

Sermon 6: Celebrating the Greatness of Christ: Ephesians 1:18-23

Text: Ephesians 1:18-23 "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all..."

Introduction: Review from last time

- **Paul had a deep love for the church and longed for them to more deeply understand several key concepts:**
 - Their security in Christ.
 - The riches of their inheritance in Him.
 - The greatness of His power which was displayed in their conversion.
 - His greatness
- **Our love for and knowledge of Him should never stop growing:**
 - **Romans 11:33** "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"
 - **Ephesians 3:18-19** "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God..."
- **This growth is possible because:**
 - **Aorist:** What He did for us:
 - **He died: 1:20** "Which he wrought in Christ..."
 - **He rose: 1:20:** "When he raised him from the dead..."
 - **He has made intercession for us: 1:20** "And set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places..."
 - **He took back His rightful place over creation: 1:22** "Hath put all things under his feet,
 - **He is the head of His church: 1:22** "Gave him to be the head over all things to the church..."
 - **Perfect:** What He did in us which continues to affect us today:
 - **1:18** "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened
 - **1:18** "That ye may know what is the hope of his calling..."

Summary: Paul prays that God would give His children a deeper and richer understanding of the unsearchable greatness of Christ.

Proposition: This is what God wants for all of us.

Truth 1: His greatness was demonstrated in His humiliation:

- **Christ is Creator: 1:19-20** "The exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead..."
 - **John 1:1-3** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made..."
 - **Colossians 1:16** "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him..."
- **Christ is Sustainer:**
 - **Hebrews 1:3** "Being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power..."
 - **Colossians 1:17** "He is before all things, and by him all things consist..."
 - **Acts 17:28** "In him we live, and move, and have our being..."
- **Christ took on flesh:**
 - **John 1:14** "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us..."
 - **Romans 5:15** "If through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many..."
 - **Philippians 2:7** "Made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men..."
- **Christ died for us:**
 - **Hebrews 2:9** "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man..."
 - **Philippians 2:8** "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross..."
 - **Hebrews 9:12** "By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us..."
 - **Hebrews 9:26** "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself..."

- **Christ conquered death: 1 Corinthians 15:19-22** “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive...”

Truth 2: His greatness was demonstrated in His exaltation: 1:20 “And set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places...”

- **His work is completed:**
 - **Hebrews 1:3** “When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high...”
 - **Hebrews 12:2** “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God...”
- **His presence is a continual reminder of the completion of that work for us: Romans 8:33-34** “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us...”
- **He has established the right to a redeemed inheritance:**
 - **Revelation 5:2-5** “I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof...”
 - **Philippians 2:9-11** “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father...”

Truth 3: His greatness is demonstrated in His sovereignty: 1:21-22

“Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet...”

- **No system of rule is beyond the scope of His sovereignty:** “Far above all principality...and dominion...”
 - A “principality” is a chief ruler or magistrate.
 - A “dominion” is a realm ruled by a powerful leader.
- **No might or authority is stronger than His might:** “And power, and might...”
 - “Power” has the sense of authority in a realm.
 - “Might” has the idea of inherent strength.
- **This sovereignty extends from eternity past through time and into eternity future:** “And every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come...”
 - Every creature that has ever existed
 - Every creature that will ever exist.
- **Satan is God’s enemy, but he is not His peer.**
- **The vilest tyrant will accomplish God’s purposes.**

Truth 4: His greatness is revealed in His relationship to the church:

1:22-23 “And gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all...”

- **He is the Head:** The powerful ruler over this past creation is personally related to the church.
- **It is His Body:** The church is not simply a Kingdom, but it is a living organism that is united to Christ.
- **He reveals Himself through that relationship:** He reveals Himself through His personal work in and through the church.

Application: To the unbeliever and then to the believer

- **Unbeliever:**
 - His sacrifice is available to you.
 - If you do not meet Him as your Savior now, you will one day meet Him as your eternal Judge.
 - Repent and trust in His sacrifice.
 - Glory in Him as the One who has mercifully saved you from your sin and reconciled you to Himself.
- **Believer:**
 - All these blessings were secured through His work for us.
 - We know this, but we do not appreciate it and live in the light of it as we should.
 - Let’s come to the Lord’s table with a grateful and humble heart.
 - Let’s ask God to give us a deeper sense of the richness of these truths.
 - Let’s rejoice in Him and praise Him as we remember His great sacrifice.