

**Jesus Over All**

**5-10-09**

**Ephesians 1:19-23 (READ)**

You don't have to read much of the New Testament

To realize that large portions of it are future oriented

It tells of Christ's finished work providing salvation for His people

**But it also tells us that Jesus will return in power**

**To subdue His enemies and subject all things to God**

One of the earliest Christian prayers was – Come, Lord Jesus

Throughout history the church has looked forward to Christ's return

And longed for Christ's victory

**But for many this longing for Christ's ultimate triumph has obscured**

**Jesus present exalted position in the universe**

It is true as the author of Hebrews writes

We do not yet see everything subject to Him

But he also writes – we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor

That is what Paul was thinking about

He had been speaking about the greatness of God's work in and for us

He had given a wonderful exposition on God's sovereignty in our salvation

God chose you before eternity began

Doesn't it give you something of a chill to know that

**God was thinking about you before He created the world you live in**

The plan was set – God would choose you – Christ would redeem you

By His death on the cross Jesus paid the price you and I could never pay

He redeemed us from the power and the penalty of sin

The Holy Spirit applied this saving work to us individually and then sealed us in God for eternity

When you placed your faith in Christ

The Father transferred you from the kingdom of the devil into the kingdom of His Son

**God decided to save us**

**Jesus redeemed us on the cross**

**The Holy Spirit applied the work to our hearts**

**The Father adopted us and brought us into His kingdom**

That is the miracle of our salvation

It is that simple yet it is that profound

As He considered God's great work of salvation

Paul began to pray for the church that they would grow in Jesus

**Growing in knowledge of Jesus should be the primary goal of every believer**

He prayed that we would know Jesus

And understand three elements of salvation

That we would understand the hope to which we have been called

We are pilgrims on a lifetime journey

This world is not our home – we are strangers and aliens in it

Our home is in heaven and if we truly understand that we will long for it

**We have been left here to introduce others to our Savior**

Then Paul prayed that we would truly understand how much Jesus loves us

And we would know the glory of Jesus inheritance in the saints

**Your inheritance is Jesus – Jesus inheritance is you**

That is mind-boggling but it is true

And finally that we would come to know the very power of God in our lives

Then Paul does something that makes me feel better

One of the reasons it takes me so long to write a message is this

I start off thinking about a topic like grace and before I know it

My mind has wandered and I'm thinking about Saul disobeying God and losing his kingdom

Don't ask me what that has to do with grace – I don't know

My mind just runs that way – and in a way so does Paul's

In the middle of this marvelous prayer Paul switches subjects

Kind of makes me proud

When he began to think about God's power Paul changed course

His mind began to marvel at the greatness of that power

And by the time he was done he was thinking about Jesus Christ

Through whom that power had been displayed  
Today's passage is about the exaltation of Jesus Christ  
And its application to our life

**Christ was exalted by God's mighty strength**

Having just finished studying Paul's prayer where he prayed for  
Knowledge of Christ - knowledge of our hope  
Knowledge of Christ's inheritance in us - and knowledge of God's power  
It is impossible read through this without realizing

**Christianity is a religion of knowledge**

Christianity is for the head as well as for the heart  
The world thinks of Christians as having unreasoning faith  
But God wants more than that for you  
He wants you to know Him

The paradox of the Christian life is that we get to know God best  
When we live by faith

Now God wants to reveal Himself to you by revelation

**Revelation is the Word of God applied to the heart by the Spirit of God**

And God wants you to know Him through experience

**Experience is God showing Himself to you in the daily events of your life**

Now here is a warning

If you only know Him by revelation your faith will be small

Your knowledge will be theological but not experiential

**To be vibrant and full of life**

**You must experience God's mighty power in your life**

As important as sound Biblical doctrine is

God greatly desires that we might then experience His power

Head knowledge without heart knowledge is dangerous

It leads to dryness and it leads to pride

Christianity is knowledge – yes – but it is also power

**Without God's power not one person would ever become a Christian**

You are a Christian only because of the power of God

The new birth is a miracle

**Without the power of God not one person would ever triumph over sin**

It is only by the power of God that we are able to live the Christian life

Only by His power

First Paul emphasizes God's mighty strength

**And He tells us this strength is shown in the resurrection**

**God exalted Jesus when He raised Him from the dead**

What is the greatest display of power in the universe

Is it creation power – God spoke and it was

Paul says no-

**God's greatest display of power came when He raised Jesus from the dead**

We have become used to the idea

We have seen movies where life was created

We have been educated to think that life might have happened by accident

But the creation of life takes the power of almighty God

God took something lifeless – the body of Christ

He was dead three days – the body was beginning to smell

He took something completely corrupted – the soul of Christ

Jesus bore our sins in His body on the cross

He had literally become sin

**God took this completely lifeless perfectly corrupted person and made Him sinless and alive**

So alive so pure so holy that He could sit in heaven next to the Father

No power on earth could possibly have accomplished that miracle

**On the third day God raised Jesus from the dead**

**Just as Jesus said He would**

By this action God affirmed everything Jesus had said

And declared that Christ's atonement for sin was acceptable

There's more – because Christ was raised from the dead

We know that we too will be resurrected

Because He lives – we shall live also

But God's power toward us is not just future oriented

It is available to us here today

**He revealed that all who He has made alive in Christ  
can live triumphantly through that very same power**

So that we might overcome our three great adversaries

The world – the flesh - and the devil

The world constantly bombards us with its values

We get it in the media – at school – at work – in casual conversation

**We can only overcome the world by the power of God working in us**

And no other way

This power is able to transform us by renewing our minds

It is the power of God that makes us a new creation

Our second great adversary is our own nature which the Bible calls the flesh

**The flesh is that sin nature within us that wars against God and is unable to do His  
will**

It is a powerful enemy

It draws us to inactivity when we should be reading the Bible or praying

It locks us into sinful patterns of behavior

When we should be living lives pleasing to God

It is at war with the Holy Spirit

**We can only overcome the flesh by the very power of God**

Then we have our third great enemy – the devil

**The devil and his band of demons are the only enemy we have**

You see we do not have human enemies

Our enemy is Satan acting through men

The devil hates us as much as God loves us

He is powerful and clever – deceitful and subtle

**The devil works in heaven accusing us before God**

He works on earth accusing God to us

The devil tempts us to sin by telling us it won't matter – it's no big deal

Then after we sin he tells us God will never forgive us

He twists Scripture – he attacks the person of Christ

He will tell you any lie to deceive you

In fact he is unable to tell you the truth

**The devil cannot steal your salvation but he can make you ineffective**

Peter writes that the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour

He masquerades as an angel of light seeking someone to deceive

He is one of the most powerful created beings in the world

How can we overcome this fiendish foe

Martin Luther put it this way

Did we in our own strength abide, our fighting would be losing; were not the right man on our side, the man of God's own choosing

The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him; his rage we can endure; for lo, his doom is sure; one little word will fell him

What is that little word that can knock down our mighty enemy

The name of Jesus

**When you are a child of God Christ's very name has power**

Not so much if you are not His child

In the Book of the Acts there is a story of some men who saw Paul casting out demons and they tried to do it

They said in the name of Paul's Jesus, we command you to come out

The demon replied – we know Jesus and we know Paul but who are you

And he attacked the men

So if you are not born again don't mess around with spiritual forces

But if you are you do not have to fear the devil`

**You have the power of the name of Jesus for you are inhabited by the person of Jesus**

Later in Ephesians Paul writes - **Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes**

When you are clothed in the armor of God

There is no force in hell that can withstand you

Now listen carefully – you may not feel this way but  
Your name is known and you are feared in the heavenly places 2X  
That is one of the reasons you come under attack

**Then God has placed all things under Jesus**  
**Jesus exaltation over all rulers and authorities**  
**Involves all earthly powers and angels**

But in the context of the Christian struggle to live right before God  
The emphasis is certainly upon  
The hostile spiritual powers who control this hostile world system  
The Bible teaches that evil powers stand behind evil rulers

**We battle not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly realms**

**Every spiritual power in the world has been made subject to Jesus**

It is as though you have the meanest neighbor in the world  
He hates you owns a dozen pit bulls and his yard has no fence  
Are they frightening – you bet they are  
Are they powerful – you know they are  
Would they rip you to shreds if they had the opportunity – you know they would  
When they see you they bark and their bark is savage vicious and frightening  
But you don't have to fear them  
The authorities have put every single one of them on a leash  
They can only go so far and no farther  
And if they bother you – you have been given authority over them  
And even more importantly

As much as they hate you, as vicious as they are, you have power over them

**You see - You have power over spiritual forces in the name of Jesus**

Should you be wary of them – absolutely – can they attack you – yes

**But you have in your cache of weapons the Name that is above every name**

You do not have to fear satanic forces any more than your own flesh or this world

system that is set up against Godliness

How are we to be victorious over Satan

James tells us – **Submit yourself to God; resist the devil and he will flee from you**

In our own strength we are powerless against demonic forces

**But if we submit ourselves to God**

**We can come against spiritual forces clothed with Christ's power**

The devil will leave us just as he left Christ at the end of His temptation in the wilderness

He will leave you but he intends to come back

Perhaps at a weaker moment

**The final thing that excites Paul is the church which is Christ's body**

**The final exaltation of Jesus was the gift of us to Him by the Father**

I mentioned this last week

**Jesus is our inheritance and we are His**

Jesus has been exalted over the spiritual forces as a conqueror

**Jesus is exalted over the church as its head**

**And the church is His body**

Don't you love how the Bible uses such easy to understand metaphors

He is our head, we are His body

Why does the body move – the head tells it to

What causes the body to perform tasks – the head wills it

How much use is the body without the head – none

What does the body do

Whatever the head wants

What can the body do – what the head commands and nothing else

In fact if the body starts doing something the head doesn't will

It is sick

Can you imagine the body telling the head what it wants to do

Doesn't work – does it

Can you imagine the body telling the head what it won't do – no

The head controls the body and the body functions because of the head

That is just the way it is

That is what your relationship to Christ is meant to be like

Now in this short passage is another one of those verses that just floor me

Every so often in my quiet moments I think about this verse and just wonder

**God gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, (now listen) the fullness of Him who fills all in all**

The fullness of Him who fills all in all

The church – you and I - are the fullness of Christ

I have read different views of what this passage means

And most of the views try to explain away what is the obvious meaning

So it is important to consider the meaning of this verse

In the context of our being Christ's inheritance

**The church is why Christ came; the church is why Christ became sin**

**The church is why Christ died**

**The church makes Christ complete**

You and I fulfill the mission and the purposes of Christ

The world may tell you that you are not much

Your family may tell you that you are not much

You may feel like you are not much

But that isn't how Jesus feels about you

You are what makes all that He suffered worthwhile

You make all the sin He had piled on Him worth it

You make His separation from the Father and His death worthwhile

But even more than that

In some mysterious way

Although Jesus is God

And has all the attributes of Deity which includes self- sufficiency

When you became a Christian you made Jesus complete

**Our love for Christ fills Him**

When Jesus emptied Himself became a man and died on the cross

Taking on the sin of the world

He was eternally changed

I won't go so far as to say He needs you

**But I will say that Jesus would not be the same without you**

That is how special you are

The Bible tells us that we do not yet know what we will be

But there are millions of Christians who really don't know what they are - Right now

**We are the inheritance of Jesus Christ and the fullness of Him who fills all in all**

Nobody can take your place

There is one last thing I want to mention here

**Christ is not only the head of the church He is its fullness**

We are His "Raison D'etre" – His "reason to be" and because of that

**Christ will do everything He can to achieve His goals for us**

John MacArthur puts it this way

Since He has such a unique and intimate relationship with the redeemed whom He loves, all His power will be used in their behalf to fulfill His loving purpose for them. He is completely over us and completely in us, our supreme Lord and our supreme power.

When you received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior

God took your lifeless corrupted spirit and made it alive in Christ

**You are a brand new creation**

**Created by God in Christ Jesus for the purpose of glorifying God**

That is your magnificent purpose

So I want to finish by asking a few questions

First - Is Christ your head – I don't mean theologically

I mean it on the day to day level of life - do you do what He says

In the Gospel of John Jesus gives us His definition of love

John 14 – Jesus said, **"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word"**

You can profess love all you want but

**Jesus will know if you love Him if you do what He says**

Then - Is Christ your fullness or are you full of yourself

Is Christ your power or are you doing the best you can to live the Christian life – and failing

Finally – Is your life glorifying God or is it spent satisfying your earthly appetites

It will be one or the other

Today commit to live in the power of Jesus

Doing what He says glorifying the Father

If you do your life will become filled with joy and peace

Remember peace is not the absence of conflict – it is the presence of Christ in the midst of the conflict