Ephesians 1:22-23

Christs' Power Over the Fall of Man

Sermon

In the book of Ephesians, Paul is writing about massive "things", cosmic "things". Things in heaven, things on earth. We need to see these ***"things"*** as Paul sees them, with the biblical lens through which Paul is writing about them. Otherwise, we could miss the trail that he is taking us on. He's been writing about massive topics: Our spiritual blessings in heavenly places in union with Christ. The Father as the architect, the Son as the one who accomplishes the plan, the Holy Spirit as the one who applies all the Father decrees and the Son accomplishes by putting us in UNION with Jesus. We've seen in Paul's prayer the δυναμις, Power of God seated through a Davidic King who is over every evil rule, authority, power, dominion, and every name to be named. Now this morning - A risen Lord who is seated in heavenly places – His head, and His feet, and His body all demonstrate how everything in the universe is being reconciled through Him. Everything that is out of order in the universe, is being reordered through Jesus ***and His church*** – All things.

This phrase – "all things" - is very important in Ephesians. It's used three times in these two verses. The first time it's used helps us to understand what Paul means by it. It's in the thesis of this heavenly dissertation written by Paul in 1:9-10. God, in Christ, is…

> **Making known to us the mystery of His will, according to his purpose, which He set forth in Christ As a plan for the fullness of time to unite ["to sum up" - through reconciling, through reordering, through restoring, through filling] *all things* in Him, *things* in heaven, *things* on earth" (1:10)**

These "things"…all of them…have been turned upside down through the fall. God is turning them right side up through Christ. Notice in vv.22-23 which we just read how the seated Jesus is now ruling over all things, and filling all things through the church:

> **And He** [the Father] put ***all things*** under His feet and gave Him as head over ***all things*** to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills ***all in all*** [or ***all things*** in ***all places]*** **(Eph. 1:22-23)**

Jesus is ruling over all things, Jesus is head of all things, Jesus is filling all things.

1. ***Jesus is ruling with all things under His feet.***
2. ***Jesus is reordering all things as the Head***
3. ***Jesus is filling all things through His body***

Let's look at each of these together..

1. Jesus is ruling with all things under His feet

Paul is praying, and he wants the Ephesians to know, that the Father has "put all things under the feet" of Jesus. This is a significant phrase. The word for "put…under" is the same word translated as "to

put in subjection" or in other places as "to put into submission". It could be literally translated "He subjected all things" or "He put all things into submission under His feet."

Now Paul, being a good Jew, doesn't pull this phrase from thin air. He thinks about things through the lens of the OT. Paul is probably alluding to Psalm 8 where David is marveling at the amazing privilege of man, Adam, to be given dominion over all things by God.

> **You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have *put all things under his feet*. (Psalm 8:6)**

God created man, Adam, and gave him a mandate: "***Be fruitful*** and ***multiply*** and ***fill the earth*** and ***subdue it***" (Gen. 1:28). Adam was to be in subjection to the Father, and all things were meant to be in subjection to Adam. And Adam, with Eve by his side, was to fill the earth with the glory of God through His offspring. An entire race under God and intended to glorify God upon the earth.

Adam and Eve failed. They sinned in the garden, they fell, and all hell broke loose. Now "all things" are no longer under the feet of Adam, and Satan in a very real way became the ruler over all things. Jesus called him the ruler of this world (John 14:30), Paul called him the "god of this age" (2 Cor. 4:4). But God had a plan. A plan to reconcile all things. One day a seed would come from Eve, a perfect man, a Second Man, who would crush the head of Satan (Gen. 3:15). This ***seed promise*** is fulfilled in Jesus, who is now seated with all things put in subjection under His feet.

The writer of Hebrews, who also quotes Psalm 8, puts it this way:

> **Now in putting everything in subjection to him** [to Adam], **he left nothing outside his control.** [Adam was given the mandate by God to rule over all things] At **present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him** [the fall stripped this authority from man, and turned everything upside down – FALLEN WORLD!]. [9] **But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus** [Jesus, had to become fully man, in order that He could become the Second Adam], **crowned with glory and honor (Heb. 2:8-9)**

Jesus, the perfect man, the Second Adam, has succeeded where Adam has failed. Jesus is called the Second Adam in Scripture, because He is the perfect man and He is the fulfillment of all that our first father, Adam was given charge to do, but failed to do.

The fall brought the dominion of Satan, the dominion of sin, the dominion of death, the dominion of a world at war. In Genesis we see the fallout of this as there is murder, and curse upon curse, and wickedness, and a flood, and in Genesis 11 the people are dispersed (a big problem for which Ephesians is the solution), no longer united – which results in a world at war with God, with one another, and with Satan at the helm…and all along the way we see a genealogy of "death"…over and over a name is given, and the death sentence comes, "and he died". These genealogies teach us something…Sin leads to death! The sentence of death goes on and on. But within that genealogy, there is also a specific thread where the mandate to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth is restated over and over through God's people. The seed is promised and the line is established beginning in Genesis and leading right up to the New Testament that shows the line of the promised seed to come and it runs right into Jesus. Now, Jesus is ruling and reigning with all things under His feet.

2. Jesus is reordering all things as the Head

Paul writes that the Father "gave him as head over all things to the church" (1:22)

The word "head" is a subject of much debate. Some today want to say that the idea of headship is not about "authority" and "order" but about "source". But here, and elsewhere, it is clearly about authority. The Bible consistently uses the word "head" as either the physical head, or as "authority". Here is an example:

> **But I want you to understand that the *head* of every man is Christ, the *head* of a wife is her husband, and the *head* of Christ is God. (1 Corinthians 11:3)**

God has a specific order within "all things"…even within the Trinity. Notice that Christ has a "head", God the Father is the head of Christ. This shows that "headship" does not in any way diminish the value of the individual – Christ is fully God even as the Father is fully God – rather, headship has to do with authority and order. God is a God of order, and He has established order in the universe for a reason.

God's order originally looked like this:

Original Order: God → Man → Woman → earth/dust/animal kingdom (serpent)

God was to be over man, man was to be the head over woman, both man and woman were to rule over the earth and the animal Kingdom. However, the fall spun everything out of control and out of order. All things are out of order! Headship…authority…order has been turned upside down.

Fallen Order: God → Satan (serpent) → earth/dust → Woman/Man

Notice that God is still in control. God has never lost control! But Satan has now gained control over humanity in a real way. It's significant that Satan uses the form of an animal and even more significant is that he comes to tempt Eve. If he can disrupt the order and get the man to follow the woman and both of them to follow the serpent and disobey God – everything will fall apart. His plan works, Eve gives in to his temptation, but Adam is held responsible who is there with her and instead of protecting and leading his wife, he follows her and lets her lead and everything falls apart.

Brothers and sisters….LOVE THE ORDER THAT GOD HAS GIVEN. The world today wants to throw out order, the world today wants to throw out distinctions and roles. The world today wants to throw out authority. LOVE THE ORDER THAT GOD HAS GIVEN…it's for a reason!

Rather than the man subduing, working, and ruling over the earth, the dust, man is subdued by the dust:

> **By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return. (Gen. 3:19)**

Everywhere you see a gravesite, you are literally seeing the "dust" that man was to rule over, ruling over man.

Also, Rather than the woman being led by the man and the man ***lovingly, and sacrificially*** leading his wife. Her tendency is to rule over Him and His tendency is to then forcefully rule over her. Men, are you lovingly, sacrificially leading your wives? Ladies, are you lovingly submitting to your husbands and seeing that you respect them and the authority that God has given to them? There is a very real power struggle

in marriage, and it goes all the way back to the fall of Adam and Eve – Paul in Eph. 5 will show this order in marriage restored as the man is the head of the woman and both are under Christ. Notice the sinful tendency of the woman in Gen. 3:16:

> **Your desire shall be contrary to your husband [in 4:7 the same words are used by God to warn Cain of the sin that is trying to gain control over him…so the idea is that the woman will now be tempted to usurp the control over her husband] , but he shall rule over you. (Gen. 3:16)**

The order has been turned upside down because of the fall. Christ has now restored order as the "head of all things".

Restored Order: God → The Second Adam → Man → woman → earth/dust/animal kingdom (Satan)

This restored order is not fully realized yet, but when the Second Adam returns He will put His feet upon the earth and rule over all things on the earth. Order and harmony and TRUE PEACE will be brought to this earth and into eternity.

3. Jesus is filling all things through His Body

God is reconciling all things – things in heaven, and things on the earth. How does He bring about that reconciliation? Jesus is seated in Heaven. What *means* does He use to bring about the filling of all things? Here we see that the body of Christ is a vehicle, a means, through which Jesus fills all things that have been broken. Adam was to fill the earth…the church, the body of the Second Adam is now to fill the earth.

Look at 1:22-23 – "**and He gave Him as head over all things to the church, [23] which is his body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all**." (head over "all things to the church" is probably better translated, "for the sake of" or as the NLT says, "head over all things *for the benefit* of the church". For the benefit of the churches mission to fill all things. The church has been passed the baton. It is raised and seated with Christ. The church is over all things with Christ as His body. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. We are now the vehicle through which all things are healed)

This is a difficult phrase, but it's powerful, and it sets the stage for the rest of the book of Ephesians. We will be coming back to this phrase often. Let's take it bite by bite: Thinking caps on…

Notice that Jesus is depicted as "Him who fills all in all". It is better translated as "Him who fills all things in all places". Jesus is the plan of God, who unites, reconciles, restores, reorders….all things – things in heaven, things on earth. This reconciliation is here depicted as "filling". He fills all things – this idea of filling is used all throughout the OT to speak of God filling His temple, and the future promise of God filling all the earth with His glory. Passage after passage. Adam was meant to fill the earth…the Second Adam, Jesus FILLS ALL THINGS…not just on earth, but in heaven as well. So Jesus is "Him who fills all things in all places".

Notice that the Church is first mentioned here in Ephesians, but it becomes a massive topic in Ephesians. This verse, is the key to unlocking how Paul views and discusses the church in the entire book of Ephesians. The church here is seen as the MEANS through which Christ fill all things – things in heaven and things on earth. Jesus is the fullness of God in bodily form (Col. 2:9-10). Here, Jesus puts all things under His feet, establishes His headship over all things…and now fills the church, His body, with His fullness, and its through the filled, full, church, His body, that Christ fills all things in all places.

Sounds like a Dr. Seuss book – "he filled the church, and the full church fills all things through the one who filled it."! There is a reason why Paul writes it this way…because in Greek it's a beautiful alliteration of "P's"…I just want you to hear it: τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν πληρουμένου. Paul was a masterful communicator. What does it mean?

To tie this back to the thesis in 1:10 – God has established a plan "to unite all things in Him, things in heaven, things on the earth." The church, in Ephesians, is the *means* by which this reconciliation of all things happens. The Church is the vehicle through which the rule and reign of Christ fills, reconciles, reorders, unites all things that have been wrecked through the fall.

Here's the application: You and I are to fill the earth with the glory of God as Christ fills us. Christ fills us, for us to spill over onto the world around us. As ministers of reconciliation – both to God and to man. Through the message of the cross that we bear. With armor fitted on, with Christ as our Captain. With the power that Christ has given. An army of love and reconciliation that heals all of the pain and sorrow and discouragement and fear in the world around us. With love and joy in our hearts. Trials on every side, yet being renewed day by day in the inner being. EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY, YOU AND I NEED TO BE FILLED SO THAT WE CAN SPILL OVER ONTO THE WORLD AROUND US.

This is a glorious, humbling depiction of the church! We're going to see this in many, many verses to come as the church filling all things (heavenly, and earthly) is really the grand picture that Paul wants to give to Ephesus. I was tempted to scan for you verses to come but my wife lovingly stopped me and said, "no Brian, that's too much!" So for now in closing, here the lyrics of the song: O Church Arise because I swear its taken right out from Ephesians and gives this glorious picture of the Church of Jesus Christ filling all things:

O, church arise and put your armor on
Hear the call of Christ our captain
For now the weak can say that they are strong
In the strength that God has given

With shield of faith and belt of truth
We'll stand against the devil's lies
An army bold whose battle cry is love
Reaching out to those in darkness

Our call to war, to love the captive soul,
But to rage against the captor
And with the sword that makes the wounded whole
We will fight with faith and valor

When faced with trials on ev'ry side,
We know the outcome is secure,
And Christ will have the prize for which He died
An inheritance of nations

Come, see the cross where love and mercy meet,
As the Son of God is stricken

Then see His foes lie crushed beneath His feet,
For the Conqueror has risen

And as the stone is rolled away,
And Christ emerges from the grave,
This vict'ry march continues till the day
Ev'ry eye and heart will see Him

So Spirit, come, put strength in ev'ry stride,
Give grace for ev'ry hurdle,
That we may run with faith to win the prize
Of a servant good and faithful

As saints of old still line the way,
Retelling triumphs of His grace,
We hear their calls and hunger for the day
When, with Christ, we stand in glory