

The Glory of God in the Church

by Eryl Davies

The sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing God and the means by which we can know him, including the Bible and the Holy Spirit, and the role of prayer in accomplishing God's purposes.

Duration: 56:39

Scripture: Ephesians 1:15

Topics: "Glory Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of discipline in the Christian life. He mentions the examples of George Whitfield and John Wesley, who divided their days into specific time slots for sleep, work, prayer, and Bible reading. The speaker also shares a personal story of a Pentecostal pastor who decided to devote his late evening TV time to God and prayer, resulting in blessings for him and his family. The sermon then shifts to the topic of salvation and the transformation that occurs in a person's heart when they become a Christian. The speaker recounts a conversation with a man who recently became a believer after reading John 3:16 and experiencing conviction and a longing to know God.

Transcript

in that true spirit of worship. Let us turn to the Word of God. Our reading this morning is in Ephesians chapter 1. We read from verse 15 to the end of the chapter.

Let's hear the Word of God together. 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, 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. 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, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power towards us who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 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.

And he put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. May the Lord apply his word to our hearts and our lives with power. I'm very happy this morning publicly to endorse the two appointments within the EMW.

I'm delighted that Peter Hallam, the small man, is my colleague down the corridor. We get on well together, and it is a joy and a delight to fellowship with him, to liaise with him, and I trust that he will continue to be well used in the office as Chief Administrator, as the boss, as I call him. I also endorse the appointment of Stuart Elyot.

The college has given him a free transfer. We haven't had a record transfer fee at all, but the free transfer is a happy one because the condition is that he plays some home games for us, and an occasional away game. So we're delighted that he will be able to contribute to the teaching programme and the preparation of preachers, particularly as we are expanding that provision during the coming months.

I'm very happy of the appointment because it will help further to express the unity of God's people. Any appointment, any development that expresses the unity of the Lord's people must be welcomed. And I trust, not just between the college and the movement, but amongst Christians generally in Wales, and further afield, that this appointment will manifest, encourage and foster genuine fellowship and unity amongst the Lord's people.

I think too we must remember that the work of God is always much bigger than any small area of the work that we're involved in. Sometimes we can be guilty of tunnel vision. Imagine that the work of God is confined to our little organisation.

But God's work is much bigger, much more important than our own little area of activity. Therefore, in that, Stuart is being set apart to a wider work, and I trust wider than the EMW. I trust that God will bless and use him.

Let's turn now to the Word of God. Paul's letter to the Ephesians. We are considering this morning the glory of God in and on behalf of the church in verses 15 to 23.

The little word, therefore, which begins verse 15, is extremely important. So notice it. It points you back to the blessings which God has blessed us with in Jesus Christ.

These glorious blessings include election, predestination to adoption, redemption, forgiveness of sins, the making known of the mystery of God's will, the cosmic renewal of the universe, and also the sealing of the Spirit as a guarantee of our glorious inheritance. These are great and glorious blessings with which God has blessed us in Christ, and these are the privilege of all believers in him. Now from praise to God, in verses 3 to 14, the apostle now turns to thanksgiving in verses 15 and 16.

And then he turns to specific prayer for the Ephesian Christians in verses 17 to 23. It's essentially a prayer for the spiritual progress and development of these Christians. Christians are expected to grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, in their understanding of the truth as God has revealed it.

And so the apostle is praying for these believers. Once again in the Greek text, this is a single unbroken sentence from verse 15 down to verse 23, consisting of 169 words this time. But throughout the long sentence, the glory of God is prominent, particularly as it is manifested in and on behalf of his church.

Now before considering the prayer in detail, I want to ask two basic questions very quickly. These are questions which some of us are asking this week. The first question relates to the apostle's thanksgiving in verses 15 and 16 for the Ephesian Christians.

The question is a basic one. What is a Christian? It's the most important question you can ask. I remember being asked this question in Romania, in a very small village out in the countryside.

I was there for the best part of two days preaching in a very small Baptist church in the evening, just about 15 members. The small church persecuted fiercely by the local Orthodox priests and his members. These believers were suffering because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the preaching service, I knew a few unbelievers were present. After the service, we all went to the home of one lady, one couple. This was a very special occasion because the husband had recently professed faith.

He had been one of the active leaders of the Orthodox church, who along with the priest had been persecuting these believers and even giving his wife and children a very difficult time. It was the first time that they'd ever held a fellowship meeting in their home. So I gave greetings.

They wanted to know a little bit about me. As I told them how I became a Christian, they began to give their testimonies. When it came to the turn of the man living in this house, he said, I think I'm a Christian now.

But his face was beaming. He explained he had recently watched a baptismal service in the river. He'd heard some testimonies.

He knew what his wife believed and his two children. About a month previously, he'd been reading New Testament, unknown to the family, and John 3.16 had spoken powerfully to him. After reading that verse, he came under a measure of conviction.

He then asked me the question, do you think I'm a Christian? What is a Christian? He went on to say. I threw the question back at him. Well, tell me what's happened to you? Three things he said have stuck in my mind.

One thing he said, I knew they were right, pointing to these Christians. I had to agree with them in the end. What they said about God, about the Lord Jesus Christ, about sin, about believing, repenting, I knew they were right.

And that's a vital element in saving faith. Knowledge. Knowledge of the Word of God.

Knowledge basically about God, about his Son, about our sin, the way of salvation, trusting in Jesus Christ who bore our sin. Then he said, I had a longing. I looked at my family, I looked at these Christians.

I was aware of my sin and my danger, and I longed to know what they knew. I was jealous of them. There was conviction, there was thirst, there was hunger, a longing.

It's another vital element in saving faith. Then he told me, I ran. I didn't know what he meant.

I ran to the fields, he said, to find Jesus. Tomorrow morning I'll show you in the field where I went. I didn't want to be with Christians.

I wanted to find Jesus. Out there in the fields, I prayed and I found Jesus Christ and I trusted in him. That is saving faith.

It's what the Apostle refers to in verse 15. After I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Saving faith rests upon the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is a running, a going to him. Not just knowing about him, not admiring him, but going to him. Resting upon him and trusting in him.

After hearing this, I used a number of New Testament texts to encourage him. And verse 15 here was one of them. And I underlined the fact, your love for all the saints as an evidence of being a Christian.

He stopped me. Yes, he said, I love these Christians and he went round them one by one. He named them.

I love you. I love you. Forgive me for what I've done to you, but I love you.

The evidence of grace is love to God's people. And so the Apostle Paul rightly, hearing of the faith and knowing of the faith of these Ephesian Christians, thanks God for them. It's God's work.

He's regenerated them and he's given them the grace of faith. The fruit of the Spirit is evident in their lives. I do not cease to give thanks for you.

Second question concerns the prayer which follows in verses 17 onwards. Why pray if God is sovereign? If God chooses the elect and does as he pleases in the world, what's the point of the Christian praying? Well, God decrees all things. Nothing happens by chance, by coincidence.

We're not governed by fate. It's not the movement of stars, as astrologists tell us. The world is governed by God, by a personal living God.

History is the outworking of his eternal decrees. But the sovereign God who has decreed all things has decreed the means by which he will accomplish his purposes. This is not fatalism.

God has chosen the means by which people will be saved, the means by which Christians will grow. He's chosen prayer. He's chosen witnessing on the part of his people.

The Bible, the Word of God, the reading and the preaching of the Word. The holy living of God's people. The diligent use of the means of grace in the church, the fellowship of his people.

These are the means which God has chosen and through which he will work and he will bless them. And so God gives us the privilege of accomplishing his purposes in and through his people. A young Calvinist Baptist pastor in 1785 in a small Northampton village of Moulton.

You all know his name, I'm sure. In order to support his family, he taught in a local school and he also made shoes. But he was a great man of prayer.

He had a passion for preaching the gospel. Oh, he believed in election, predestination. Sometimes when teaching the children in the school in the geography lesson, he would point to certain countries and islands and say to the children, these are pagans, pagans.

Tears streaming down his face. A burden, a passion for the lost. And he prayed for them.

In 1793 he sailed with his wife and four children for India. William Carey knew that God sovereignly decreed all things. But he has appointed the means by which people will come to faith.

He was to go and to preach the word. I remember a moving occasion when a missionary friend with whom I had some banter sometimes because he was a very strong Arminian. And he was describing a visit he'd made to a village and a village he believed that had never seen a missionary or had a Christian visit that village before.

He believed that he and his colleague were the first Christians to take the gospel to that people. As soon as they arrived in the village, his colleague with him was a doctor. They were appointed to an old lady who was dying.

And he told me that before they could actually witness to this old lady, she died in the arms of the doctor. And he said, I wept and I wept and I wept. He turned to me and said, but Errol, you are a Calvinist, aren't you? And you wouldn't cry.

I rebuked him. We may give this impression to people and we can be cold and indifferent, but the Christian who knows God's electing grace, the wonders of Calvary, the love of Christ constraining him, weeps for sinners, longs to see them converted. And so the Apostle Paul here is doing something which is within the revealed will of God.

He's praying for the believers. He wants them to grow, grow in their understanding of the truth. He wants them to know God better.

He wants them to be encouraged. He doesn't just sit back and leave them to God to do it. He knows that God is involving him in praying for these Christians.

Some of us Christian friends with our Orthodox theology tend to be fatalistic. Theologically, we may know it. But in practice, we just leave it as if it will inevitably happen.

But God involves his people in accomplishing his means, his ends. And you must repent of any hard, callous attitude, any failure to respond to the right use of the means which God has appointed to accomplish his purposes. And if you are neglecting the means of grace in the church, you must put it right.

If you are neglecting to pray for Christians, repent of it. If you are not reading the Bible and fellowshiping with his people, you are dishonoring God. Well, after thanking God for these Ephesian Christians, the Apostle proceeds to pray for them.

There are three requests I want to mention as briefly as possible. First one, verses 17 to 18, that they should know God better. He first describes the God to whom he is making this request in verse 17.

The God of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's a lovely description. It's as if the Apostle is saying, Lord, God, I know you.

You've loved me from eternity. You've chosen me. You've given your Son to die for me.

The God of our Lord Jesus Christ. I remember visiting a hospital, very eager to get into a particular ward to see a patient. And the ward sister insisted, it was outside visiting hours, but she insisted that even as a pastor, I could not go and see that patient.

When a ward sister tells you that, you have to listen. And so disappointedly, I turned around and began to walk away from her office. And then suddenly, providentially, the medical consultant was walking down the corridor towards the sister's office, towards me.

I knew him well. He greeted me, a personal name. We chatted.

And then he said to me, well, who do you want to see? What are you doing on this ward? And I explained. And he turned to the sister and said, Sister, it's all right for my friend to see this patient. Yes, she said.

So I turned to the sister, perhaps you will take my friend and show him where patient X is. And when my friend is finished, he said, the three of us will have a cup of tea in your office. I didn't take that up at the end, I must admit.

But I knew him. I knew the man at the top, if you like. It's almost, in a much more wonderful way, it's as if the Apostle is saying, God, the Father, who loves me, who loves his people, who has chosen us, who has predestined us to adoption, who has given his Son, and for whom the Lord Jesus Christ has died, I'm praying to you, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And then he describes him as the Father of Glory. I believe the description functions in two ways in this verse. First to express worship, but also to express a spirit of expectancy.

It obviously expresses an attitude of worship because the term glory refers to what God is in all his essential perfections and beauty. God is unutterably and inexpressibly glorious and perfect in his essential being. He is the Father of Glory.

But this attitude of awe and worship also expresses an attitude of expectancy. It's this God of Glory, Stephen says in Acts 7 verse 2, who appeared to our Father Abraham. The God of Glory appeared, manifested himself, dealt with our Father Abraham.

Here is the God who reveals himself to his covenant people. The God who unveils his character, shows his will, extends his grace. And now the Apostle is praying to him.

Oh God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, I want you to manifest yourself. I want you to have more dealings with these Ephesian Christians. Notice what the request is in verse 17.

The Father of Glory may give to the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. Real knowledge, genuine knowledge, certain knowledge, accurate, reliable knowledge about God. But including experimental knowledge, knowing God himself.

Isn't this what Christianity is all about? Our Lord Jesus in John 17 verse 3 tells us, this is eternal life that they may know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you sent. In Ephesians 2 verse 18, Paul tells us for through him we both have access by one spirit to the Father. Our broken relationship with God has been restored in and through Jesus Christ.

Christ introduces us to the Father, ushers us into his presence. And our privilege as Christians is to know God. And Paul is praying that they will know him better and better and better and better.

It's Paul's prayer in Colossians 1. There's a close affinity between Ephesians and Colossians. In verse 10 of Colossians 1, Paul speaks of increasing in the knowledge of God. But how can we know God better? There are lots of different, strange answers today.

What you need, some tell us, you need a weekend away to get the spirit. You'll come back a different person. Or you need to go to one of the North American airport churches and get slain.

Or you need to go to that exciting church in your locality with fabulous worship and music, miracles. Or you need to go to one of those centers in the UK where every part of the building is anointed with oil, every part of it. When anyone goes inside that anointed building, things happen.

That's in the current magazine of this organization. And I wonder people are confused. How can I know God better? That should be the cry and the longing of each Christian.

Simply there are two requirements, the Bible and the Holy Spirit. The Bible, this is God's revelation of himself. He's unveiled himself, his character, his purpose to us through the prophets and apostles and supremely in his Son.

Do you want to know God? Well, you must come back to the Bible. You must read it. You must meditate.

Are you longing to know fellowship with him? To catch new glimpses of his character and his glorious purposes? Come to the Bible. It's God's book. He's the author.

God breathed out this through the teachings and even the very words of the Bible. So the prophets and apostles spoke and wrote what God was revealing. So here is wisdom, the wisdom of God.

It's knowledge from God which can make us wise unto salvation and which equips us to live our Christian lives. And where we can see God revealed. But notice how Paul expresses this prayer.

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. He's not asking for extra biblical new revelation but rather fresh understanding, insight into what God has already revealed in the Bible. And verse 18 confirms this.

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened. The perfect sense is used. Conveying a sense of a completed action which has a continuing impact and force.

Illumination has come to us in new birth and conversion. There's been a decisive change in chapter 4 verse 18. Paul tells the Ephesians that they were darkened in their understanding.

Unable to see the truth. In chapter 5 verse 8 of Ephesians, he says, once you were darkness but now are you light in the Lord. So the inner disposition of the heart is changed in the miracle of regeneration.

So the eyes of our heart or understanding are opened. I remember Christians years ago always saying or asking the question, have you seen the light? This is what they meant. Their eyes have been opened.

The miracle of new birth has taken place. They can now see the glory of God, the way of salvation in Jesus Christ. But that's just the beginning.

We need the Holy Spirit to open the word more and more to us, to reveal more of the Lord to us. And in the word, by the operation of the Spirit of God, to be able to experience God and to know him intimately. So the prayer request is that believers will be given ability and grace to see the Lord, to discern, to understand, receive what is revealed in the scripture.

It's the work of the Spirit to do this. To give us a growing supply of wisdom, of clear knowledge. To be able to see the real meaning of the gospel.

To have clearer views of the glory of God. To be humble, to have a sense of amazement. The word is the means through which we come to know him better and better by the Spirit.

To know God better. That's his prayer. It should be our prayer.

Practical hints? Well, read and use your Bible well. Treasure it. Pray.

This is what Paul is doing here. Spend time in the presence of God. Get to know him on your knees.

And as you pray and read your Bible, ask God to illumine your minds by the Spirit of God. Discipline yourself in your use of time. George Whitefield used to divide his day into three parts.

He said 8 hours sleep, 8 hours work, 8 hours prayer and Bible study. John Wesley, very disciplined having his 2 hours of prayer in the morning. But he was disciplined in going to bed on time as well.

Remember that Pentecostal pastor who was convicted of the time he spent watching television and he covenanted before God that the time he spent in the late evening watching television he would devote to God and to prayer. God blessed him. God met with him.

We need discipline. Using the word. Praying.

Looking to God the Spirit to work in the word to bring us to know him better. But secondly, notice the request in verse 18 that we should know the hope to which we are called. This little word call in verse 18 may have lots of associations with possibly a parent thinking of a young child playing and then runs further and further away from the parent.

You call and call and call. The child ignores the call. You probably know the experience of having to run for all you're worth to catch the child up and forcefully pick it up, bring it back.

And God is calling people, sinners everywhere in the gospel. It's the general invitation. Many people as they hear the call ignore it and they go further and further and further away from God.

But usually in the New Testament this word call or called carries a much stronger meaning. God actually bringing the person he calls, invites, but with the call he actually brings the sinner. So Romans 8 verse 30 Paul writes whom he predestinated, these he also called.

Whom he called, these he also justified. 1 Corinthians 1 verse 9 God is faithful by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. It's God's work.

It's powerful. It's irresistible. It's effective.

And apart from that mighty effectual call by God, no one would ever come and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. God brings us. We often struggle and fight and resist, but in bringing us and in calling us effectually, the miracle of regeneration takes place inwardly in us.

And we embrace and we yield and submit to God's irresistible call. And God brings us into union and fellowship with Jesus Christ. God's power, God's grace does it.

And so the people of God appreciate and anticipate the hope which lies ahead of them. There's a glorious future. I do believe that the Apostle is referring to heaven here.

I think the close link between Ephesians and Colossians, for example, confirms this. In Colossians 1 verse 5 the Apostle speaks of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Believers can look forward to future glory.

The Apostle could say that absent from the body, present with the Lord. In Philippians 1 he says, I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better. To be with Christ which is far better than living here as a believer.

There's a very moving story of a lady in her early 60s living near Betta Sequoia in North Wales. Around about 1860, there had been a very powerful work of God's Spirit in revival. And this lady was a godly woman, very prayerful.

She'd been well used in the village to bear testimony to Christ. But she was very ill and she was thought to be dying. She had a longing to be with Christ.

And the local doctor called to see her this particular day. And just after he left, the pastor went to see this lady. And she was crying bitterly, sobbing and sobbing her heart out.

And the pastor assumed that the doctor had given her the most awful news. You're going to die then soon, said the pastor. Well that's the problem, she said.

The doctor has told me I may not die. And I'm longing that I'll be with the Lord in heaven before next Sunday. In anticipation of glory, being with Christ.

And often as Christians we're so earthbound, so worldly. Money, houses, things mean so much to us. Heaven is a kind of appendix.

Postpone it for as long as possible in the New Testament. The believers anticipated, looked forward to it. They couldn't wait to get there.

Heaven is to be with the Lord, to be in His immediate presence. Heaven is to see the Lord. 1 John 3, 2, We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

We see Him in creation, His glory. We see Him revealed in the Word. We see Him reflected in His people.

But we're going to see Him face to face. Heaven is home. In my Father's house are many mansions, says our Lord Jesus.

It belongs to Him. He's going to prepare a place for us. And I believe that in the rest of verse 18, the Apostle goes on further to describe heaven.

I'm aware that some understand this as referring to God's possession of His people and their privileges. But Paul has the habit of continuing and piling up a description or words describing the same theme. The word inheritance, the people of God, appears in verse 11, for example, and suggests this interpretation.

And after mentioning general terms, the hope, perhaps here he's spelling it out, the riches of the glory of His inheritance among the saints. It's a corporate privilege. All God's people will inherit glory.

It's a rich and a glorious inheritance. John Bunyan died in 1688. And some historians believe that what he writes of Mr. Stanfust and part two of his Pilgrim's Progress was really reflecting his own dying.

Remember where he says there, I'm going now to see that head that was crowned with thorns. I'm going to see that face that was spit upon for me. This thought, I'm going to see my Savior.

I'm going to this better country. I shall be with Christ. I shall see Him and enjoy Him.

We're going to be there with the saints, with all the saints one day. All the elect will be safely gathered in. It's going to be international.

Not one Christian will be lost. We'll all be together. We won't be there just for a week.

We'll be there for eternity. The Lord will be there in the middle. No Bible is needed, no prayer meetings, no preachers, no chief administrators there, no encouragers of pastors.

No Lord's Supper there. Heaven is glorious. There'll be no division.

Some of you have been telling me of difficulties in your churches and people leaving and quarreling. I can't grasp it but we're going to agree 100% in heaven. No partings, no imperfections, no problems with that elder or deacon.

I will look at that difficult elder or deacon and I will love him 100%. There'll be no disease, there'll be no death there. And I wonder, Lloyd-Jones scribbled on that piece of paper a day or two before his death, don't pray for healing.

Don't keep me back from the glory. Finally notice, in verse 19 onwards, Paul is praying that we should know the great power of God at work in us and towards us. The Apostle wants these Christians to know the greatness and the extent of God's power which works in and on behalf of his people.

To do so, in verse 19, he uses as many as four different Greek words for power. They may all have the same basic meaning as disagreement. Possibly slightly different emphases.

God's power, God's ability. His ability to accomplish what he pleases. He never fails, he's never defeated.

His inherent strength, this is his nature. He is gloriously strong. He has vast resources of power in himself.

Perhaps another word refers to the way in which God in his power overcomes all opposition. Nothing can hinder God in doing what he decrees. Perhaps another word expresses the exercise of his power.

The energy of God. The strength of God. The might of God's power.

So the Apostle prays, Lord, I want these Christians to see clearly the greatness, the vastness of your power exercised towards us who believe. Open their eyes. Why emphasize power? Well, different commentators give different reasons, but perhaps the local situation in Ephesus is one reason.

One of the largest cities in the then known world. It included one of the seven wonders of the world. The great temple of Diana was there.

Bigger than a football ground. I almost said Anfield, or I should have said Goodison Park. There were massive columns, pillars supporting this big roof.

Thousands of ungodly, immoral priestesses serving the goddess. And linked with that temple was the occult, magic, witchcraft. There was power in that ungodly worship.

Perhaps these Ephesians were somewhat afraid. He is asking God to show them the greatness of his power working in them and towards them. To help us, and to help them, he refers to three events where God's glorious power was exercised.

First, which he worked when he raised him from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is an act of God the Father, in his power, raising his human nature. It is an act of omnipotence, indicating that his sacrifice is accepted.

Death and grave are now conquered. Satan is defeated. Christ is risen.

Then he refers, in verse 20, to the power which seated Christ at his right hand in the heavenlies. In verses 20-21, there is even more emphasis on the power of God taking the Lord Jesus, our Mediator, back to heaven. The words are grounded in Psalm 110 and verse 1. Our Lord uses them himself in Mark 12 verse 36.

They are used later in Hebrews 1.13, Hebrews 10 verses 12 and 13. Do you recall the scene of the Ascension? Nearly six weeks after resurrection, the Lord Jesus talking to his disciples. Suddenly he was taken up before their eyes.

A cloud hid him from their sight. It is the act of God's power, taking him. In verse 19, according to the working of his mighty power.

So the God-man, our Mediator, the victor over death and hell and sin, returns to heaven and to the right hand of God the Father. I like to think of him going past all the believers in heaven, going past all the various levels of angels, going straight to the very throne of God, sitting where only God can sit, at his right hand. Position of absolute universal authority.

In verse 21, no one is higher in position or power. Far above all principality and power. Above the most powerful angels and archangels.

Far above Satan and his evil hosts in this age and the age to come. Far above all worldly powers which may be opposed to God. The point is reinforced in verse 22, and he put all things under his feet.

Words taken from Psalm 8 and verse 6. Psalm 8 concerning man's uniqueness as the summit of God's creation. Hebrews 2, verses 6-8, as if the writer is saying, here is greatness, here is glory. It's not an earthly king.

It's not a great scientist. It's not a philosopher. It's Jesus Christ.

He is God the Son, the one who became man. He is now also exalted to the position of the highest authority in the universe, seated at God's right hand, fulfilling Psalm 8 far more gloriously than anyone else. And all are under his feet.

It's underlined and pressed by the apostle. All creatures. Everything subject to the authority of Christ.

And it gets even better. At the end of verse 22, Paul tells us, not just that he put all things under his feet, but gave him to be the head over all things, to the church. In his meditational lordship, all authority in heaven and earth is given to him as our mediator.

And he is exercising that universal authority on behalf of his people, his church. He is the organic head. He is the ruling head of the church.

And he uses his power to bless and to build his church. There's a mystery in Providence why Christians and pastors should be killed in parts of Pakistan or Sudan or Indonesia. Why there should be such intense persecution in some areas in Eastern Europe.

But Christ is sovereign. He's exercising his power on behalf of his church. In Iran, despite evil regimes, more and more Iranians are coming to Christ.

In Iraq with Sudan, a thriving church in Baghdad, men and women come into faith in the Lord Jesus. In Sudan, despite intense persecution, more Muslims are coming to Christ in Sudan than anywhere else in the world. A lot of them are being martyred.

They're suffering. Christ is building his church. He's blessing it.

He is our exalted head. Oh, says Paul, to the Lord, open their eyes to see the great power which is at work. That little prayer meeting of yours in your church, discouraged, dejected, look up.

Remember your ruling head. Remember the meditational lordship of Christ. He is Lord.

Pray to him. Seek him. Ask him to regenerate people in your locality.

Ask him to restrain evil. Ask him to come again and to revive his church. May God help us.

Let's pray. So Lord, we ask that you will open our eyes to the rich teaching of your word, to your glory, and to the exalted position of our Lord Jesus Christ. Encourage us.

Come, O Lord, and exercise that power even more evidently in our situation here in the United Kingdom for your eternal glory. Amen.

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