

Christ, The Head of the Church

Sunday, June 16th, 1985

Colossians 1:18

“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

I am going to speak to you today on this subject: “JESUS CHRIST, THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH.”

I could select one of several passages of Scripture, but I am going to select this one over in Colossians chapter 1:18. There is just one phrase; *“And He is the head of the body, the church,”* (speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There are those who see the church as only local; they call it, “A local, New Testament, church.” They believe this and this is their definition which they give, they believe that the church is a local assembly of believers called out by the Holy Spirit.

That definition is certainly in keeping with the Holy Scriptures. The word “*church*” is often used in the Word of God referring to a local assembly of believers called out by the Holy Spirit. They refer to it as a church in a given location such as the church at Galatia, the church at Ephesus, the church at Thessalonica, and the church at Philippi. These were local, independent, churches and assemblies of called-out believers.

In Matthew 18, when the Lord was telling the disciples how to settle difficulties and divisions among the brethren, He said; *“You go to a man who is offended (or is offended with you) and if he will not hear you, then take two or three witnesses. If he will not hear the witnesses,”* then He says; *“Tell it to the church.”*

This has to be a local church when He says, *“Tell it to the church,”* tell it to the assembly of believers. Tell it to the brethren and to the local church.

In Acts 14:23, the Scripture says; *“They ordained elders in every church.”* There are several churches now. They ordained elders in every church of which there were many.

Most believers and most competent writers and preachers of the past see the New Testament church as both local and universal. In other words; we talked about the local assembly of believers called out by the Holy Spirit, the believers in Christ or the professors of faith in Christ.

This great, universal church of which the Scripture speaks, is the church of our Lord Jesus Christ and it is made up of all believers, of all generations, of all tribes, kindred, nations, and tongues under heaven. This great, universal church is made up of all believers.

You might say, “Well, when (or where) is the church assembled?” It is assembled at the feet of Christ our Lord; it is always assembled at His feet. It is assembled now at His feet.

Believers from the Old Testament such as Abraham, Moses, Abel, David, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, and Paul are in this church. Believers such as Luther, Whitfield, Spurgeon and Calvin are in this church.

Some of these believers are in heaven, some are on earth, some are from one part of the world and some are from another part. All nations and people which are the redeemed of Christ, make up the church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen to these Scriptures:

Matthew 16:18 our Lord says; *“I will build my church.”* He is not talking about the 13th Street Baptist church or the church down in Danville, Kentucky or the church in Cincinnati, Louisville, or Charleston. Christ is saying, *“I will build my church, (my true church), and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”*

In Hebrews 2:12, Christ said this; *“I will declare the name of God in the midst of the church to my brethren and I will sing of thee.”*

In Hebrews 12:23, it says; *“The church of the first-born, (the church of the Lord Jesus Christ), whose names are written in heaven.”*

Ephesians 5:23 tells us that *“Christ is the head of the church; He is the Saviour of the body (the Church). He sanctifies and cleanses the church. He presents to Himself a glorious church. And He tells husbands to “Love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.”*

This church (in Christ) has no unbelievers in it. This church has no tares. This church has no hypocrites or false professors. This church is made up of believers in different locations.

There are those individuals in local organizations or assemblies who do not know Christ; this is obvious. Our Lord Jesus Christ had 12 disciples and one of them did not know Him.

The apostle Paul talked about Demas forsaking him and Alexander doing him much evil. Phygelus and Hermogenes made shipwreck of the faith.

Paul talks about these who departed. John said, *“They went out from us but they never were of us,”* even though they were local church members.

They were not members of the true church, the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, the church of God, *“Whose names are written in heaven.”*

The old Scottish preacher, Robert Murray McCheyne is one of my favorite preachers and writers of the past. He died when he was only 29 years of age. He left a great impact with his writings and with his messages.

He said this, *“The church which is the object of God’s love is all people of all ages who are chosen of God, awakened by the Holy Spirit, and justified by the blood of Christ, called, sanctified, already raised with Christ, and are seated with Christ and glorified in Christ.”*

This church is made up of every person who is saved and who will finally be saved. It is made up of every person who will sit down to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and be conformed perfectly to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The great Bishop J.C. Ryle, (who is worthy to be read), had a sermon on the universal church, the church of our Lord, the true church. This is one of the greatest messages ever preached.

He shows how this church is made up of believers, everyone of the elect, everyone of the sheep of Christ and everyone of the brethren. In that church there are none who know not the Lord.

Charles Spurgeon is the favorite of most people in our day. Most of the preachers in our day read Spurgeon. Men of every denomination read Charles Spurgeon. He is admired, respected, and well read. He was the great preacher of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, England for 38 years. He died in 1892 at the age of 58.

Charles Spurgeon wrote this about the church; he said, “The church is the assembly of those whose names are written in heaven.”

When does it assemble? It is assembled in the mind and purpose of God. It was assembled in the mind and purpose of God before the world began. It is assembled at the feet of Christ the Lord.

With God there is no time. We are time creatures. We are time conscience, but with God everything is in the everlasting present. Everything is now and always has been.

Spurgeon says, “The church is the assembly of those whose names are written in heaven that aggregate of all believers that make up the church which Christ both redeemed with His most precious blood and of which He is the sole and only Head.”

Part of that church is in heaven, triumphantly. Part of that church is on the earth, militant. These differences or places make no division of the unity of that church.

I have a son who is in glory. I have a son who lives in Ashland. I have a son who lives in Tennessee but they are still my sons. We are one family. When my son died, he did not cease to be my son. When my son moved to Tennessee he did not cease to be my son.

It does not matter where Christ’s sheep are. It doesn’t matter where believers are; they are His sheep. They are in Him and their unity is not divided. “There is but one church,” Spurgeon contended, “only one church.” It is above and beneath.

Time creates no separation. Place creates no separation; the church is always one because they are one in Christ. Can Christ be divided? Then all who are in the church, (in Christ), are in the true church.

It does not matter where they are and it matters not what the time is or the generation in which they might have lived; they are in Christ.

That brings me to my subject: “Christ is the Head of the Church.” That is what it says; let me read it to you in several places.

In Ephesians 1:22, the Scripture says; “*The Father, (the Heavenly Father), hath put all things under His feet and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church which is His body.*” Christ is the Head of the body which is His church. The Father gave Him that distinction. The Father gave Him that position.

Ephesians 5:23 says, *“For the husband is the head of the wife.”* This is Scriptural. Marriage is not a 50/50 proposition. I know that we cooperate, live in love with affection and unity. The husband is the head of the house. This is what the Word of God says.

He told Eve when she and Adam were thrown out of the Garden of Eden; *“You shall be in subjection to your husband and he shall have the rule over you.”* As the man is the head of the woman, *“Christ is the Head of the church.”*

This is what Christ says, *“The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the Head of the church. He is the Saviour of the body.”* In Colossians 1:18, He says; *“He is the Head of the body, the church.”*

I have about seven or eight points and I am hopeful that I will be able to get all of them in along with this message. I want you to listen carefully as I speak to you on “Christ the Head of the Church,” and what it means:

First of all: Christ as the Head of the church, every believer, every sheep and every child of God, represents the whole body.

Have you ever heard someone say, “Well, they are counting heads?” What does that mean? What this means is that they are counting people. The whole person is represented by the head. We count heads. Well, the body goes with the head. The head is the whole person.

So, watch this; this thing of Headship means that the whole human race was represented by one Head or Headship, (Adam). This is what the Word of God says. I am not just telling you something that I suppose or surmise; this is what the Scripture says.

Adam was the head of the human race; when he stood, we stood. When he fell, we fell. When he sinned, we sinned. Listen to Romans 5:12, *“By one man, sin entered this world and death by sin. So, death passed upon all men”* because he was the head of all men.

He was the representative of all men. Adam stood as the head, the federal head of a whole race. *“In Adam all die. As we’ve born the image of the earthy; we shall bear the image of the heavenly. The first man was of the earth, earthy.”*

He stood for all men. When he fell we fell. It was imputed to us and imparted to us and was reckoned to us. It was passed down through Adam to us, a sinful nature and a sinful standing before God.

In order to save a people out of Adam's race, God, in a Covenant of Grace, (which the Bible teaches), instituted a second federation of which Christ Jesus is the Head. In Adam, all who are in Adam, die. In Christ, all who are in Christ are made alive.

By one man there was sin, and many were made sinners by one man's disobedience. By the obedience of another man, "*Many were made righteous. By man came death, by man came the resurrection. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.*"

Do you understand what I am saying? Christ is the Head of the church. We call the church the family of God and the kingdom of God." We call the church the elect of God, Spiritual Israel, and "*those whose names are written in the Lambs Book of Life,*" those whose names are written in Heaven.

Their Head is Jesus Christ. I am going to make this as simple as I can and as clear as I can. The word Adam means; one man, the red earth, or taken from the earth.

Even Eve came out of Adam. God took man, the one man He created, and took a rib and made the woman. She came out of the man. She was called "*Woman.*" She came out of the man.

God didn't make but one man. He didn't create but one man. There has never been created on this earth but one man, Adam. He was created from the earth. "*God breathed in him the breath of life and he became a living soul.*" Every person who has ever walked on this earth has come out of that man.

He is the first man, the head, the federal head and the headship. When he stood, the whole race stood in his loins. When he fell, the whole race fell. When he became a sinner, the whole race became a sinner. The only kind of son that Adam begets is a sinful son with his nature and with his likeness.

God determined to have a people different from that fallen man. He chose them out of Adam's race and He instituted and anointed and ordained a living Head, another Head, which is Christ. By Adam's transgression we fell. By Christ's obedience we were made righteous. In Adam we die; in Christ we are made alive. "*By man came death and by man came the resurrection.*"

There are two men, two Adams. The Bible calls them two Adams, *“the first man is of the earth, earthy. The second Adam is the Lord from Heaven.”* Read 1 Corinthians 15 and tell me who the second Adam is.

You know who the first Adam is; it is man, the first one who was in the Garden of Eden. Who is the second Adam? The second Adam is the *“Lord from heaven.”* He is the Head. When God deals with the church; He deals with the Head. The Head represents the whole body.

Secondly: Christ, as the Head of the Church, is the life of the church. Not only does He represent every believer in the church but He is the life of the church.

Man cannot live without his head. I can live without my arm and I can live without an ear, an eye, or a leg. I cannot live without a head. The life is in the head.

Even so, Christ is our life. The Scripture says, *“Your life is hid with Christ in God.”* He is the Head of the church and being the Head of the church He is the life of the church. *“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we appear with Him in glory.”*

Where the Head is the body has to be there. You don't have a Head and a body unless they are both in the same place. Christ being the Head is the life of the church. Where the head is the body is.

You might say, “Well; He is seated at the right hand of God.” Paul said in Ephesians 2, *“We are seated with Him in the heavenlies.”* We are seated with Christ. In 1 John 5, it says this; *“This is the record; God hath given us eternal life and that life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life.”*

He that hath the Head hath life. *“He that hath not the Son doesn't have life.”* It doesn't matter what he claims or professes. He doesn't have life; Christ is the life.

Thirdly: Christ as the Head of the church is the chief glory of the church. I said this to our congregation recently; you can go into a person's home. You will notice that they have pictures of their children and their grandchildren.

What kind of pictures are they? They aren't pictures of feet. There are no pictures of a big hand on the wall. There are pictures of heads. When we take a picture of someone we take a picture of the head. When we point to that head, we say; “That is so and so.” Well, that is the glory of the person, his head. That is where the glory is. When you make a carving, you make a carving of the head.

Even so, what is all glorious and beautiful about the church is because of the beauty and glory of our Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Head, the glory and beauty of the church.

Listen to Jeremiah Chapter 9; *“Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom. Let not the mighty man glory in his might. Let not the rich man glory in his riches. Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord.”*

“All hail the power of Jesus’ name
Let angels prostrate fall.
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him Lord of all.”

He is the glory of the church. He is the beauty of the church. He is the Head of the Church. I will tell you this, when you put a crown on a monarch you don’t put it on his hands or on his knee, but on his head. That is where the crown is; on His Head are many crowns. He is the beauty and the glory of the church because He is the Head of the church. When the Father sees Him, He sees us.

When you come into a house and see a picture of a person on the wall; you say; “There is my son or there is my daughter, friend, wife, or husband.” There is the whole person. You are only looking at the head but the head represents the whole body. The head is where the glory and the beauty are.

Fourthly: Christ as the Head of the Church is the Lord and the King. He is the absolute Sovereign in the church.

I hear people talk about the church being democratic body with one man and one vote. Really and truly? Christ is the King. He is the Sovereign Lord.

It is from the head that all orders are issued to different parts of the body. I am using my hand to illustrate and to make points but my head is telling my hand what to do. My head is telling my hand what to do. My head is telling my eyes what to do. My head is telling my eyes to look down here or look up there or to read this Scripture or say that Scripture. I am getting all of my orders from my head.

My feet are not giving any orders to this body. My hands are not giving me orders. My head is the one giving the orders. Even so; the church is subject to the will of Jesus

Christ. He is the Lord and He is the King, the Sovereign, and Supreme Ruler of the church.

From Him we get our life. From Him we get our commandments and we are pleased with them. From Him we get our orders. From Him we get our doctrines and from Him we get our authority which is from the Head. The Head of the church is the Lord Jesus Christ and being the Head He is indisputably, absolutely, unconditionally and totally Sovereign.

He is Sovereign in all things, in creation, providence, and salvation. We bow to our Lord; we worship our Lord, we adore our Lord. *“Holy and Reverend is His name. He is the Great and only Potentate.”*

Fifthly: I may ask you this question, who but Christ can be the Head of the church?

The Father made Him the Head. Anyone who claims to be the head of anything, called the “church” is an imposter because the Father said, *“I have set My King on My Holy Hill of Zion.”* Anyone listening to me, which knows anything about the Bible, knows that Zion is the church. God the Father said; *“I have put my King on the Holy Hill of Zion.”*

Our Lord Jesus said in Matthew 20, *“All authority is given unto me,”* no one else. In John 17:2, He says; *“I have all power over all flesh”* because Father, gave it to Him.” Who but Christ can be Head of the church? The Father decreed it; the Father designed it and the Father made Him the Head.

He purchased that right and He bought that right. It says in Romans 14:9, *“To this end Christ both died and rose again that He might be Lord of the dead and the living.”* I’m talking about those in glory and those on the earth, the saved and the unsaved. He bought that right.

Not only did the Father make Him Lord, Sovereign, Ruler and King, but when He went to the cross, He bought that right. It is like when the thief died on the cross (that was next to him), he said; *“Lord; you are not going to stay dead; you are coming into a Kingdom,”* (the Kingdom, the only Kingdom of God).

When Christ comes into that Kingdom, He comes in as the absolute King, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The thief said, *“Remember me when you come into your Kingdom.”* He is the Head of the church. He is the Ruler and He is the only one who has the right. He bought that right.

Sixthly; He is the only one who deserves to be the Head, because He is the only one who can do for the church what needs to be done; He is able. Listen to this Scripture; *“Abraham believed God that He was able to do all that He promised.”*

No one else can do that. There is not another creature in the universe that can do all that He promises; I can't and you can't; no one can. Christ can!

“He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him.” It doesn't matter; it says, *“To the uttermost;”* He is able. He is able because of who He is and because of what He did. He is able because of where He is, at the right hand of God.

Not only that; *“He is able to keep us from falling.”* None of His sheep shall fall away because He is able to keep them.

It not only says this, but the Scripture says; *“He is able to present us faultless, holy, without blame, before His Father with exceeding glory.”* No one else can do that.

Watch this; *“He is able to raise us from the dead.”* Let me tell you something; I hear fellows talking about their power to do different miracles. No one has ever been able to go out to the cemetery where a man has laid in the grave four days with his eyes dried up, his veins collapsed, and his lungs fallen in and say; *“Lazarus; come forth.”*

There has never been anyone able with his heart already decayed, his body already stinking, and saying in a loud voice; *“Lazarus come forth,”* and that man come out of the grave. That is power!

This is the immutable, infinite, power of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Head of the church and He is the only one who has that right and that power to say to the dead; *“Live.”*

Yet, let it be said that our Lord Jesus not only is the Head of the church but He is the Head of all things.” He is the absolute Monarch of this universe. The Scripture says, *“The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hands.”*

The Scripture also says, *“Thy throne O God is forever. Sit Thou on my right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.”*

In closing; I want you to listen carefully; *“God hath delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son,”* which is Christ. *“In*

whom we have redemption through His blood even the forgiveness of sin: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.”

“For by Him, by Christ, are all things created that are in heaven, that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or power. All things were created by Him, for Him, and He is before all things and by Him all things consist and He is the Head of the church.”

This is who we are talking about; the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the church. He has all authority; *“For by Him, and for Him, and through Him, were all things created and He is the Head of the church.”*