

The ***Blessings***
of
God's Grace

**An Exposition of
Paul's Epistle to
the Ephesians**

by Mathew Bartlett

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To all those who share in this same abounding grace.

"The abundance of grace" Romans 5:17

Foreword

Before his conversion, Saul of Tarsus made havoc of the Church of Jesus Christ, persecuting men and women to their deaths for the crime of being His followers. To Saul, following the despised Nazarene was a renunciation of the Jewish faith which he held so dear, and so was an offense to God. What the followers of Jesus suffered as a result of their beliefs was, to him, no more than the punishment which their their blasphemy meritted.

Saul had presided over the stoning of Stephen, the first recorded Christian martyr; an event which caused many new believers to scatter to foreign countries for fear of their lives. Yet Saul was so exceedingly zealous against the members of this "new sect" that he pursued them beyond the borders of Israel in order to bring them to justice.

On one such punitive expedition, he travelled to the Syrian capital Damascus with letters of authority from the chief priests at Jerusalem to arrest any followers of Jesus of Nazareth who were there and bring them to Jerusalem for trial. But whilst Saul was still on his way he was met by the risen Christ in person. The Lord Jesus revealed Himself to Saul with a glory which Saul later described as being "above the brightness of the sun", a glory which left Saul temporarily blinded. The Lord spoke to him with a voice that was audible even to his travelling companions, although they saw nothing. At first, Paul was amazed at the revelation. "Who are you Lord?" was his first question to the heavenly visitor. "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting," came the reply. Saul's conversion was complete as he recognised the risen Christ, believed in Him as Saviour and submitted his life henceforth to His absolute Lordship.

From that day onwards, Paul's heart overflowed with gratitude for the grace of God which brought him out of the darkness of spiritual ignorance into the glorious light of the knowledge of Christ. The theme of grace rings out again and again throughout his epistles, and no where more so than in Ephesians. Saul, once a sinner and an enemy of God was now reconciled, not by virtue of his own works, but by what God had done for him through Christ. By faith in the Lord Jesus, Saul had been forgiven and was able to take his place among God's redeemed people.

Some time after his conversion, Saul decided that this second (and Roman) name Paul was now more suited to his new life. The name Saul means "destroyer" and that is what he formerly was, whereas the name Paul means "worker" and this is certainly what he became. By the grace of God, Paul received a ministry from Christ something which he was always thankful for (1 Timothy 1:12) and something he always considered himself unworthy of. (Ephesians 3:8). With Paul we marvel together at the grace of God, which transforms the useless and unprofitable into valued servants of the King.

It was a similar experience of Divine grace which inspired the heart of Englishman John Newton. Before his conversion, Newton was a slave trader, a blasphemer and a self confessed rapist. After his encounter with God who saved him by His grace, Newton was forgiven, a changed man, a son of the King, serving God in the Anglican ministry and giving his own voice in support of the movement to abolish the slave trade. His experience of Divine grace inspired him to write the lines:

"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see."

As we ,with the help of God's Holy Spirit, carefully study the doctrines of His grace, we too will aspire to greater heights of worship and adoration to One who has "saved us by His grace".

Introduction

Authiorship and Date

The authorship of this epistle has never been called into serious doubt. Its author is Paul, formerly Saul the persecutor, who had been saved by the grace of God and called to be an aposlte. It was most probably written from Corinth in about 63 A.D.

Background

When Paul first came to Ephesus, he found a small group of twelve belivers who knew olny the baptismn of John. After further instruction from Paul, the new church at Ephesus was formed, and he became its spiritual father. On his return visit, Paul stayed for 18 months preaching the gospel in Ephesus, and from their the Word of God spread throughout the entire region of Asia. During this time, God did extraordinary miracles the hands of Paul to confirm the Word of His grace.

Such was the success and progress of the new faith in Asia that the metal smiths, who derived a large part of their wealth from idolatry, caused a riot in the city, their anger being motivated more by loss of profit than the "honor" of their "gods". The new church stood the test of persecution well, and continued to flourish after Paul's departure to Corinth. Paul's epistle conatins no direct rebukes, or corrections, but aims to build the believers up in the faith and the teachings of Jesus Christ - the very same thing he asked Timothy to do during his later stay at Ephesus.

Teh fact that Paul sent his young son in the faith, Timothy, by his own admission the best man he had in the ministry, to be its Pastor, is a clear in dication of his concern for the region, and an acknowledgement of teh fact that the city was of strategic importance for the Gospel, since from there, the Word of God impacted the whole of Asia minor. No doubt Paul anticiapted Ephesus to

provide an example for the other churches springing up over the region; a responsibility which they were later found to be falling short of. (See Revelation 2:1-8).

Content

As is the case with all Paul's writings, the epistle to the Ephesians is characteristically Christ centred. The name of Christ occurs no less than forty seven times and Paul's preferred description of believers as being, "in Christ", is an expression which occurs at least fourteen times.

Throughout the epistle Paul exalts the name and person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul begins his epistle by extolling God for the great things he has done for believers in Christ. He does so by contrasting what believers were outside of Christ (before their conversion) with what they are now "in Him". He reveals how God has provided His salvation by grace to every man and woman, irrespective of race, "Whether Jew or Gentile".

Although he had not known it at the time, Paul now understood that in his unconverted days he had been enslaved by sin and Satan, "*the prince of the power of the air*". By virtue of his union with Christ, he was set free from evil powers to walk in the power of the Spirit. Like a well armoured soldier God gave him the means of constant victory over all his spiritual enemies.

To Paul was revealed the mystery of the Church as the Body of Christ and the mystic union of Christ as Head of that Body, a union akin to that of a husband with his wife.

On the basis of his teaching, Paul proceeds with a characteristic application of the truth to his reader's lives. As usual, his applications take the reciprocal form.

He writes in effect, "since you are now in Christ" or "since Christ has done this for you", "so you must now.." For Paul, obedience was always a reciprocation flowing from our experience of the grace (undeserved favour) of God and not the meritorious means of our acceptance with Him.

Paul had great reason to give thanks to God. Having experienced God's grace in all its depth and fulness, God also revealed to him the inner secret of its working, the many faceted plan of grace which God had prepared before time began.

Though full of Christ centred teaching, the letter flows effortlessly from the highest doxology to the most practical of exhortations. Indeed the complex section of chapter five which compares the relationship of Christ with His Church to that of a husband and wife interchanges almost seamlessly from a lofty and worshipful declaration of Christ's pre-eminence to a practical lesson for married couples.

As with all Paul's epistles, that to the Ephesians is essentially pastoral in nature. In particular, Paul is careful to assure the believers of his ongoing prayers and personal concern. His comments reveal a weight of care for the church which, as he tells the Corinthians (2 *Corinthians 11:28*), remained at all times on his heart. Through his pastoral writings Paul seeks to build up the believers with spiritual teaching; encouraging and warning them with godly instruction and calming and soothing them with assurance of his constant love and prayers.

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Chapter 1

Ephesians 1 v 1 - 14: God's Eternal Purpose in Christ.

Greetings.

1. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus:

Paul had been chosen by God to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, that is a messenger or herald sent by Him, with the authority to preach in His name and to teach God's truth to His people. He addresses the Christians in Ephesus as "*saints*" or "*holy ones*", since they are among those who are chosen and set apart for God by faith in Jesus Christ.

They are "*faithful*" not only because they believed in Christ initially, but also because they were standing firm in their faith at the time of Paul's writing. Whilst the letter was originally intended for the Ephesian believers, its teaching applies to all Christians in every place throughout all time.

2. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul greets the believers, as his custom was, by stating his wish that the grace of God (His unmerited favour) and the peace of God (wholeness and spiritual rest) might be given them by God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ. (*1 Timothy 2:5*). At the very beginning of a letter which focusses on the grace of

God, Paul makes clear that there is but one Mediator between God and men. The Lord Jesus Christ is the unique channel through which the grace of God flows out to men. The apostle John writes that grace and truth have come to us *"through Jesus Christ."* (John 1:17).

The fact that God's grace is offered to man in the person of His Son was revealed by the angels, who announced that with His birth came, *"peace on earth, goodwill toward all men."*

It is because God loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son so that whoever believes and receives Him might experience the freely given, undeserved love and forgiveness which is implied by the word "grace."

Having finished his greeting, Paul, almost without pause, proceeds to show that through Christ we have received, *"grace upon grace"* (John 1:16) and, *"abundance of grace"*. (Romans 5:17).

Blessed with Every Blessing to the Praise of His Glory.

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

The giver of a gift is always greater than the gift. Since God is the source of all blessings He should be blessed and praised for what He has freely given to us - every blessing that there is - in Christ.

If His blessings are so great, and so freely given, how great and generous is God? His purpose in freely lavishing His blessings on us is that He might bring praise of the highest nature to "His glory" - that is, His person,

who He is, for God's glory is His own essential being and nature.

God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and all that God gives to us is *in* and *through* His Son, so that the Son may have the pre-eminence in all things. (*Colossians 1:18*). God has blessed us (given us a benefit, something for our good) with every spiritual blessing in Christ. God has not withheld one thing from us, but has invested all He has in His Son, so that to have the Son is to have all things. Christ is the fulness of God and we share His fulness. All that God is and has is ours in Christ. (*Colossians 2:9 - 10*).

The words "heavenly places" refer to the eternal and spiritual realm, where Christ now is, sitting at the right hand of God. Those who are in Christ share in all the blessings of His exalted position. God has, "raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (*Ephesians 2:6*).

As Bruce says,

"because Christ... is now exalted to the heavenly realms, those who are in Him belong to those heavenly realms too." F.F. Bruce

4. Just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.

A better rendering might be, "in love, He chose us before the foundation of the world.." Paul first tells us why God has showered these blessings on us: it is because He loves us. (*Romans 5:8*). God's love is the motive for all that He has done in bringing us the benefits listed in the following verses.

We have Been Chosen in Christ.

4a. Just as He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world...

Having established why the choice was made (because of His love for us) Paul next tells us how it was made - "before the foundation of the World". Before the world was formed, God had a plan for the salvation of mankind, and determined in Himself that whoever would receive His Son Jesus Christ would themselves receive full rights as His sons. Paul emphasises that our salvation, and the plan of it, find its root and origin in God. Since God Himself is eternal, His choice of us, based on His grace, is necessarily eternal. As Bruce puts it:

"So far as the personal experience of believers is concerned, their entry into the relationship described by the words "in Christ" took place when they were born from above... But from God's point of view it has no such temporal limitation." Bruce argues that since God is in eternity and is eternal, "those He chooses are objects of His eternal choice and that eternal choice is so completely bound up in the person of Christ that they are described as "in Christ" before the cosmos was made... Here is a mystery before which we do well to acknowledge our own limits of understanding."

We are Being Conformed to Christ.

4b,5. ...That we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, (NKJV™).

Before the world began, God chose us to be holy and without blame before Him. God has made the believer

holy once and for all in His sight through the death of Christ. (*Hebrews 10:10*). The words, "without blame" indicate the removal of all guilt, which again God has accomplished by Christ's sacrifice once and for all. (*Hebrews 9:14*).

However, God's purpose is also to change every believer into the likeness of His Son, that they might exhibit the practical fruits of holiness in their every day lives. The Scripture declares that God's will is for our entire sanctification, as expressed in *1 Thessalonians 5:23*, "may the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely," and in *1 Thessalonians 4:3*, "for this is the will of God, your sanctification." As Peter writes, "Be holy for I am holy." (REF).

So God continues His work of grace in our lives day by day, changing us into the likeness of His Son. This process will only reach its fulfilment when Jesus Christ comes again, and the bodies of dead believers are resurrected and those of living ones changed, and all shall "be like Him". This, ultimately, is what is meant by the phrase, "the adoption of sons", which literally means, "giving a son his place." (*Philippians 1:6* ; *1 John 3:2*).

As Bruce says, "Those in Christ must become like Christ in increasing measure here and in fulness thereafter."

*6. To the praise of His glorious grace that
He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.*

The eternal purpose God has for us in Christ shall be to the praise of His glorious grace. "The grace of God in redeeming the sinful children of Adam and adopting them as His own sons will be throughout eternity the most glorious theme of praise to His name." F.F. Bruce.

All God's blessings are bestowed on us freely, without any merit on our part, through the beloved Son. The words used in some translations, "*he has made us accepted in the beloved*" are better rendered in the New Revised Standard Version, quoted above. The verb used for "*accept*" is simply "*to grace*" or to "*favour by grace*". In other words, to bestow freely and without merit on our part. We receive *all* God's blessings, undeserved and unreservedly, when we receive *Christ*.

We are Redeemed and Forgiven in Christ.

7. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

"*We have redemption through His blood.*" Before we received Christ we were in slavery to sin, which results in death. (*Romans 6:23*). Under Old Testament law, in order to set a slave free, a ransom or redemption price had to be paid. When the ransom was paid, the slave belonged to the one who paid the price, who is then able to grant him freedom. Christ paid the price to set us free, with His own precious blood. (*1 Peter 3:18*). Since He did this for us, we now belong to Him, (*1 Corinthians 6:20*), and being His, we are free indeed. (*John 8:36*).

Although Christ has paid the redemption price for all men, only those who receive Him as Saviour will receive the benefit of what He has done and so be redeemed.

Redemption is the theme of the Old Testament book of Ruth. Ruth was a Moabitess who had married an Israelite before being widowed. As was the custom according to the law of Moses, Ruth the Moabitess was considered the property of her dead husband, and any claim made by a relative on the property had to include an offer of

marriage to Ruth. Only a near kinsman could redeem the land, and Ruth with it, to keep the property in the family line. Ruth and the property were redeemed by the wealthy and godly Boaz. Ruth's redemption resulted in her being forever part of the family and gave an enduring inheritance for her family line. It also brought her great joy and full assurance of her acceptance into the commonwealth of Israel. She is listed as one of the ancestors of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Similarly, Christ, by redeeming us, has given us an everlasting inheritance and made us unalterably part of God's family, that we might have the full rights of sons and the full assurance of belonging.

Ruth belonged, as a loved wife, not as a slave, to the one who bought her. So we belong to Christ, not as slaves, but as the loved bride of the heavenly bridegroom who gave His life's blood to redeem us. The believer is no longer a slave to sin. (*Romans 6:6*). Being redeemed by Christ, he is free to "*walk in newness of life.*" (*Romans 6:4*).

Forgiveness is a blessing which is closely linked with redemption, for as Jesus said in *Matthew 26:28*, "*This is My blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*" Both forgiveness and freedom from sin are granted to us freely in Christ by God's grace.

We Have an Understanding in Christ.

8,9. Which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,

God's grace has been freely lavished on us according to His wise and all knowing plan. This plan is called a "mystery" since it was not previously known to men, but only to God. Now, however, an understanding of this "mystery" has been given to God's people through the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:7 - 10).

God's purpose before the world began was to save men and women by Christ's death and resurrection, but only since this has happened can the gospel be preached so that all might believe and be saved.

10. That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him.

God has determined that His Son will be the ruler over all things in existence. To "gather together in one all things in Christ," sadly does not mean that all will be saved. Rather, that all things will be made subject to one head - Christ, who will be the absolute ruler over all.

Through the gospel, He is already putting this purpose into effect and it will be completed when the appointed time has come. Every time believers submit to Christ's lordship they are showing the present outworking of God's eternal purpose, which will only be fully realised when all the universe shall bow the knee and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. (Philippians 2:10 - 11).

We Belong to God in Christ.

11. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

Rather than "*we have obtained an inheritance*", the text may be read "*we have become God's inheritance*" - His own special possession. (*Deuteronomy 32:9*). As believers in Christ, we have been admitted to the community of God's chosen people.

From eternity God planned to take a people to be His own, out of every tribe and nation. This purpose is being fulfilled in Christ, so that whenever anyone believes in the Lord Jesus, they too become part of God's people.

And when God has decided to do something, all His wisdom, love and power combine to overrule events to achieve what He wishes to do. Even the sin of men can be turned by Him to serve His own purposes. In particular, that sin of sins, man's crucifixion of the Saviour, was overruled by God and made the means through which we can enter into God's blessings. (*Acts 2:23*).

12. That we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Those who "*first trusted*" or "*trusted before*" are not the first people ever to become Christians. Instead the reference is to those who believe God's word before seeing its fulfilment.

We have not yet seen the consummation of God's purpose, Christ ruling the universe as Lord of all, but have believed on Him as Lord and trusted Him as Saviour. Those who have accepted Christ by faith share His blessings now, and look forward to the day when they shall certainly share His glory. The fact that we shall be in heaven shall be "*to the praise of His glory*",

it will also be our unending joy and duty to set forth His glorious praise.

13,14. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

We became part of God's chosen people when we believed the Word of Truth, the gospel message which has brought us salvation. (*1 Corinthians 15:1 - 4*). Having been saved, we received from Christ the Holy Spirit, just as God had promised. An owner seals his property to mark it as his, so the fact that as believers we have received the Holy Spirit is a token that we belong to God.

The word "*earnest*" or "*guarantee*", used to describe the Holy Spirit, would in modern Greek be translated, "*an engagement ring*". The ring is the promise of the husband that at a certain time he will come to take the bride home as his wife. They have already agreed to belong to each other, but they have not yet entered into the fulness of their married relationship.

So God has given us the Holy Spirit as the sign that we are His and as the guarantee that Christ will come one day to take us to be with Himself that we may enter fully into all the blessings that are ours in Him. Not only shall we enter into His rest, but He shall take full possession and enjoyment of His own - His people who are "*to the praise of His glory*".

The fact that God will dwell among those He has redeemed by His precious blood; and that we are His and He is ours; will be the endless theme of our worship and

the cause of our highest praise of His most excellent being - His glory. (*Revelation 21:3*).

Chapter 2

Ephesians 1 v 15 - 23: Knowing God Better

In the previous chapter we saw how God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. By receiving Christ, we receive all these blessings with Him: we are redeemed, forgiven, chosen to belong to God and are being conformed to the image of His Son. Just as we share the privileged spiritual position enjoyed by the Ephesian believers, so the good things which Paul prays for the Ephesians to receive, God wants us to receive too.

Knowing God Better.

As Christians, we already have a relationship with God as our Father. We became His children when we received Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. (*John 1:12*). Paul's prayer is that we may grow to know God more fully and intimately.

15,16. Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:

Paul spent two years evangelising the whole of Asia Minor from his base in Ephesus. Paul did not personally visit all the villages of this region, but many of his converts did. In addition, many outstanding miracles were done during that time, word of which spread to the outlying regions of the province, so that Luke records "*God did extraordinary*

miracles through Paul, so that when the handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were brought to the sick, their diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them." (Acts 19:11 - 12).

As a result, many were converted and churches sprung up throughout the region. The work and witness of the new believers continued after Paul's departure, and many more converts were added to the church in his absence. Though Paul had never met these Christians, he had heard how the work was going on and that the new believers were standing firm in the faith. He continually thanked God for them and prayed for their spiritual growth. Even though as believers we are blessed with all spiritual blessings, we must continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:18).

*17. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of glory, may give to you the
spirit of wisdom and revelation in the
knowledge of Him,*

Paul asked God to give the believers "a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him". We know Christ as our Saviour, but God wants us to know Him more.

The natural mind is not able to understand the things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:14). Only our renewed spirits can have fellowship with God through His Son Jesus Christ. Only the Holy Spirit, who is God and who knows God fully, is able to reveal Him to us.

When Paul told the believers at Ephesus that he prayed for them to know God better, he meant to know Him personally, not just to know about Him. We cannot know God unless He chooses to make Himself known to

us. (*Matthew 16:16 - 17*). The action of God in choosing to make Himself known to us is called revelation. Wisdom is the insight which understands what is revealed. Through the wisdom of His Word and by the Holy Spirit, we can all "get better acquainted" with God.

18. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

Paul wanted the believers to understand what God had done for them. "*The hope of our calling*", is what God has done for us in our past, present and future. He chose in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be conformed to His image, and when we see Him we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is. (*1 John 3:2*).

"*The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints*" is a reference to both the glory that will be ours because we are saved, and the glory that will be His because He has saved us. God wants us to appreciate how great this glory shall be when He reveals us to the whole universe as His children, redeemed by His blood, sharing the image of Jesus - a community through whom He will be glorified throughout endless ages.

The Pre-eminence of Christ.

19,20. And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead...

We can know God because His power is at work in our lives - the power that raised Christ from the dead and exalted Him to the highest place in the universe.

Paul seems to struggle to find the words to adequately describe the power which sets us free from sin so that we may walk in newness of life. (*Romans 6:4*). Paul is not saying that since God had the power to raise Christ, He also has the power to save us. Rather it is by God's unique action of raising Christ from the dead that He has delivered us.

In chapter two Paul will tell us that God has made us alive spiritually. But chapter one tells us how this was accomplished: by the death, resurrection and exaltation of Christ. (*John 14:19*). When we receive Christ, we receive what He has already accomplished through His death, resurrection and exaltation.

Many were raised from the dead during Christ's ministry but they died again, since their nature was not changed in their resurrection. Christ's resurrection was of a different order, for by the glory of the Father He has been raised to eternal, immortal life, which only He could attain and has obtained. (Note: "*the glory of God*" is always a reference to His own Divine person and nature). Paul's point is that He did not obtain it for Himself alone, but also for us who believe in Him.

He was raised never to die again. (*Romans 6:9*).

He was raised with a spiritual body. (*1 Corinthians 15:44*).

He was raised as a life giving spirit. (*1 Corinthians 15:45*).

In this glorified state, as both God and man, He fills all things with His presence. (*Ephesians 4:10*).

20. ...And seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

The right hand of God signifies the place of highest honour and authority. Christ shares God's glory as the regent of His power. He rules with God, as God. The fact that Christ is sitting at the right hand of God demonstrates that Jesus Christ is Lord of all. (*Acts 2:36*).

21. 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.

The Lord Jesus Christ is not only above all, but far above all. The Redeemer has been given universal sovereignty. The name of Jesus is the highest name now and will never be equalled in future. (*Philippians 2:9 - 11*). Whatever powers there may in heaven, on earth, or in the coming age, they must all submit to His authority. (*Matthew 28:18*).

In *1 Corinthians 15:27 - 28* Paul gives one notable exception to this rule. When God has put all things in subjection to His Son, then shall the Son, in a voluntary act of humility, subject Himself to the Father, that "God may be all in all." Christ is absolute ruler with God, not without God. One might say that there is no hierarchy in the Godhead, but that through eternal love the Divine Persons submit to and delight in each other.

22. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church,

God has made Christ the supreme ruler of the universe, having put all things under His feet. (*Hebrews 2:8*) We are

yet to see Him fully demonstrate His authority in the world, but we know that He will one day take up His power and reign. (*Revelation 11:17*).

In the scope of His universal rule, His relationship with the Church is unique. For to us He is the Head, and we are His Body; His life is our life. We depend on Him and owe all to Him, a relationship which Paul, in chapter five, compares to that of a husband and wife, since "*it expresses a vital unity.*" (*Bruce*).

Christ is head over all creation, but not one with it. He is Head of the Church and one with it. Notice that Christ is the Head over *all things* to the Church. Just as the wife has no right to make a decision independently of her husband, nor can the Church make its own plans without Christ. As "head over all things" He is interested in every detail of what happens in His Church. Whether we preach the Word or clean our local church building, Christ takes a personal interest in all we do to serve Him. That is why we are admonished:

"and whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men." (*Colossians 3:23 NKJV™*).

23. which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Believers share the fulness of the One who is fully God, who fills all things with His presence. Although He is at this time sat at the right hand of God, the omnipresent (present everywhere at once) Christ resides in all His fulness within His Church and that Church exists entirely "*in Him*".