

Master of the Universe

April 12, 2015 ~ Ephesians 1.15-23

3 Roles of Jesus

1. Last week we viewed Christ as our **Redeemer** / in the resurrection
 - ✧ He not only redeems us – but all creation as well
 - ✧ His role as Redeemer was “before the foundation of the world” (1 Pet 1.20)
 2. Our text today emphasizes Jesus as **Ruler**
 - ✧ He rules not only over us (His Church) – but over all of the created order
 - ◇ That created order encompasses all of heaven and earth
 3. Before either of these Jesus was the **Creator** of all things
 - ✧ Paul wrote in **Col 1.16**, “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.”
- ❖ So Jesus is the **Creator**, the **Redeemer** and the **Ruler** of all the universe
 - ✧ In short, He is the Master of the Universe

“Master of the Universe”

- ❖ This phrase was not of my own invention . . .
- ❖ A favorite book is “**Concise Theology**” by *J.I. Packer*, mini-encyclopedia of theology
 - ✧ There is a chapter entitled Session
 - ◇ Derived from Latin word “**sessio**”, which means “**sitting**”
 - ◇ Jesus is said to be sitting at the Father’s right hand ~ not resting – but ruling
 - ◇ Presbyterians describe local church government in terms of “the Session”
 - ✧ In the prior chapter Ascension is this “**The fact that Jesus Christ is enthroned as master of the universe should be of enormous encouragement to all believers.**”

Paul’s Prayer and Christ’s Honors

- ❖ Paul prays that God would open the “**eyes of understanding**” of the Ephesians
 - ✧ Though saved, the Ephesians need more (intellect / passion / will)
 - ✧ He prays that they would know 3 things (**vss 18-19**)
- ❖ He goes on to describe 4 works of the Father done for Christ (**vss 20 – 23**)
- ❖ It’s these 7 topics we’ll cover now . . .

Xition: First let’s look at what Paul wants the Ephesians to know . . .

Paul Wants the Ephesians to Know These 3 Things (vss 18 – 19)

1. “What is the hope of His calling?”
2. “What are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints?”
3. “What is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe?”

1. “What is the Hope of His Calling?”

- ❖ Paul refers to God’s effectual call upon their lives / God’s initiative
 - ✧ Later he reminds the Ephesians they were once without hope (**Eph 2.12-13**)
 - ✧ Believers sealed by the Holy Spirit (**Eph 1.13**) / Our hope is grounded in truth
- ❖ God’s effectual call is for us a life changing event
 - ✧ His call imputes value to our lives as nothing else can
 - ✧ A few months ago Robin Williams took his life
 - ✧ He was rich and successful / But no hope to sustain him

2. “What are the Riches of the Glory of His Inheritance in the Saints?”

- ❖ Just as it was God’s calling, it is also His inheritance
 - ✧ Paul emphasizes God throughout this text “**His xxx**” / not the Ephesians
 - ✧ Paul’s prayer is that they would recognize their great riches
 - ✧ Before Agrippa Paul quotes Jesus speaking to him on the road
 - ◆ **Read Acts 26.17-18** ~ “**While thus occupied .. sanctified by faith in Me.**”
- ❖ In **Mt 13.44-45** Jesus compared kingdom of heaven to treasure in field or pearl
 - ✧ In each case the person sells all they have to buy it
 - ✧ But we receive the kingdom of heaven as a gift / it is free to us
- ❖ “**Do we truly see our inheritance as riches and value it as such?**”
 - ✧ Inheritances are often squandered on this earth . . .

3. “What is the Exceeding Greatness of His Power Toward us Who Believe?”

- ❖ Adjectives are not all that common in Scripture
 - ✧ In **Gen 1** the works of God are 6 times called “**good**” / **Gen 1.31** “**very good**”
 - ◆ “**Do we want our creative works to be called good – or even very good?**”
 - ◆ No - We ought not covet praise but we appreciate it / esp. when merited
- ❖ “**hope of His calling**” / “**riches of the glory**” / “**exceeding greatness of His power**”
 - ✧ Paul draws greater attention to this last fact / this last prayer for them
- ❖ The exceeding greatness of God’s power was revealed in Christ’s ascension

Xition: The power exercised in raising Christ is “toward us”

4 Things the Father does for Jesus through His mighty power

1. v20 ~ “He raised Him from the dead”
2. v20 ~ “.. seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places”
3. v21 ~ “.. far above all principality and power and might and dominion”
4. v22 ~ “And gave Him to be head over all things to the church”

1. “He Raised Him from the Dead” (v20)

- ❖ Resurrection is amazing ~ There are both OT and NT examples
 - ✧ Elijah did it / Elisha did it / Jesus (3) / Peter (*Tabitha*) / Paul (*Eutychus*)
- ❖ But we learned last week that the resurrection of Jesus was different
 - ✧ Jesus rose from the dead with a glorified body (*different attributes*)
 - ✧ His body exhibited continuity (*nail marks*) and discontinuity (*immortal*)
 - ✧ “How can a human body be physical yet pass through solid matter?”
 - ✧ We don’t know / What we do know is it exhibits God’s mighty power

2. “He Seated Him at His Right Hand in the Heavenly Places” (v20)

- ❖ God elevated Christ to the greatest position possible
 - ✧ Jesus is at the right hand of the Father exercising all authority on His behalf
 - ✧ The Father placed Jesus there because of His triumph on the cross
- ❖ Jesus being seated doesn’t mean He is inactive – or resting
 - ✧ He is seated on a throne ruling – He is in the seat of authority

3. “He is Far Above all Principality and Power and Might and Dominion” (v21)

- ❖ This phrase includes all earthly and heavenly powers
- ❖ **Isaiah** compares God to the nations of the earth in **40.15**
 - ✧ “Behold, the nations are as a drop in the bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the scales;” and in **Isaiah 40.22-24 (read)**
 - ✧ “He .. sits above the circle of the earth .. take them away like stubble.”
- ❖ **Psalms 2** warns world leaders throughout all time against rebelling against Christ
 - ✧ Read **Psalms 2** and point out Christ’s words in **vss 7-9**
 - ✧ Jesus Himself will never again be scourged, jeered at, or mocked. . .
 - ✧ When He returns it will be in triumphant victory . . .
- ❖ Yet His body remains on the earth as His representative
 - ✧ And that’s what we move on to in the 4th action of the Father

Xition: God made Him Head over all things . . .

4. “He Gave Him to be Head Over all Things” (v22)

- ❖ Being Head over all things is obviously a position of authority
 - ✧ But a head requires a body ~ emphasis quickly xitions via “to the church”
 - ✧ Father God honors Christ most by moving on to addressing His bride
 - ◇ He addresses the object of Jesus’ desire / the reason for His sacrifice
 - ✧ Yes – Jesus is head over all things
 - ◇ But, first and foremost, He is head over His body ~ His bride

Also ~ “to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all”

- ❖ God regards His Church with such a great respect, tenderness and love
 - ✧ This degree of honor may mystify us
 - ✧ We just don’t see this when we look on the Church
 - ✧ When we look upon the church we may see a very different woman
 - ◇ Ill: Marquis drivers ~ obese, brassy, smoking, slovenly, rude, self-centered
- ❖ “What does Jesus see when He looks on the Church?”
 - ✧ He doesn’t see her as she is / He sees her for what she’s becoming
 - ✧ He sees a beautiful bride / radiant in glory / glowing with anticipation
 - ◇ chaste / demure / respectful / obedient / excited / hopeful
 - ✧ We would be wise to remember this . . .
 - ◇ We often freely criticize the Church / Yet the Church is Christ’s betrothed
 - ◇ God honors her / We ought to honor her
- ❖ In this text the Church is said to complete Christ
 - ✧ The Church is called “the fullness of Him”
 - ✧ We ought not criticize the bride of the Master of the Universe

Asking Jesus to Exercise His Power

- ❖ Paul prayed that the Ephesians would know (*meaning embrace and fully realize*)
 - ✧ “what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe”
- ❖ All power is Christ’s to command / He is the “Master of the Universe”
 - ✧ Jesus tells us in **John 14.12** “.. whatever you ask in My name .. I will do it”
 - ✧ James tells us in **James 4.2-3** “.. you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss ..”

Xition: One more point about Jesus’ Ascension to the throne . . .

Jesus Honors Those who Honor Him

- ❖ There is a puzzling passage concerning Christ at God's right hand in heaven
 - ✧ In **Psalm 110** and here in **Ephesians** Jesus is seated
- ❖ But in **Acts 7.55-56** we read this concerning Stephen:
 - ✧ "But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"
- ❖ "Why the difference?" / Is this a textual discrepancy as some say?
- ❖ I have a theory . . .

Jesus Honors Those who Honor Him

- ❖ During the time of the judges a man of God was sent to Eli (**1 Sam 2.30**)
 - ✧ "I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.' But now the LORD says: 'Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed."
 - ✧ Eli dishonored God by not rebuking his sons for their sacrilege
 - ✧ God took His honor of Eli away . . .
- ❖ Here is my theory . . .
- ❖ "Why is Jesus standing when Stephen sees him?"
 - ✧ Because Jesus knows what Stephen does not
 - ✧ Stephen is about to die for being so bold in his witness to the Jews
 - ✧ Christ grants Stephen this beatific vision in his final moments on earth
 - ✧ Jesus stands to both honor Stephen and to welcome him into His embrace

I encourage you to stand up for Jesus on earth

So that Jesus will one day stand up for you in heaven

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,

And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,
To God our Savior, who alone is wise,

Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.

Amen *pause* Go in peace . . .