

**Ephesians 1: 19-22a; “All Things Under Christ’s Feet”, Sermon # 8 in a series
entitled – “The Exceeding Greatness of His Power”, Delivered on
October 8th, 2023, in the Morning Worship Service.**

We are told here that the Father has put all things under Christ’s feet when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand. What does this mean? I believe that it is referring to Christ’s Dominion. He is referring to the universal extent of His righteous reign over all men, and the Church. I want us to look, 1st – At Adam’s Dominion over all created things. 2nd – At how Christ’s Dominion was established. And 3rd – How Christ’s Dominion is presently being established over all the earth.

1st of all –Adam’s Dominion over all created things.

Let’s turn to Genesis chapter 1, verses 26-28, to see God’s purpose with regard to man in the Beginning. “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’” “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” “Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”

What is it that God gave to Adam at the beginning of the world, when He said to him that he should have dominion? It was the God-ordained power to rule in a righteous way over all the creation. That is, under Himself. Adam was given this authority, this power to rule over all the fish and birds and cattle, and over all the earth; over every creeping thing. And it was because he was created in God’s image, which no other creature was, that he was given this right to rule, as God’s delegated authority, over all the creation.

The mandate that was given was to be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it. And this is explained as having dominion over everything that moves on the earth. But we know that Adam sinned. We know that because he was the Representative Head over all of our race, he and all of his descendants in him, lost their ability to rule over the creation in a righteous way. They did not lose their dominion entirely. But they lost the ability to rule over it righteously in a perfect way. In other words, in the Fall, man lost the ability to see how he could govern righteously.

He now did not understand by nature how to rule over the creation, to promote God’s glory, through his actions. In losing his original righteousness, his fall into sin brought corruption and death into the whole physical world, as well. Therefore, because there was rebellion in Adam’s sin against God, sinful men proved their inability to govern both themselves and others under their authority, righteously. This was proved in the days between the creation and the flood.

There were righteous men before the flood, but there were not all that many who were called by grace, according the promise of God found in Genesis 3: 15. “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” The promised Seed is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ; the One whom God would send to obey God’s law fully. And as a result He would be given the right to rule over all creation in Adam’s place, and all things would be put under His feet.

Why was it necessary that all things be put under Christ’s feet? Because Adam, and all men descended from him were now enemies to God’s righteous rule. Those who were now born into the world, created in Adam’s fallen image, were opposed to God exercising His authority over them. You will remember what it says in Genesis chapter 6: 5 & 6. “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was

only evil continually.” “And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.”

Now, I am sure that you can see from these words that it was hardly possible for the majority of people in that day, to exercise righteous dominion, when they were so full of sin. The people of that day were ruling in unrighteousness. And so, they had to be put under Christ’s feet in judgment. This had to be done even before Christ came into the world. It had to be done to fulfill all righteousness in judgment, even before He came into the world to become our Savior. How do I know this? Well, if you will turn with me over to Psalm 29: 10 and 11, you will see this. “The Lord sat enthroned at the Flood, and the Lord sits as King forever.” “The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace.”

You can see from these verses what the position of the Lord has been all through human history. His judgment and His mercy is especially evidenced in the changing of great epochs of human history, such as the flood was. The Lord Jesus, as God the Son, one of the three Persons of the Divine Trinity, sat enthroned as King. And as God He sits enthroned that way forever. However, in God’s setting up Christ’s Mediatorial Kingdom, the Lord Jesus received His own particular Kingdom. And the Father sent Him in His Incarnation to become a Man, and He fulfilled all righteousness on God’s behalf, and on behalf of all who will trust in Him for salvation.

But the Lord sat enthroned at the flood. You see the record of this in Genesis chapter 8, verses 15-21. And here we find the modifications which were made to the mandate of dominion which was given to Adam, by the promise of Christ. “Then God spoke to Noah, saying, ‘Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you.’” “Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.”

“So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him.” “Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, and whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark.” “Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma.” “Then the LORD said in His heart, ‘I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.’”

Now, we have to ask ourselves how it was, that Noah knew that it was necessary to offer sacrifices of every clean animal and every clean bird, on the altar. It was because, even though he was a righteous man in God’s sight, his was a righteousness of faith. It was his faith in the promises of God in relation to Christ, which was imputed to him for righteousness. Noah knew that he was not righteous in himself essentially, and apart from God’s grace. But he had found grace in the eyes of the Lord before the flood. And that is why in godly fear, he built the ark, which he and his family and all the animals, two by two, entered the ark, and were safe.

They were trusting in what God would do through Christ. This is the picture of their entering the ark. God would lift them up by grace, to ride on the waters of judgment and not to be drowned by them. It was by faith in God that they would have the wisdom and the ability to govern themselves. It was by faith in God and His word that they would be able to do what was right and to relate with other people in a righteous way when the population of the world grew once again.

If we were to take time to look at Genesis 9: 1-17, we would see that there was a renewed mandate given to Noah, and provision for righteous human government which was given to him. But all of this would be based upon a covenant which God would make with Noah and all his descendants after him. It was called – The everlasting covenant in verse 16, and the sign of that covenant would be the rainbow. When God saw the rainbow in the cloud, He would remember His covenant which was between Him and Noah, and every living creature of all flesh; that He would not destroy all flesh with a flood ever again.

What is this a picture of? It is a picture of God's promise of the giving of His Son to be the perfect and righteous substitute for sinners, and those persons who enter into this ark of Christ's finished work, shall be saved and they shall not come into judgment. They shall pass from death unto life, and be looked upon by God as righteous. Thus, Adam's curse would be removed by the second Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ.

2nd – Let's look at how Christ's Dominion was established.

"And He put all things under Christ's feet", it says here in verse 22a. To further understand what this means, we will need to read Psalm 8. It says here – "O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens!" "Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, Because of Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy and the avenger." "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?" "For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor." You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen – Even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas." "O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth!"

Now, you can see here that this Psalm focuses our attention, first of all, upon the excellency of God's name. Yahweh our Adonai, how excellent is Your name in all the earth. He is the self-existent, eternal, and unchangeable God. He is our Father God, whose has set His glory above the heavens. And by "His glory", we need to understand His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. He who is the brightness of His glory, and the exact representation of His nature. For in this Psalm king David is speaking prophetically of Christ.

He is speaking of what Christ would do to perfectly fulfill the mandate which was first given to Adam in the Garden of Eden. He would live and act in a sinless and upright manner before God and men, and fulfill all the righteous requirements of His law. He would love God with all of His heart. When we consider God's heavens, the work of His fingers, why should men be given grace in the Son of Man? Why should God consider us in relation to Christ? It is because Christ not only lived for us, He also died for us!

Look at Isaiah 53: 10 with me. "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief." "When You make His soul an offering for sin." "He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." You can see here, that when the work of the Lord Jesus was finished, He lay there in the tomb for 3 days and 3 nights. And then the Father was pleased to raise Him up from the dead, and to crown Him with glory and honor. How did He do that? He had Him come, as the glorified God-Man, and sit at His right hand after His triumphal ascension to heaven!

This was His formally putting all things under His feet. Christ's being lifted up on the cross, and being raised from the dead, this was how His dominion was established. He was given all authority in heaven and earth. He was appointed a position far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. How thankful we should be that this is so, for it shows us that all things of angelic power or other men's power over our lives are in His righteous and loving hands. All of His enemies and ours are under His feet. They shall not ultimately prevail over us to harm us eternally. And we shall reign with Him!

3rd – How Christ's Dominion is presently being established over all the earth.

Building off of what I have already explained to you thus far, let us proceed a little farther. Verse 22 says – "And the Father has put all things under Christ's feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church..." In order to understand Christ's dominion rightly, we need to turn over to Hebrews 2, verses 5-9. "For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in

subjection to angels.” “But one testified in a certain place, saying: ‘WHAT IS MAN THAT YOU ARE MINDFUL OF HIM, OR THE SON OF MAN THAT YOU TAKE CARE OF HIM?’ ‘YOU HAVE MADE HIM A LITTLE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS; YOU HAVE CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR, AND SET HIM OVER THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS.’ ‘YOU HAVE PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET.’ “For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him.” “But now we do not yet see all things put under him.” “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.”

Here we see that God has not put the world to come in subjection to angels, but to the Lord Jesus Christ. What does this mean – the world to come? Well, the word “world” is οἰκουμένην in the Greek. John Owen says of this word in its context – “The subject of the proposition is, “The world to come” (עולם הבא) the new heavens and new earth (οἰκουμένη), which God promised to create, Isa_65:17; Isa_66:22; which refers unto ימי המשיח, “the days of the Messiah.” “The later Jews sometimes call it עולם עתיד, “the future world,” though usually by that expression they intend the world of future bliss.”

“But the world here intended is no other but the promised state of the church under the gospel.” He says – “This, with the worship of God therein, with especial relation unto the Messiah, the Author and Mediator of it, administering its heavenly things before the throne of grace, thereby rendering it spiritual and heavenly, and diverse from the state of the worship of the Old Testament, which was worldly and carnal, was “the world to come” that the Jews looked for, and which in this place is intended by the apostle.”

With that understanding in mind, we can now proceed to understand in what sense all things have been placed under Christ’s feet. All things in this present Church age have been put under Christ’s feet in that He is presently sovereignly reigning over all the inhabited earth. You remember what it says in John 17: 1-3? “Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: ‘Father, the hour has come.’ “Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.” “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

The words, “authority over all flesh are related to Christ’s having been given dominion (the right to rule) over all people. There is not any person or kingdom or nation that is not presently under His dominion. In what He has been granted Him by the Father, He has been set over all the works of God’s hands. And He is presently reigning over all people and all nations and all kings and kingdoms, even though many of these people and nations do not presently acknowledge Him. This whole Church age is the age of the Messiah where His gospel is being preached. And during that time, Christ having “tasted death for everyone”, will be the Mediator to bring all the sinners who will believe in Him, to God and to eternal life. That’s the overview of Christ’s dominion.

But verse 9 shows us that we do not now, as of yet, see all things put under him; that is, all things placed under the Church (or believing mankind) in relation to Christ. But we do see Jesus presently reigning and victorious in terms of His gospel being spread to more and more people. And so, we ought to have the anticipation, according to God’s word, of the gospel triumphing among the nations as this age proceeds. The climax will be Christ’s Second Coming. But there will be a greater subjection to Christ among the nations as this Age proceeds.

And ultimately when He returns, there will be a total subjection of all things to Him. This will come about because of His great power working together with, and in His Church. Much more could be said, and will be said, in my next sermon to you, when we will speak about Christ Church as being His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

