



4 | EPHESIANS 1:18-23

CHRIST'S SUPREMACY

Christ is exalted and sovereign above all.

Outline

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Sunday School Introduction

We've talked about our destiny and identity in Christ. We are now going to see where that destiny and identity lead to. They lead to **Christ's supremacy** in our lives.

1. CHRIST IS EXALTED IN YOUR **WORLDVIEW**

(1:18-19)

In order to grow and change in Christ and get to know Christ better and better, we need to have a constant focus.

Just like we plan for our meals each day, we need to plan on feasting on Christ each day.

A CHRIST-EXALTING HOPE

The great focus of the Christian begins with seeing the hope of all God has called us to. Hope in the Scriptures is no wish or wishful thinking. No hope is an earnest expectation of a certain reality. Hope for the Christian is a certainty. God has opened our eyes to his plan—the hope of his calling is not in this world. It's focused on another world! This world will lead you to destruction, but we can focus on the hope of a world with Christ as Head, and where he dominates our thoughts.

Ephesians 1:18a | Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you...

Our hope is not found in this life. We don't get the promises here and now. We get some benefits, but the vast majority are in the world to come.

Our hope is in the world to come! Yes, there are tremendous things we can look forward to in this world, but it's all the world to come peeking through! God's blessings are that He "makes all things new". He bears fruit through us! We see people transformed. We see our children walking with God! Those are the blessings of the world to come manifesting themselves here!

There is an emphasis in churches today to replace our eternal hope with a present earthly hope. Churches are replacing the hope of the gospel with a utilitarian message that allows you to have "your best life now". And this is not only being seen in the prosperity churches. The hope

becomes that we can have a better life by utilizing the things of this world. Our life is enriched brothers and sisters by the hope we have in Christ right now.

A Spirit Enlightened Hope

Ephesians 1:18a | Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened...

The Spirit of God must open the eyes of the heart in order that we might see that our hope is in Christ. It's not in relationships or jobs or bank accounts. Our hope is in Christ alone.

A Relationally Deep Hope

Ephesians 1:18b | That you may know what is the hope to which he has called you...

The point of the Spirit's work is "that you may know" Christ better. You need to know Christ because he indeed is our ultimate hope.

An Eternally Rich Hope

God has opened our eyes to his promise—the promises of the world leave you empty!

Ephesians 1:18c | ...what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

Here on earth, we must live for a realm in which Jesus Christ has no competition. There are no idols when we see Jesus Christ face to face, and we come into our inheritance. Only Christ! Live for those things that are to come. Sometimes we get a peek into the world to come. When people are enlightened by the Spirit and receive Christ by faith, you are witnessing the power of the world to come. When your prayer life is filled with the unction of the Spirit, you are touching the face of God! When you see submission in marriage from the heart, even though it is hard, you are observing Christ's exaltation in that brother or sister. **Glory! Joy!** This is the power of the world to come. Focus on these things! Focus on a place where Christ is God alone.

A CHRIST-EXALTING POWER

God has opened our eyes to his power—the arm of the flesh will fail you!

Ephesians 1:19-20 | ...and what is the **immeasurable greatness** of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places.

This is the same power that raised Christ from the dead. Focus on these things will lead you to maturity. Paul was describing how powerful we are, so he used every word for power he could think of. There are four different Greek words used for power in verse 19.

Dunamis: “The immeasurable greatness of his power [*dunamis*].” We derive the English word dynamite from *dunamis*. It refers to inherent power.

Energeia: “According to the working [*energeia*].” That word is the basis for the English word *energy*. It refers to operative power.

Kratos: “The working of his mighty power [*kratos*].” Sometimes *kratos* is translated “dominion.” It refers to ultimate power or authority.

Ischus: “His mighty [*ischus*] power.” It refers to *endowed power*. It means power that is designated to us by another.

Who is the power given to? His power is directed “toward those who believe.” There is no hope for those who lack faith. If you do not entrust yourself through a holy

surrender to God, there is no power for you. You must surrender your life. You are impotent in your own power. There is absolutely no meaningful power in the flesh. Have you ever tried to plug something into a dead power outlet? Spiritually, we are plugged into the infinite outlet of endless energy in Christ.

Paul was saying that God has given believers unbelievable power. Many Christians claim they don't have enough strength or power. That's why Paul prayed for the believer to know the power available to him. Have you experienced the working of that mighty power? If you know Christ, then you know and have tasted of the power of God. What kind of amazing power is this? It's the power...

Ephesians 1:20 | that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places...

The same power that God demonstrated when he raised his Son from the dead is the same power right now that works in you. You have no real power in yourself that is of yourself. The power that works, that matters, that transforms, and that empowers is the power that comes from Jesus Christ. Focus on that power and you will grow in maturity.

It's not only the power of the resurrection, it's the power of the ascension. Remember when Christ ascended to the right and of the Father and God "seated him at his right hand" in the heavenly realm? Not only do you have infinite energy to do what God wants you to do, he also gives you all authority to do what God wants you to do.

2. CHRIST IS EXALTED OVER THE WORLD (1:20-21)

We have every reason to submit to Christ because of his highly exalted position. Jesus Christ has no rivals. He has no equals. He's exalted for a purpose: that he might fill his church. When Christ is exalted in the lives of his people, he is incarnated: seen and felt through your life. He wants to "fill all in all" (1:23).

Christ is seated at the right hand of God. He is at the highest place of authority and honor in the presence of the Father. God's raised his Son to the highest place of honor and glory, with all authority. And his place of honor is so far above any other name, because no one comes close or compares to Jesus. There's no comparison.

Ephesians 1:20-21 | ...that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

JESUS IS EXALTED HISTORICALLY

Historically, this speaks of his resurrection and ascension. It's not speaking of geography or location. It's speaking of authority and position. Christ rose from the dead. He conquered death in time and in history.

JESUS IS EXALTED THEOLOGICALLY

This is a means of saying that Christ sits in the place of God as God. He is deity. Everything will be under his

control, even His enemies. Every knee will bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is *kurios* (LORD). This is the Greek translation in the Septuagint for *Yahweh*, or the God of Genesis. Jesus Christ is Yahweh. Every tongue will confess that. The God of Genesis came to earth incarnate in humanity and was crucified for your sins and for mine.

Christ is exalted above everyone in heaven and earth and under the earth in this present age. That is, Christ is exalted in history. He is exalted in the metaphysical realm. He's exalted in the realm we see and the realm we don't see. Christ is exalted in the present time of rebellion and spiritual warfare, and he will be exalted when sin is wiped off the face of the earth forever and ever for the ages to come.

3. CHRIST IS EXALTED OVER THE CHURCH (1:22-23)

Christ is exalted as Head of the church. The Father put him there. The Son accomplished redemption for the church through his blood, and the result is that all things are placed under his feet. This is in direct correlation with the Genesis 3:15 prophecy that though the Seed of the woman would be wounded, the Seed would also crush the serpent's head, and put all things under his feet, illustrating the crushing judgment reserved for those who stand against Christ's headship.

Ephesians 1:22-23 | And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Christ opposes and crushes those not submitted under his feet, but he also fills those who are submitted with the fullness of him who fills all in all. If Christ is not exalted personally in your life, how will the world know him? We who are called to salvation must submit to him in all things – that's the pathway to fullness. We are to be filled with him that he might be our collective Head. He must uncover every idol in our life. He must be our Lord and Head in all things pertaining to us, his church, and his bride.

Christ is most seen in his exalted form in this temporary time of earth that we live in through his church. He is seen in his people, in you and in me. He is seen in us. And when Christ is exalted in us, when they see us, they see *him*. Glory to his name! He is supreme!

Conclusion

Here are two challenges for you in this text: 1) are you saved, growing spiritually and serving? 2) Are you praying for your own spiritual growth and the growth of others?

The first challenge is about spiritual growth. Are you growing spiritually? Are you serving joyfully under the exalted Christ? Is Christ exalted in your life? What kind of fruit are you producing for the kingdom? Is your character changing to be more like Christ day after day?

The second challenge is about your prayer life. This passage is a prayer of praise. Paul says in this passage: Because of what God has done in your lives, I want to give praise to him! Do you praise God in your prayers? We are called to praise God for what he has done and what he is doing in our lives and in the lives of others. God is working in you. Lift up your eyes and see. If you see what God is doing, you will praise him.