

Sermon Outline

Who's In Charge Here?

Christ, the Ruler of All

Ephesians 1:15-23

The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Paul's prayer that the Ephesians would have the eyes of the heart opened to spiritual realities remains the apostolic hope and prayer. Like Elisha's servant we need to "see" that "there are more for us than against us." The Ephesians, not unlike the Church in every age, is surrounded with the emblems of power, and finds little in its present experience that reflects the reality of the resurrection and ascension. But this changes when we discern "the immeasurable greatness of God's power toward us who believe." That is why the Messianic age is known as "the day of thy power" (Psalm 110). While we do not yet see all things subjected to Christ, we do so see Christ who rules at the right hand of the Father.

I. *Christ, Ruler over Death – Ephesians 1:19-20*

- A. Death is an enemy of God and humanity. But it does not now rule us since Christ has been raised from the dead. Revelation 1:17-18; Acts 2:24
- B. Death is our enemy as well, but it is one that cannot rule us since we share in the resurrection of Christ as his Church. Matthew 16:18
- C. Death is answered by a double resurrection. John 5:25-29

II. *Christ, Ruler over Darkness – Ephesians 1:21*

- A. Earthly rulers and heavenly powers (Ephesians 6:12)
According to the fathers, nine "ranks" of angelic beings
- B. The "powers" see the "wisdom of God" displayed through the Church (Ephesians 3:10)
 - The Cross as wisdom
 - The darkness of Ephesus exposed and driven away by the light of the Gospel
Powers coming to nothing 1 Corinthians 2:6-8; again, "rulers" are both spiritual and natural Acts 19.

III. *Christ, Ruler over his Church – Ephesians 1:22-23*

- A. Headship – Rule, direction, and life
Genuine though mystical union
- B. The Body of Christ – a spiritual and physical reality
- C. The Body of Christ – the fullness of him who fills
 - "We are powerless without him; he is invisible without us."
 - "I fill up that which is lacking..." Colossians 1:24
 - This is the humility of the Savior – he fills us that we fulfill him.
 - The dominion of Christ on the earth is expressed through his Church

"By this word 'fullness' he means that our Lord Jesus Christ and even God his Father account themselves imperfect unless we are joined to himit is his will to have us joined to him, yes, even on the condition that he should be perfected in us by our being united in that manner. As if the father should say, 'My house seems empty to me when I do not see my child in it.' A husband will say, 'I seem to be only half a man when my wife is not with me.'" – John Calvin

This is why Paul boldly calls the Church "Christ" in 1 Corinthians 12:12. And thus "the head cannot say to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'" 1 Corinthians 12:21

When our eyes are opened to the reality of Christ's rule over all things as King and his Headship over us in union with us, we will cease wresting control from him, and we will cease apologizing for our King. This is the Day of His Power.