

Our Great Savior, Part 2

Scripture: Ephesians 1:15–23

Code: 49-6

I have to tell you as your pastor that I have you on my heart all the time. I normally do, but it seems in the current situation we're in that the burdens that you are all carrying are very, very different, very unique. Life has changed dramatically, dramatically for all of us, and I just want you to know that I'm praying for the Lord to give us all wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, so that we can keep our focus on Him in a time like this. I go back to a way to understand this by looking at Romans chapter 1, and I'm just going to comment on it—you've heard me comment on it before. But Romans chapter 1, starting in verse 18, says that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness."

If there would ever be a nation of people who held the truth it would be certainly our nation, as well as most of the Western world. We have had the Bible. We've had the revelation of God. We all are very much aware that that has been rejected in our nation wholesale; and as a result of that, the wrath of God has been revealed. It is revealed against any society, any culture, any people, who hold the truth in unrighteousness, who turn from God; and that's exactly what our society has done. And Romans chapter 1 defines the wrath of God. It says this is what it is. God, when He judges a society for rejecting Him, turns them over to a sexual revolution. It's explicit. We have had that, 30 years ago I suppose, the sexual revolution; that was the first sign of divine judgment. He lets men go into sexual unrighteousness, pornography—really the death of any sense of biblical morality.

But there's a second step in Romans 1, and that is there will be a sexual revolution, and then there will be a homosexual revolution. Paul explicitly mentions that: men with men, women with women—and this produces many effects. One he talks about, I think he's referring even to venereal disease, which could be seen as AIDS. So when God judges a nation that has rejected His truth there will be a sexual revolution, followed by a homosexual revolution—which we've been watching for the last couple of decades.

But the third point is, he says, God gives them over. God gives them over to sexual perversion. God gives them over to homosexuality. Then God gives them over to a reprobate mind. Reprobate mind is a nonfunctioning mind; and what that means is the final step in divine judgment is a kind of insanity, where nothing makes sense. And out of that, Paul in Romans chapter 1 lists a long list of every imaginable kind of wickedness and sin, that will literally flood and drown a society. In the middle of that list, of course, is deceit and the hatred of God.

So there's a reason why this country is in the insanity that it is in, and it is the judgment of God. God has allowed this nation that has rejected Him to go down the path of Romans 1, through a sexual revolution, a homosexual revolution, to the point where there is an insanity that really makes no sense to any thinking person. It's a reprobate mind, it's a mind that does not function. And out of that mind that doesn't function comes every imaginable kind of evil.

It was John Calvin who made the interesting statement that when God judges a people He gives

them wicked rulers. When God judges a people He gives them wicked rulers. So this judgment of God, that has sent us down this careening path of transgression, iniquity, and sin, is also aided and abetted by wicked rulers because they tend to be the architects of all of this—if not overtly, certainly covertly.

So I just want to say that you have to look at this in the light of divine judgment. What is happening in our country—the chaos, the insanity, the nonsense, the things that you can't figure out, the confusion, the disorder, the disruption—is all part of divine judgment. And if you understand it that way you're going to realize that you can't fix it, you can't fix it. The next election will not fix it. No election will fix it. A new governor in California will not fix it. It cannot be fixed; it is divine judgment, and it is obviously unleashed on us, and we're in the final stage, the stage of insanity.

The folly of all follies in a situation like this is to think there's anything you can do in the human realm to stop the divine judgment of God. That's not possible. This is God judging, and He laid it out in detail. We are under judgment at a severe level, the most severe level revealed in Scripture, short of final, global judgment yet to come in the end of the age, and eternal judgment in hell. What is wrong in this country is not fixable; this is God bringing judgment. The good news is that He protects His people in the judgment, that His cover is over us. We are in the shelter of His protection. We are saved from the wrath to come, and we are protected in the current judgment.

But I just want you to understand that the church has one great responsibility in the midst of this judgment. It's not to try to fix what's wrong in society. That same chapter, Romans 1, gives us our mandate. Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel [of Christ], for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew and the Gentile." Our responsibility is to preach the gospel—not to be ashamed of the gospel but to preach the gospel, which is the only answer. The only hope is Christ, and the only appropriate response to Christ is to embrace Him as Lord and Savior, and to embrace His glorious gospel.

I guess what I'm saying to you is don't expect it to get better. But it raises the stakes for what we as believers in the world are called to do. And while so many churches, so many churches, ranging from the liberal churches to the even evangelical churches, are caught up in trying to fix what's wrong in the world—everything is a result of judgment, even the racial hostility, the insanity of teaching people to hate and living on vengeance and revenge. All of these kinds of things are part and parcel of what happens to a culture when God lets them go. They go to an insanity where nothing makes sense. That's where we are.

For us, we know the truth because we have the mind of Christ in the Word of God. And our responsibility is not somehow to figure out how to fix the world, but how to proclaim the gospel that can deliver people from the world, from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. The church needs to focus on the person of Christ; and sadly it's all over the place on social issues, which cannot be fixed, first of all, because people are sinful. And what's wrong in the world, in society, is a reflection of sin. And secondly, because that sin is compounded when God removes normal, divine restraint, and it becomes a judgment. So the judgment is that sinners get what they want, and it gets worse and worse and worse.

The church has one calling in the midst of this, and that is to be the church. It should dawn on people about now, if it hasn't already, that for the church to reach the world it can't keep trying to be like the world. It amazes me that you have the world cultivating hate and trying to put it in elementary schools

and all of that. And then you have evangelical churches feeling like they need to adapt to the issues of the world and filling churches with the same kind of deceptive ideologies. And all it does is rip and shred and tear. You have to see those things for what they are. They're not fixable; they're a reflection of fallen sinfulness, a reflection of a nation that has abandoned God, and a reflection of divine judgment itself.

So what do we do in a time like this? Well we have very clear calling, as I said, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. The church needs to become Christ-centered. For the church to reach the world, it has to stop trying to be like the world, because why would you want to identify with a society under judgment? Understand that what's going wrong in our society is divine judgment. We have to be the church. We have to be the haven; we have to be the eye of the hurricane; we have to be the safe place. We have to be the place where Christ is exalted and the Word of God is proclaimed, truth is known and believed and lived and taught. We have the mind of Christ, and it's in the pages of Scripture.

Jesus said in John 12, "If I be lifted up, I will draw men to Myself." This is the time for the church to focus on lifting up Christ. And that, of course, is the theme of the text that we're looking at. Turn to Ephesians chapter 1, Ephesians chapter 1. This marvelous epistle directed at the church and the life of the church starts out with an entire first chapter that is as magnificent a portrait of Christ as you will find anywhere in the Bible. It is so profound, and it ties the person of Christ to His people, to His people. It shows us Christ, and it shows us our place in Christ.

You remember in verse 3 this amazing comprehensive statement: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." In the middle of the judgment we are the blessed, and our blessings are in Christ. And follow the flow of this because, verse 4, we were chosen "in Him" because, verse 6, saving grace was "freely bestowed on us in the Beloved." Verse 7, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin." Verse 9, at the end of the verse, God's purposes are "in Him." Verse 10, everything is summed up "in Christ." The end of verse 10 into verse 11, "In Him we have obtained an inheritance." Verse 12, "We who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. In Him," you'll receive the "truth, the gospel of your salvation," verse 13. End of verse 13, "In Him you were sealed with the Spirit of promise." Everything is in Christ. Everything is in Christ, and Christ is everything.

That's what we've been trying to say. Having given all those glorious realities in verses 3 through 14, Paul in verse 15 prays for us to understand that. It's a prayer for us to get a grip on these great doctrinal truths that speak of things that we possess, in possessing all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ.

Let me just remind you of this passage. "For this reason," verse 15—because of all that is ours because we are in Him, of all that He is to us—he says, "I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers." "I'm thankful for you. I know you're true believers because two things: You have faith in the Lord Jesus," verse 15, "and you have love for all the saints. You believe in Christ, and it manifests itself in love. So I do not cease giving thanks." So he knows he's talking to a believing church, evidenced by their faith in the Lord Jesus and their love for all saints.

“But I have a request,” he says, verse 16, “while I make mention of you in my prayers. And here’s my request,” verse 17, “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.” “You already know Him in terms of salvation; you already know Him in terms of understanding the gospel. But I want you to have far more understanding of Christ. I want God to give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation.” And of course that spirit is produced in us by the Holy Spirit, who in Isaiah 11 is called the spirit of wisdom. “I want the spirit of God to give you wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. I want your knowledge of Christ to increase.” “Knowledge” is deep knowledge, deep knowledge; it’s a specific Greek word for that. So that you spend essentially your Christian life getting to know Christ better and better and better.

Over in chapter 3 and verse 18—well verse 17, Paul talks about Christ, and he prays in verse 17 “that Christ may” —literally—“settle down and be at home in your heart through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love” —and here it comes—“may be able to comprehend” —this again, this is mental—“to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.” How do you get to “the fullness of God”? How do you get to the place where you’re literally filled with the Spirit of God, where you’re literally controlled by the knowledge of Christ? He says this is a work of the Holy Spirit, but it is a work of the Holy Spirit as He brings you an understanding of the divine Scripture. The goal is to be filled with the fullness of God. The way is to love Christ. The way to love Christ is to know Him in His fullness.

Over in chapter 4, even, he’s talking about Christ in verse 12, and then in verse 13, “Until we all attain to the unity of the faith.” And what is the unity of the faith? It’s the unity “of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.” So in chapter 1, we had the fullness of God. We have the fullness of God again in chapter 3, verses 18 and 19. We have the fullness of God again in chapter 4, verse 13, which is equated to being a mature man, which is equated to knowing Christ. The Christian life is not complicated to understand—it’s all about knowing Christ.

In Colossians chapter 1, I would just call a couple of things to your attention—chapter 1, verse 9. Again, here is Paul’s prayer: “For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.” Again it’s the same prayer. It’s for us to have deep wisdom and knowledge concerning God, concerning Christ. And then where you have that, verse 10 shows the result: “So that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” Even in the process of having the knowledge of God and living in the knowledge of God, increasing in the knowledge of God is still a necessity. It is continual growing in grace and the knowledge of God, as Peter says in his epistle. So Paul’s prayer, again, is that we would increase in the knowledge of God, increase in the knowledge of Christ, so that we would walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

Over in Colossians chapter 2, verse 2, “That your hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God’s mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” Again, the prayer is the same thing—that you would have a full assurance of understanding, that you would have a full knowledge of Christ, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are placed.

So the Christian life is not hard to figure out; it's coming to know Christ, and know Him more, and know Him more. You have the apostle Paul in Philippians saying, "That I may know Him, that I may know Him." And you might say, "Paul, you know Him. You know Him, you preach Him, you love Him, you live for Him." "But I want to know Him more, know Him more." This is not some wish for some mystical experience; this is for his mind to be able to grasp the fullness of Christ as revealed from heaven, and for us in Scripture.

When Paul writes to Titus, in Titus chapter 1 he introduces the letter by saying, "Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness." Godliness is connected to the knowledge of the truth. Godliness doesn't happen apart from a knowledge of the truth.

Listen to 1 Peter 1, "According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood." I don't know how much you give to knowing Christ; I don't know how much time you spend reading the four gospels or any other New Testament book that reveals Him; I don't know how much time you spend buying books about Christ. There are lots of books in Christian bookstores about a lot of other things. There rarely appear to be books concerning Christ; and He is everything, absolutely everything.

Even John, 1 John 2, "He's the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." And then he says in verse 3, so key, "By this we know we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments." You can know whether you know Him, if you keep His commandments. If there are areas of your life where you're disobedient, your knowledge of Him is deficient, it is incomplete. And as you gaze at the glory of the Lord, and the knowledge of Him becomes yours, Paul says to the Corinthians, "You will be changed into His image, from one level of glory to the next." This is what the Christian life is about. The church exists in the process of sanctification to become like Christ, which happens when you look at Christ and you grow in your knowledge and love, and you are better able to reflect Him.

I don't see this very often in churches, and I fear it even in our own church.

But let me give you a little bit of background about the church at Ephesus. This was a remarkable church, basically the first to bring the gospel to Ephesus, that pagan city in Asia Minor where Aquila and Priscilla, according to Acts 18, they brought the gospel—a couple who were in the trades, but they were believers. They were then joined by a powerful Old Testament preacher named Apollos. He was a Jew from Egypt, and the book of Acts says he was mighty in the Scripture, and he was zealous and passionate. So he joined them. So they had the influence of Aquila and Priscilla, and they had the influence of Apollos.

Then came the apostle Paul. And Paul was in Ephesus for a period of three years, to the degree that all in Asia heard the Word of the Lord from Paul coming from the church at Ephesus. The whole province, the whole nation, if you will, heard the gospel because of the power of the preaching of Paul over those three years. There were miracles wrought by Paul. There was amazing influence. The church flourished, grew, exploded. And we read in Acts 19, as the chapter comes to an end, that the pagans were fearful that the gospel was so powerful, so many people were being converted, they were going to literally put paganism out of business in Ephesus.

It would have been enough for a church to have had the apostle Paul as a pastor for three years. But Paul was followed by Timothy. And then Timothy was followed by another faithful, faithful man named Onesiphorus who, when everybody else was unfaithful to Paul, was faithful to him. Onesiphorus was followed by another one of Paul's companions, by the name of Tychicus. And finally the church at Ephesus was pastored by none other than the apostle John. It's not possible that a church could have any greater pastoral lineage than that, which makes you wonder why the apostle Paul is so concerned that they grow in their knowledge of Christ. He commends them for being true believers based on their faith in the Lord, saving faith, and their love. But he obviously is concerned about their spiritual growth in understanding Christ. And that's why he prays for it again in chapter 3, verses 14 and following, that they would grow in their understanding of Christ. This is his passion. Why? Pretty simple. It's amazing how fast churches move away from Christ. It's amazing how fast churches move away from Christ.

Let me show you Revelation chapter 2. A few decades later, after Paul wrote that epistle, Jesus sends a letter. This is a letter to the messenger of the church, no doubt a leader in the church at Ephesus. "And here's what I want you to hear, you believers in Ephesus": From "the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands" —that's referring to Jesus; those are elements of the image in chapter 1. So the Lord Himself is writing to this church. And He says this in verse 2: "I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary." Boy, that's a lot of commendation. "I know your works; they're good works—your toil, your endurance, steadfastness. You have discernment, you don't tolerate evil men; somebody who comes along and says he's an apostle, you put to the doctrinal test, and you discern that they are false. You persevere, no doubt, through persecution. You have endured for My name's sake; you haven't even grown weary." This is a flourishing church.

But verse 4 is a shock: "But I have this against you, that you've left your first love." How can that happen? This is a church commended on every possible level. "But you left your first love." And so in verse 5 He says, "Remember, repent, and repeat. You left your first love." What's your first love? Your love for the Lord. Remember the early days when you had just come to know the Lord Jesus Christ, and you were caught up in love to Him. What happened to that? What happened to that over the years? "You left your first love."

This is such a concern to the apostle Paul—to any pastor—that he speaks of it in another place that I want you to look at. It's 2 Corinthians chapter 11, 2 Corinthians chapter 11. And Paul is burdened deeply here. We'll pick it up in verse 2, 2 Corinthians 11:2, writing to the church at Corinth, "I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. But I'm afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ."

How could that happen? How could that happen? Well verse 4, he says, "If someone comes and preaches another Jesus whom we haven't preached, or you receive a different spirit"—other than the Holy Spirit—"which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully." "I'm afraid for you because you tolerate deception—deception about the person of Jesus, deception about the Spirit of God, and deception about the gospel." How sad—"You bear this beautifully." Yeah, that's what the Greek word means. "You don't seem to have a problem with it

at all.” This is a form of, I guess you could say, being a traitor. This is disloyalty. And we all see a traitor or someone disloyal as the most repugnant and despicable of persons. But somebody who is faithful and loyal is hard to find. Proverbs 20, verse 6, says, “Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, but who can find a trustworthy man?” Proverbs 21:21, “He who pursues righteousness and loyalty finds life, righteousness and honor.” But loyal people are hard to find.

“When you came to Christ,” he’s saying, “you confessed Jesus as Lord.” That’s what required for salvation. “You basically denied yourself, took up your cross, and followed Him. And now I’m afraid. I’m afraid that you have shown a tendency to be distracted—another Jesus, a Jesus of somebody’s invention, part biblical and part not biblical. Or a different spirit—you haven’t tested the spirits to see if the Spirit of God is behind whatever is coming at you and distracting you. Or a different gospel—somebody who wants to take away from the gospel or add to the gospel, and you seem to be able to accept this beautifully.”

And so he says, backing up to verse 2, “I’m jealous for you with a godly jealousy,” on behalf of Christ, because “I betrothed you”—he’s like a spiritual father. He tells the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 4:15, “I’m your spiritual father.” So, “I’m your spiritual father; you’re my spiritual daughter,” as it were, and “I betrothed you to the husband,” who is Christ. “I betrothed you legally, and I gave you to Christ as a pure virgin.” No other loves are acceptable. “As the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, I’m afraid your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.” You can underline that—“the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.” That’s the Christian life. That’s it: simplicity, purity of devotion to Christ. “For to me, to live is Christ,” Philippians 1:21. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: a life which I live I live by faith in the Son of God.”

The enemy’s always trying to deceive the church, deceive believers to leave the preeminence of loving Christ for something else—personal, social, political, whatever. “And you bear this beautifully.” How could they possibly do that? When Paul writes Colossians he says, “Set your affections on things above and not on things on the earth.” “Set your affections where Christ is,” he says.

Disloyalty to Christ is so easy. In spite of the great history of the Ephesian church, sound doctrine, loyalty to the things that were necessary good works—by the time you get to the book of Revelation, at the end of the first century, they had left their first love.

So if I may, I want to call the church of Jesus Christ back to that first love. And that’s what Ephesians 1 will help us do. We could spend months on what remains of this passage. But I want just to give you the passage in a sort of overview sense. We are to focus on Christ, and we are to focus on Christ in three dimensions, in three dimensions. The greatness of His plan is the first one, the greatness of His plan. For that one, look at verse 18, this is so comprehensive: “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened”—again, we’re talking about understanding, knowledge, wisdom, revelation, thinking, the mind—“the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.”

Now you could look at every detail of that, and it would be an enriching experience. But let me just give you the big picture. “I want you to understand your calling.” What is that? Your calling is the call of God that occurred in eternity past—your calling; your divine calling; the effectual calling, it’s often referred to.

Go back to verse 4 of chapter 1. That calling occurred because God “chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.” That calling occurred because “He predestined us to adoption as sons.” Verse 11, “We’ve obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end”—the result—“that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.” What do you mean? We would be taken all the way to eternal glory. Verse 14 calls it “the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.”

Now look at the sweeping reality of verse 18. I want you to understand the doctrine of election; I want you to understand the doctrine of predestination. Some people say, “If you believe in predestination it’ll make you lazy, it’ll make you indifferent.” If you really understand the doctrine of predestination it’ll make you thankful, and then it’ll make you holy, and then it’ll make you joyful, and then it will fill your life with security. You need to understand that you were chosen, predestined, called to eternal glory. It began with the choice and the calling, and it ends with “the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.”

The very inheritance of Christ is with the saints. It’s in union with the saints that Christ receives His inheritance, and we receive it with Him. Think about it. Before time began God chose you, predestined you to eternal glory, called you in time, granted you faith to believe the gospel, justified you, and set you for glory. And it’s going to take place, because in verse 13 it says, “You were sealed [unto that glorious end] by the Holy Spirit,” who is God’s guarantee, “the Holy Spirit of promise.”

So when you’re focusing on Christ, focus on that which is eternal. You have to fly over life in this world, go from eternity past to eternity future. Think on that: “Set your affections on things above and not on things on the earth.” It’s not going to get better, you can’t fix it; let’s set our affections in the heavenlies. We live; whatever happens in the world around us, we are just a vapor that appears for a little time and vanishes away. This is a very short time; and while we’re here we need to set our affections on things above. Contemplate the greatness of the doctrine of election. This doctrine is so powerful and so important.

A couple of years ago we wrote a big book called *Biblical Doctrine*; it’s over a thousand pages, and in some ways it barely scratches the surface of the full wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. But it will take you into the depths of God’s saving purpose in ways you have never ever thought of. When you know His plan, there’s no fear, no anxiety, no neurosis, no panic, no dread because it’s all planned, and you are protected to the end of the plan.

You say, “Well how am I protected?” Because Christ is your protector. You say, “Well OK, He has a plan, and He’s my protector. Does He have the power to protect me?” Look at verse 19. So we want to know if we’re going to have this glorious inheritance in the future, that our protector is able; so he says, “I want your heart, the eyes of your heart, to be enlightened regarding what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.”

You not only understand the greatness of His plan, but you understand the “greatness of His power,” power “in accordance with the working of the strength of His might.” There are four words here that describe His power: the word “power,” the word “working,” the word “strength,” and the word “might.” He has the power. He has the energy, *energeia*, His “working.” He has the strength. He has the might.

This is the good news. He not only has a plan, He has the power to execute that plan. How do we know that? How do we know He can get us out of this world to glory? How do we know that it can come to pass? Answer, verse 20—He put all of His power on display in Christ “when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.” If He did it for Christ, He can do it for you. The resurrection of Christ and the ascension of Christ demonstrates the power of God to bring you through death out the other side into His presence, even as He did for His own beloved Son. He has a plan, and He has the power to execute that plan.

You say, “Well maybe somebody might come along and thwart that plan. What about the devil? Can the devil come along and stop the plan?” And that leads us to the third point: The greatness of His plan, the greatness of His power, the greatness of His person. This is critical. Nobody is going to thwart that plan. Why? Verse 21, because Christ is “far above all.” Notice that—“Far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.” For now and as long as time exists, even on into the millennial kingdom to come, He far exceeds all rule, all authority, all power, all dominion, possessed by any persons. That’s what it means, those people who are named—these are persons.

There is no person who has the power, and there’s no person, secondly, who has the authority. No one can usurp His authority. All persons are subject to Him now and into the future. Verse 22, all things are subject to Him, “He put all things in subjection under His feet.” There is no person, there is no thing. Sounds like Romans 8, doesn’t it? What’s going to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus?—and Paul lays out a litany of things. No—no persons, no things.

He has a plan, He has the power to execute that plan, and He is the person who is the absolute Sovereign—and that is summed up in verse 22: He has “put all things . . . under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things.” This is amazing. Another way to say that is, “He gave them a name above every name, and the name is Lord.”

He has a plan, He has the power, and He has the position. And isn’t it amazing that the One who is head over all things, God gave to the church as the head. He didn’t give us angels, He didn’t give us a committee of godly men; He gave us the head of the universe as head of the church. And we are His body; and as “His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” This is just overwhelming.

He lives in us. The one who has the universal, eternal, redemptive plan has the power to execute that plan, and is the person superior to all other persons and all other things; the One who is head over all things, ruler over everything, is ruler in His church. And not only does He rule His church, but He lives in His church. We are His body, and He fills us with His fullness. There’s so much doctrine and so much theology in this. This is the message we need to preach: It’s about Jesus Christ, who is absolutely everything, and the only hope of salvation and the only deliverance from judgment.

Father, we thank You for leading us as You do, through Your Spirit and Your Word, to understand the greatness of Christ, His plan, His power, His person. Thank You for the choosing of us before the world began, predestining us to be joint heirs with Christ, and to receive an inheritance with Him in Your glorious presence. Help us to live with our affections set on things above and not on things on the earth—live transcendentally, triumphantly, even in the midst of judgment. And help us not only to love Christ, worship Christ, increase constantly in the knowledge of Christ, but to proclaim Him, who

alone can rescue sinners from the kingdom of darkness. May this be our passion. Amen.

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