne of Christ will be the throne of Judgment
Ephesians 1:22 NAU - "He put all things in subjection under His feet"
Psalms 8:5-6 NAU - "You crown him with glory and majesty! ⁶ You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet"
- 1. He is coming again to bring all things to order
 - 2. Every man will come before His throne of judgment
John 5:22-23 NAU - "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, ²³ so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him."
2 Corinthians 5:10 NAU - "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."
Revelation 20:11-12 NAU - " Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds."

Conclusion:

1. Jesus Christ has been enthroned. He is the King of kings. He reigns upon high with absolute power and authority. The entire universe is under His dominion. The message of Scripture testifies that He will return to restore all things. He will crush every measure of rebellion against His absolute rule
Revelation 1:7 NAU - "BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen."
Revelation 22:12 NAU - "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."
Revelation 6:15-17 NAU - "Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; ¹⁶ and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?""
2. Such a King demands submission. Such a King demands exaltation and worship. Such a King demands our love.
3. The Gospel message in all its simplicity is simply this – bow down. Forsake your sin and follow the King.