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Ephesians 1:22 – 23  
The Church Which Is His Fullness

We're continuing our study in the book of Ephesians. We've made it to the end of chapter one, if you can believe it. We're actually going faster than I had anticipated – one chapter per six months. Which will make this only a 3 year study at this pace. And of course that all depends on how often I get side-tracked by other things that the Lord brings to the forefront of my heart.

Just to refresh your memory, last week we talked about the power of the resurrection working IN the believer. Most of us are familiar with hearing sermons or reading books about God's power working through a believer, or being for a believer. But so much of the New Testament is concerned with Christ's resurrection power working IN a believer which effects us by conforming us to His death. In other words, His increase becomes our decrease. As Paul says in Philippians chapter 3, we begin to know Him in the power of His resurrection and we partake of His sufferings and are conformed to His death. That is power.

I mentioned that I believe for God to take a carnal, self-centered, human soul that is by nature at enmity with Him, and transform it through Resurrection Life into the image of His Son...I believe that is a far greater demonstration of power than parting the Red Sea or calling down fire on a mountain.

Anyway that was what we spent most of our time on last week. This week I want to move on into verses 22 and 23 of chapter one and wrap up this chapter. Lets begin just by reading these verses.

**Eph 1:22** And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, **23** which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

These verses speak of Christ's role in and as the Resurrection. Remember, the previous verses speak of Christ being raised up by God far above principality and power and seated at the right hand of God. we've all heard that before. But what exactly is He doing at the right hand of God? What is He reigning over? What is He desiring to put under His feet? What are the enemies that are being subdued?

Here is where I think we are confused. I know that what I'm about to say can be misunderstood. And even those who don't misunderstand may be confused or offended. But, brothers and sisters, Christ was NOT raised up to the right hand of God so that He could put natural kingdoms and rulers and people under His feet. He wasn't raised up so that He could stir up hurricanes, strike buildings with lightning, and drop bombs on Nazi Germany. That's not the nature, realm, or reality of His rule. In fact, as far as He's concerned, those natural kingdoms, rulers, and people have already been judged by the cross.

I know that might sound strange because we are always talking about how God is "in control" of everything on earth. But stop for a minute and think about that. Does

this planet look like the expression of His control? Does this country look like demonstration of His dominion? How about Sudan? How about North Korea? Iraq? Cleveland?

Jesus Christ was raised up to the right hand of God not to fix the earth, not to beat the bad guys, not to stop the Hitler's. Don't you think that if that were his goal He would be doing a far better job of it than He is right now. Just look at the earth! Watch CNN for 30 seconds. Do we really think that the world that we live in is a reflection of 2000 years of Christ trying to put natural enemies, kingdoms, bad-guy's under His feet? Can we seriously believe that?

Do we think that things aren't going as well as He hoped? Do we think that He wasn't counting on people continuing to be so evil in His kingdom? Do we think that He was raised to the right hand of God so that He could bring peace to planet earth? What did he say about bringing peace to the world?

**Mat 10:34** "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 For I have come to 'SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW'; 36 and 'A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THOSE OF HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD.' 37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

Listen, I'm not against world peace. As far as I'm concerned, I'd love to see world peace. That would be great. But I'm not confused enough to think that God's reign through Christ is in the natural realm. I am not looking for God's kingdom and reign and headship in the world. What does Jesus say about this?

**Joh 18:36** Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews;

Jesus was raised up to the right hand of God to do what? To be a natural king in a natural city? To stop Stalin before he commits his 37-millionth murder? To do what? To be what? What does our verse say? He was raised up to be "head over all to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

Christ isn't the head over Australia. Christ isn't the head over America. Christ is the head over His body, the church. And that headship means a whole lot more than just "ruler" or "boss". We'll get to that.

But I want us to face something that maybe some of us haven't faced. Although God does intervene in, and help in, and provide in, and heal in, and speak in, etc. the natural realm, the natural world, He is not trying to make it into His kingdom. He is not trying to make the earth into another natural kingdom, a natural body, a natural expression of His rule and reign. He did that with David and Solomon in the natural as the type and shadow of His spiritual and eternal kingdom. He's not trying to bring it back.

I am definitely not saying that His kingdom cannot be manifested in the earth. It certainly can. It certainly must. That is what we are supposed to be – the manifestation of His kingdom on earth as it is in the heavens. But I am saying that the earth is not the realm in which He is trying to put enemies under His feet. The earth is not where He is seeking to be the fullness of all in all. It is **the church, His body**, where He desires to fill all, and subdue all things contrary to His life. It is in His body, as the very head, where He seeks to exercise headship. It is in your soul where He has established His throne, out from which He says flow rivers of living water. There is where He works His power to subdue all things unto Himself. Yes. There is where his weapons are mighty in God for the pulling down of strongholds. The casting down of every vain imagination that are contrary to the true knowledge of God. There is where He is taking thoughts captive. There is where He is conquering cities, and punishing disobedience (in other words, causing all things to line up with, come into accord with, His rule)

**2Co 10:4** For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Now, as far as the natural world goes, the Bible is more than clear as to who is its prince. It says plainly who's reflection and image the world bears.

**Luk 4:5** Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for *this* has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. 7 Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."

**Joh 14:30** I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.

**Eph 2:2** in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

**2Co 4:3** But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

**1Jo 5:19** We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *in the power of* the wicked one.

You see, it is not in the old creation where God's reign is being established, but in the new. It is in His body the church where God is establishing the demonstration of His rule. It is there where He is establishing headship. It is supposed to be there where the world can see something of His reign and dominion. And don't be confused about the method He employs. **He is not working life in you. He is the Life in you working death to everything that stands contrary to His Life.**

And I just wanted to mention that this morning because I hear Christian cliché's quite often, as do all of you I am sure. We read a news article about millions starving in some country, thousands dying by suicide bombers, or various other atrocities of the world and we say things like "well, God is still the one in charge." Or "God's still on His throne". And I agree 100% that God is still on His throne, but those atrocities are not the reflection of it. Nor are they even in the realm where you will see or experience the reign of that throne.

Where do you see God's reign? In the New Creation which He has established in His Son. Where do you see His headship? In His body, which is the church, the fullness of Him who fills all and all. Do you see that to be what this verse says?

Now this verse is an interesting one because it describes us, the church, as being the fullness of Him. Do you see that? What does that mean? In what sense can we be Christ's fullness? Well, its not terribly difficult to understand this if you have some understanding of God's eternal purpose to have an increase of Christ through a living habitation. That is what this verse speaks of. It is almost synonymous with the last two verses of the next chapter of Ephesians.

[Eph 2:21](#) in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, [22](#) in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

In my "Not I, But Christ" series I share an analogy that deals with our verse for today. It's a bit of a strange one, but I think it gets the point across. Imagine that you walk into church next Sunday and here I am up here in the front of the sanctuary, except I'm only a head. Somehow there is just my head up here being kept alive by all sorts of machines. I know this is a bit gruesome, but bear with me for a minute. So here I am, just a head, greeting everyone, welcoming visitors, and teaching from Ephesians.

Now you could certainly say that in that head there was something of an expression of Jason. It was Jason. It wasn't anybody else. But was it the fullness of Jason? Was it the full expression, the full manifestation of Jason? What would be needed in order to have a full expression of Jason? I would need a many membered body in which, through which, I could manifest myself. I would need a body in which I was filling every part in every way. I would need a body which was my fullness, the fullness of the head who fills all in all. Do you see?

The life is from the head. The mind is in the head. The nature comes from the head. So does the will and the emotion. But the body becomes a many membered expression of that head if that life is formed in the body. The body becomes the fullness of the head, the increased expression of the head.

You could create a similar analogy with a seed. Take, for instance, an acorn. What do you have in an acorn? You have the full genetic make-up of the entire oak tree. You have the entire life of a tree in one little bundle. But you do not have the full expression of that life. You don't have the seed's fullness. What must one do to have the full expression? Get more acorns? No, its not a lack of acorns that is the problem. We don't need more Jesus' coming again as Nazarenes in the flesh. What do we need? We don't need a bunch of people trying to make themselves look like acorns. We need the one acorn increasing into the full expression of what is already

in the one seed. We need branches that will bear and carry the life of that seed. We need branches that will actually reproduce a harvest of that one seed.

**John 12:23** But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. 24 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

Do you see that this is what God the Father is seeking to do in Christ's body? Glorify the one Seed. The hour has come to glorify the one dying Seed. How? Not by creating a harvest of copy-cats. But a harvest of the one Christ through a "dwelling place of God in Spirit." The increase of Him. The harvest of One.

There is much talk in the body of Christ about the word "harvest". That word is in the title of many Christian books and is the topic of many Christian conferences. But I'm afraid that for most of my life I greatly misunderstood the nature and reality of what the harvest is. You see, I thought that the harvest of God was many coming to act like the One. Or many coming to believe in one. But now I know that the true harvest that God has always been seeking is the One increasing in the many.

When you plant a seed, are you looking for anything other than the increase of the exact thing you planted? When you plant a seed, is your expectation anything other than the fullness of what has been planted? Again, our verse, "the church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all". We must come to understand ourselves from this Spirit-given perspective.

Christ was raised up from among the dead that He might be formed in His body and reign there as the Head and King of those who will follow Him out of the Old Man, the Old Creation, and into the new. He doesn't reign in the White House. He doesn't reign in the UN. He reigns in the souls of those who have been born again. And here is what he is doing in you and I.

- He is "being formed in us" **Galatians 4: 19**
- He is **Phi 3:21** "transform[ing] our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself."
- **Eph 4:10, 13** He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things...till we come... to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;"
- He is **Heb 2:8** "putting His enemies under His feet". The enemies that are in His land, His body, His kingdom.
- **Eph 4:15** He is causing us to "grow up in all things into Him who is the head"

He is causing us to become a mature corporate man. One New Man. A body that walks in and as the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. What a fabulous goal. What an unbelievable eternal purpose. To make us all into one body with one Head.

It dawned on me just a few days ago, that Paul's analogy of the body of Christ isn't really an analogy. Its not an analogy, it's a reality. In other words, its not like Paul is saying that the body of Christ is a little bit like a natural human body. It's the other way around. The natural body is the lesser of the two realities, the lesser of the two bodies. The natural body is the less joined, less real body. It is connected only by flesh, sinew, bone, blood. It is the type and the shadow. But what we have and what we are in Christ, whether faith has seen it or not, is far more a body than the body that you have. The body of Christ is connected and joined by eternal, incorruptible Spirit.

And I'd like to share with you, just from my heart this morning, that the more the Spirit of wisdom and revelation makes this a reality in your heart, **the more life ceases to be about the body that you have, and becomes more about the body that you are.** I'm not sure if I can say it any better than that. The more you see His finished work, the more and more you see that the body that you have is really a member of the body that you are, and must function as such. **And it begins to make sense deep in the soul that the body that you have exists to serve the body that you are.** In fact, you begin to understand what Paul means when he speaks of laying down the body that we have in order to function as the body that we are. Not out of duty, but as a simple matter of living. Its not a religious obligation, its not a spiritual discipline, its just how life works in a body.

My hand does not feel obligated to serve my body, its just what life does. My foot does not feel obligated to be in regular connection and relation to my knee, its just what life is. Life doesn't have to try to live a certain way. Life lives.

Maybe the Lord isn't dealing with you right now with this, but eventually you begin relate to the body of Christ more and more in the same way the members of our bodies relate to each other. This can't be a theology. It will never work as a doctrine. It must be a reality that grows out of the revealing of Christ's life in the soul. Where all things that He has finished through His cross become established as realities and not beliefs or creeds.

I remember quoting from Romans 12 the other week, I believe when we were talking about Christ Himself being our peace. It says

**Rom 12:5** "so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another." Or...

**1Co 12:13** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

Well, those are nice verses, but they're not really verses. They are realities being described by verses. And what I'm attempting to say is that when this reality begins to work in your soul then life changes. You can't stop it. Its not something that comes from you, it is something that happens to you as you begin to share His view.

Jason, what are you talking about? I'm talking about not just believing that you are a body, but operating as a body. I'm talking about feeling, experiencing, the magnetic connection of the Life of Jesus Christ working in those who not only share life, but having that life formed in them. I'm talking about John 17.

**Joh 17:20** "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

Brothers and sisters, we are the body of Christ, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Unity is sharing this one life. Its not something we are trying to create, it is something we are trying to realize and walk in the good of through the revealing of Christ.

There is a difference between the unity of the spirit, and the unity of faith. The unity of the Spirit is a fact and a reality for every born again believer, though it is rarely seen from God's perspective. Once you are born from above, you are one in Him whether we realize it or not. But then there is something called the unity of the faith mentioned in Ephesians 4. That unity is more than just a spiritual fact, it is a spiritual experience through Truth working in the soul. The unity of the faith is when the one mind comes to be the oneness of all who share His life. In other words, the unity of faith is when the Christ who is in us through new birth becomes the Life that works in His body in every member and in every way. Amen.