

This year at Easter – Resurrection Sunday – we are thinking about the name of Jesus and that His name is **above every other name**. His name is greater and more glorified. He alone is the Savior, and Lord of all.

Jesus' exalted name comes wonderfully into focus because of His sacrificial death, burial, resurrection. As we learn in Romans 1:4, it is by the power of the resurrection that He is declared the Son of God.

Let's read again the larger passage – today we will focus on the last two verses: **Ephesians 1:15-23**.

Did you check out [Praying God's Names](#)? All the names of God are titles of Jesus also. Consider a few...

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| • <i>El Elyon</i> | <i>God Most High, Sovereign One</i> | <i>Genesis 14:17-20; Numbers 24:16</i> |
| • <i>El Shaddai</i> | <i>God Almighty, All Sufficient One</i> | <i>Genesis 17:1; Psalm 91:1</i> |
| • <i>Jehovah Sabaoth</i> | <i>Lord of Hosts</i> | <i>I Samuel 1:3; Isaiah 6:1-3</i> |

As we mentioned last Sunday, there are many political leaders who have appointed themselves "supreme ruler". However, as Ephesians 1:21 tells us, only Jesus is the Lord over all rulers (αρχης), authorities (εξουσιας), powers (δυναμεις), lordships (κυριοτητος), and human titles (ονοματος)!

Proposition

This week, we are exploring the fact that having been raised from the dead, Jesus is named as the Head of the Church. This means leadership and authority in some wonderful ways.

It is not just political leaders who become dictators! It happens with ecclesiastical leaders also. And you do not have to be the Catholic pope or Orthodox patriarch to forget that that only Jesus is Head of the Church.

What does Christ's headship over the church mean? We have very dramatic images of Jesus in eternity future, enthroned as the Lamb of God – see Revelation 5:6-14. But what does it mean that Jesus is Head of the Church right now? We know phrases like "head of the firm" or "head of the family" but certainly Christ's headship means so much more. In Ephesians 1:22-23 there are some very important implications about the way in which Jesus heads or leads the Church.

[A] Jesus is the foundation and focus of the Church – v. 22

This verse tells that God has "**put all things in subjection (υπεταξεν) under His feet**" in a general or broad sense. But more specifically, God has "given" (lit. εδωκεν) or "appointed" Jesus to be the "**head over all things to the church**".

First of all, this means that Jesus is the **foundation** of the Church. The Church is built upon the truth of who Jesus is and what He has accomplished. In 1866 S. J. Stone penned the glorious anthem, [The Church's One Foundation](#). The second stanza celebrates how wonderfully God has created the Body of Christ.

Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth, her charter of salvation, one Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy Name she blesses, partakes one holy food, and to one hope she presses, with every grace endued.

We know what the head does for the physical body. The head contains our brain which coordinates and connects all the other aspects of the body. The head is the leader and quarterback of the body. In his book ***Fearfully And Wonderfully Made*** (Zondervan, 1987, 177,179), Dr. Paul Brand writes,

When people see someone with a spastic muscle, they often assume the muscle itself is malfunctioning. Actually, the muscle is perfectly healthy, not diseased. In fact, it is well-developed because of frequent use. The malfunction stems from the muscles' relation to the rest of the body; it demonstrates its strength at the wrong times, when the body neither needs nor wants it to function....Quite simply, a spastic muscle disregards the needs of the rest of the body; its dysfunction is closer to rebellion than disease....Movement in the Body, then, requires smooth and willing cooperation of many parts who gladly submit their own strength to the will of the Head. If they act apart from the Head's orders, their action, though powerful and impressive, will not benefit the body.

Secondly, in this coordinating role, Jesus must always be the **focus** of the Church. How do we keep Jesus Christ "front and center" of a local church. We must remember that this has never been just a modern challenge. Bishop Handley Moule, in his book *Ephesian Studies* (Pickering & Inglis, 1920, 3,5) recounts,

On a spring day of mingled shower and sunshine, March 5th, 1897, I stepped for the first time on the shore of Asia....Here [in Ephesus] for the space of three complete years – a unique length of stationary work for [Paul] – he lived and laboured, not as the apostolic missionary only but as the apostolic pastor. Here he had taken that critical and momentous step, the "separation" of the disciples from the Synagogue to a distance place of teaching and no doubt of worship, "the school of one Tyrannus," the lecture hall.

Paul was writing to a church in Ephesus which had experienced uprooting and upheaval. Especially in such situations, Christians must grow deeper in their apprehension of Jesus, and His life within. We must keep the main thing, the main thing! In our ministry direction we make this statement: "*Our progress is from Jesus who creates, sustains, and reconciles us to God (Colossians 1:15-20).*"

[B] Jesus is the framework and the fuel of the Church – v. 23

The first key thought in verse 23 is the fact that Jesus is the **framework** for the Church: "**which is His body**" (σῶμα). In this verse Paul used one of his favourite metaphors – the body – to express this fact. The Holy Spirit is the "agent of coordination" (I Corinthians 12:11) and Christians collectively form a "many member unit" (I Corinthians 12:12). Both Peter and Paul also employed an architectural metaphor.

- I Peter 2:9 our privileged responsibility is to "declare the praises of him who called us out of darkness"
- Eph 2:20-21 Jesus is the cornerstone (ακρογωνιαίου) and believers are the building (οικοδομη)

The second key thought we find in verse 23 is that Jesus **fuels** or empowers the Church: "**the fullness of Him who fills all in all.**" Jesus Himself is the "fulness" (πληρομα) of the Church. As Bishop Moule puts it, "*The Church is His Pleroma, His Plenitude, the sphere in which His blessed attributes are to be realized and displayed through the graces of His people.*" (57)

As a caring pastor, Paul wanted the Ephesian believers to fully grasp what became theirs because of the resurrection of Jesus. How does Jesus fill us or fuel us? Consider the "spiritual blessings in Christ" listed in verses 3-14. Having reminded the Ephesians of all these spiritual provisions, Paul was prompted to pray in verses 15-23 for Christians to more fully comprehend what is their possession in Jesus Christ. What is more, the way in which Jesus fuels the Church only serves to bring the focus on Him more.

Conclusion - see Digging Deeper

As the Body of Christ, do we want to be known for what we oppose or by whom we are saved? Are we the kind of congregation that authentically lifts up the name of Jesus? In the pamphlet [*What's In The Name*](#) (Prairie College, 2023), we find this important reflection on Jesus' name.

Through Jesus we have access to the Almighty and to all of his resources. This a whole new way of living. Whatever we do, in word or deed, we do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. This gives us our identity and our ability because we are people called by His name. We are at once, infinitely small in the presence of the One whose Name is Jehovah, infinitely valuable because of His love for us, and unimaginably capable, in Him, beyond our wildest dreams.