

# Fundamentals: The Headship of Christ

by Stephen Kaung

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*The headship of Christ is the eternal purpose of God to have Christ as the head of all things, including the church, and to fill the church with His fullness and authority.*

**Duration:** 1:04:48

**Scripture:** Ephesians 1:9-10, Ephesians 1:22-23, Ephesians 4:15-16, Philippians 2:1, Colossians 2:19, Colossians 3:12, Colossians 3:14

**Topics:** "Headship"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of the corporate life or the body life in the church. They highlight that the key principle for living this body life is the headship of Christ. The redemptive work of Jesus is not just about individual salvation, but about recovering God's full purpose for humanity. Through His life, Jesus unites believers into one body, the body of Christ. The speaker encourages believers to walk worthy of this high and holy calling, striving to fulfill God's purpose and be a glorious church without spot or wrinkle.

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## Transcript

Will you please turn to Ephesians, the letter to the Ephesians, chapter 1, verses 9 and 10. Ephesians, chapter 1, verses 9 and 10. Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself for the administration of the fullness of time, to head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth.

And the same chapter, verses 22 and 23. And has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the assembly, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all, and in all. And the same book, chapter 4, Ephesians, chapter 4, verses 15 and 16.

But holding the truth in love, we may grow up to Him in all things, who is the Head, the Christ, from whom the whole body fitted together, and connected by every joint of supply, according to the working in His measure of each one part, works for itself, the increase of the body to itself building up in love. And finally, Colossians. Colossians, chapter 2, verse 19.

We will not read it in a negative sense, so we will read it in a positive way. Holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, ministered to and united together by the joints and bends, increases with the increase of God. Dear Lord, as we continue in Thy presence, we look to Thee to speak through Thy Word, by Thy

Spirit, to us.

We want to tell Thee, Lord, we are here. What Thou hast to say to Thy Church, reveal Thyself to us, speak to our spirit, bring us into Thy truth, that Thy purpose in us may be fulfilled. To the praise of Thy glory, we ask in Thy precious name.

Amen. Brothers and sisters, we have been sharing together on this matter of the corporate life, or to put it in another way, the body life. But in order to really live that body life, there is a most important basic principle, and that is the headship of Christ.

In other words, if there is no headship of Christ, there will be no body life. Thank God, we know one thing, that God's purpose for man is corporate. You remember when God created man? In Genesis 1, verse 27, God created man in His image.

And in the image of God, created him. Male and female created them. So by the very act of creation, we know that God's purpose for man is not individual.

It's a corporate person. Man and woman, male and female, created in them. And they are one.

The two are united in one. They live a corporate life. And that is God's eternal purpose for human beings.

But unfortunately, when sin enters into this world, that corporateness is broken. You remember after Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil? They found themselves naked. They hid themselves among the trees.

When they heard the footstep of God. And God said, Adam, where are you? Why is it that you're naked? And you remember Adam, instead of confessing his own sin, he tried to put the sin on Eve. And more than that, on God himself.

You gave me the woman. In other words, immediately you find that individualistic approach. Self.

For himself. And the same thing with Eve. When God asked Eve, and Eve said, well, it is not me.

It is that serpent. So you find that whenever sin enters Eve, the corporateness is gone. Everyone becomes individualistic.

All by himself or herself. So that is what happened in this world. But then God, God reacted.

And he reacted to recover God's eternal purpose concerning man. So that's the reason when we look at the redemption of our Lord Jesus. You know, it seems to be very easy to think of the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus purely in a personal, individual viewpoint.

We thank God. He sent his only begotten Son into this world. We thank God that our Lord Jesus died on the cross for us.

We thank God that he has forgiven our sins. That he has given us life. But all in a individual, personal approach.

God and me. But when you look at the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus. He is not only to recover us as individuals.

But he is to recover the full purpose of God concerning man. And therefore you find the life that he has given us is the same, the life that he has given to each and every one of us. And by that life, he is uniting us once again together into one body.

The redemptive work of our Lord Jesus is not just reaching individuals. The redemptive work of the Lord is to recover the fullness of God's purpose. And if that is the case, you'll find this is why.

We are not only being saved individually. We are not only being given life, each and every one of us. But this life unites us together.

And the Bible tells us we become the body of Christ. Salvation reaches not just to individuals. It reaches to fullness, to the recovery of the corporate life of the redeemed.

So therefore, brothers and sisters, we do praise and thank the Lord that after we are saved, we not only just think of ourselves. We begin to think that we are members of that one body of Christ. There is not only that personal spiritual life that we have to seek after.

It is true. It is basic. But more than that, there is a church life, a corporate life, a body life that we have to live in.

But brothers and sisters, we may talk about church life. We may talk about body life. We thank God that the life within us is not a selfish, self-centered life.

The life within us is Christ's life. Now, it is the life of the body as well. But for that body and life to become a reality in us, there is a most basic, important principle that we have to understand.

And not only to understand, but to enter into it. Now, if the headship of Christ is not established in us, there can be no body life. So far as God's salvation is concerned, there is no problem.

Because when he saved us, even though he did save us individually, but he saved us to bring us into that body. So as soon as we believe in the Lord Jesus, whether you know it or not, you not only are conscious that you belong to the Lord, but at the same time, you are conscious that you are not alone, that you have your brothers and sisters. That is very evident.

You know, when you are saved, immediately you find there is a relationship, a living relationship between you and God. You begin to call God, Abba, Father. There is a living relationship there.

But at the same time, when you meet any brother and sister, anyone who is saved, knows God, knows the Lord, immediately you find there is a bond between you and that person. And we know that that bond is even stronger than the bond of flesh and blood. So, so far as God's salvation is concerned, there is no problem.

It is there. But so far, as we really live in the reality of the body life, there is a problem. The problem is not with God's salvation.

The problem is with our condition. It is because we still have self-life in us. If we live according to the flesh, then we are not able to live the body life.

So brothers and sisters, what we are concerned with is, how can we really enter into the reality of body life? How can we really be as members one of another? Now when you are thinking of this problem, the

first thing that will come into your mind is, the headship of Christ. Without the headship of Christ, there cannot be the body life. So this morning we would like to share together on this matter, of the headship of Christ.

In Ephesians chapter 1, verses 9 and 10, we are told of the eternal purpose of God. You know brothers and sisters, body life is not just a temporary thought of God. It is the eternal will of God.

And then, there in Ephesians chapter 1 says, having made known to us the mystery of his will, God reveals to us the secret of his heart. And this mystery of his will is according to his good pleasure. In other words, that is what God is pleased with.

Now if God is pleased with it, surely that's what we should be pleased with. He purposed in himself. Even before the foundation of the world.

That is to say, before anything is ever done. But God has already decided. There is one thing that he wants.

And he will do everything according to that will, that purpose. So it is intensely important, brothers and sisters, for us to know what is it that is behind the mind, the heart of God. What is it that God is really desire to have? And what is it that really explains all the works of God? And what is it to have all things in Christ? That is what it is.

The headship of Christ. That is in the very heart of God. He wants Christ to be the head of all things.

Not only the things on the earth, but even the things in the heavens. All things. All things will be held up in Christ.

Or sum up in Christ. Christ is to be all and everything. Now that is the mind of God.

And this mind of God about the headship of Christ is especially related to the church. Because here in the same chapter, verses 22 and 23, it says, God has put all things under his feet. Now that is just another way of saying the headship of Christ.

Everything. God put everything under his feet and gave him to be head over all things. To the church, which is his body.

Christ is to be the head of all things. And being the head of all things, he is to be the head of the church, his own body, to make it his fullness. In other words, here you find the headship of Christ is especially for the body.

In order that the body may be filled with his fullness. Now that is God's eternal purpose. That is God's pleasure.

That is God's will. When you talk about the headship of Christ, what do you mean by it? I think there are at least two things that are included. Number one, the head or the headship speaks of fullness.

When you think of your head, you find that it is the center of wisdom and of power. It is the fullness there. So the Bible says, all the fullness of the Godhead dwell in him bodily.

The head speaks of fullness. Everything that you can think about God is in Christ, in the head. There is nothing missing.

We can say that all that God is, is there. No more, no less. It is the pleasure of the Father to give all that he is and he has to the Son.

It is in Christ. It is in the head. Can you think of the fullness there? We can never comprehend the fullness of the Godhead.

All that God is, we can never understand how full is his love, how full is his holiness, how full is his righteousness, how full is his almightiness, how full is his glory. You know, we can never, never be able to comprehend because it is way beyond us. But one thing we do know, whatever you can think of God, it is in Christ Jesus and nothing, nowhere else.

God has put all that he is, all that he has into his Son. He is the fullness of God. If you see the Son, you see the Father.

He declares the Father. You know, in the old days, God would have spoken to the prophets, but in many parts and in many ways, in pieces and bits. But in the last days, he speaks in the person of his Son.

So when you think of head, headship, it speaks of fullness. Number two, when you think of head, of headship, you think of authority. Because the head is the center of authority.

You know, in Romans chapter 13, verse 1, it says, there is no authority except from God. In other words, in this universe, who is the authority? Where can you find authority? In God? He is the authority of the universe. There is no authority outside of him.

He is the center of authority. And all authorities come from him. So that is what the head of headship is.

Now having seen what the head of headship is, now we would like to come to the practical side. How does it work in the body? You know, brothers and sisters, this physical body of ours is a good illustration. It is not a full illustration.

Because spiritual body, the relationship between Christ and the church, is far more than the relationship between this physical head and the physical body. But at least it illustrates the principle. When do you have a healthy body? When your body is rightly related to the head.

If there is any cut off somewhere, the body is either sick or dead. But this is more than a physical thing. Because the relationship between the head and the body is not just an outward joining together.

It is more than that. The head is the seat of command, of authority. And you find that everything will go back to the body, from the body to the head, and from the head to the body.

The whole body is related by a nervous system, and all the impulses, all the things that come from outside will be related back to the head, to wait for the head to give the command as to how to act and react. That is how we are so, this body and the head are so intimately related. If there is any blockage in a member of the body, even though it may be outwardly connected, but if there is any blockage within, so that nervous system is blocked, the command cannot go through it immediately.

You'll find you're sick, or it will end in death. That is how intimate, how real it is. And I believe we all understand that.

But when you come to the spiritual realm, the relationship between Christ as the head and we as the body is even closer, more intimate than that. Here you'll find our Lord Jesus. He is the head of the church, His body.

And here we find His body. And we are all members of that body. When our Lord Jesus was on earth, the Word became flesh, incarnated, tabernacle among man, full of grace and truth.

That body, personal body of our Lord Jesus, did not give Him any problem. That body was in perfect submission, perfect obedience, perfect cooperation with the head. But on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit came down from heaven and baptized, and 120 members were baptized into one body of Christ, the spiritual body, mystic, culprit body of Christ, theoretically, there should be no problem.

But practically, we have problems. This is not just an outward joining together. This is an inward reality.

Now the Holy Spirit is like our nervous system. The Holy Spirit in each and every one of us, in the body of Christ, He is here to represent Christ, to represent the head. How do we know the headship of Christ? How do we know His mind? How do we know His fullness? How do we know His authority? It is by the Holy Spirit.

And you know the wonder of salvation. Because when we believe in the Lord Jesus, not only our dead spirit, human spirit, was quickened into life, new spirit, but the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in our spirit. So He is there.

The nervous system is there. The Holy Spirit is in each and every redeemed child of God. You know in the old days, with the Pentecostals, they do not believe that when you believe in the Lord Jesus, you have the Holy Spirit.

You don't have the Holy Spirit until you have the baptism of the Holy Spirit by speaking in tongues. But from the Word of God, we find that God gave us not only a new spirit, but He put His Spirit into our spirit. And we cry out, Abba, Father.

So this inward system, spiritual system, is already there in the body. And it should work perfectly. So far as God's salvation is concerned, it should work perfectly.

But unfortunately, it is not that simple when you come to practicality. The Holy Spirit represents the fullness of the head, as well as the authority of the head. If we want to really experience the fullness of the head, you have to obey the authority of the Holy Spirit.

And this obedience is absolute. It is not conditional. It is not partial.

It has to be total. So we say that our obedience to God is absolute. No bargaining.

No discount. As He says, so we do. Now, brothers and sisters, so the problem here is, do we really give the Holy Spirit absolute obedience? We should.

But why is it not? So this brings us back to this matter of consecration. What is consecration? Consecration is you yield yourself, you give yourself completely to the Lord, to the head. You accept His

headship without questioning, without reservation.

That is what Romans tells us. After chapter 1 through chapter 11, all the mercies of God that has shown us in Christ Jesus, how should we respond? Present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship, with all reasonable service. We have to begin there.

After we have received all the mercies of God, how should we begin? We begin by presenting our bodies. Why? Because our bodies represent everything. Whole being.

No reservation. Not like the other offerings, other sacrifice. Bone offering is a whole offering.

Outside, inside, everything. We present our bodies a living sacrifice. We live from henceforth our lives as a sacrifice, as something already given to God.

Not ours anymore. We have given up our right over ourselves. We are not our own.

We are totally His. Brothers and sisters, we have to begin there. Now it is very true.

You cannot do that unless you are constrained by His love. Because who is willing to give up himself to somebody else? In such totality? Nobody will. So this is first love.

It is love that constrains us to do that. But you have to remember that consecration is not just one act. You have to take the first step.

But there is a way of consecration. A consecrated life that you have to live. Not because five years ago you have consecrated yourself, so everything is okay.

No. Where are you today? Are you still in that way of consecration? And it has to go deeper and deeper. Consecration, as our brother Nee says, is our first Christian experience as well as our last Christian experience.

So do not think that you have consecrated yourself five years ago. That solves the problem. It doesn't.

It just puts you on the way of consecration. You have to daily consecrate yourself. That's why burnt offering has to be offered one in the morning, one in the evening.

And the fire of burnt offering never runs out. So dear brothers and sisters, is our consecration real today? Is our consecration living today? This is a question we have to ask ourselves every day. Are we totally giving up ourselves to Him and allow Him to have absolute authority over us? The Bible sometimes calls the Lord Jesus the despot.

Why? Because it is absolute authority. No question. So when it comes to your experience, brothers and sisters, I believe every one of us have gone through such experience.

How we argue, how we delay, how we try to offer something else instead of absolutely obeying the Holy Spirit. So this is the first thing. I will reserve the process a little bit later.

But I would like to continue on with another thing. In a sense, it is easy to say that, yes, I am the authority of the head. Why? Because my head is perfect.

Now, it is easy to say, but it is not that easy to really live out. But oftentimes we feel, well, I am willing to be absolutely obedient to the head, listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit. This is basic, yes.

But when you think of a body, does every member of the body relate directly to the head? If my head and my feet, they are all related directly to the head, why is it a monster? No such thing. And furthermore, if every member is related directly to the head, then where is the body? Have you ever thought of that? We think that the authority of the head comes directly to us, individually. Because everyone is directly related to the head.

In one sense, spiritually, yes. But in another sense, no. Why? We are the body of Christ.

And we are members one to another. As 1 Corinthians 12 says, we are the body of Christ and member in particular. Now, what does it mean? It means that God has set us in the body, as particular member in the body.

You look at my body. My body has many members. Some visible, some invisible.

But every member is particular. My hands are different from my feet. My heart is different from my mouth.

Everything is different. So in 1 Corinthians 12, we find that the ears say to the eyes, I'm not an eye because I'm not of the body. Because I'm way back and the eyes are at the front.

I'm not of the body. Now, can you do that? Can we choose to be that particular member of the body? Who places us in the body? If you read 1 Corinthians 12, it is evident. God has placed us, has set us in the body.

As various members of the body. We have no choice. You cannot be the other member of the body.

It is God's authority. He puts each and every one in the body. There is a divine order.

And that divine order comes from God. He sets it. So no member can boast nor can complain.

It is God's will. And this is something we have to see and understand. Furthermore, when he puts us as members in the body, he puts us in such a way that all the members of the body are related.

No member can exist by itself. All the selfishness must go. All the self-centeredness must go.

All the I, me must go. Isn't that wonderful? So that's why you find in Psalm 139, it says, the body is wonderfully and fearfully made. My, it's wonderful, but it's fearful.

Think of that. If you're all by yourself, it's wonderful, but it's not fearful. But if you are joined with your brothers and sisters, it's wonderful, but it's fearful.

But this is the wisdom of God. So you find that the problem in living body life is twofold. On the one hand, is your relationship with the head living? Number two, is your relationship with your brothers and sisters living? And right.

If any of these two goes wrong, you're not able to live the body life. The body life is broken. So brothers and sisters, when I meditate on these things, I think, well Lord, it is wonderful, but it is fearful.

So what should we do? On the one hand, we need to give the head absolute obedience. And on the other hand, we need to submit to one another in the fear of Christ. Ephesians chapter 5, verse 21.

We do not give our brothers and sisters, the members of that body, absolute obedience. No. Nobody is worthy, only Christ.

We do not follow any man, absolutely. That leads us into destruction. But we do need to submit ourselves to one another in the fear of Christ.

I submit to you, not because of you, but because of Christ. Christ in you. So it is not just a submission to a person.

Now this is our problem. We think when we submit, we are submitting to a particular person. Now who is that person that we should submit to? Sometimes a big member has to submit to a small member.

And vice versa. Not your choice. It is Christ.

In the fear of Christ. It is for the body's sake. So brothers and sisters, when you consider these things, it is not as simple as you think.

You know, it is easy to talk about body life. But to live body life is not that simple. Not that easy.

It demands a great deal. Are you willing to pay the price for the purpose of God to be fulfilled? Or are you ready to keep yourself and destroy the purpose of God? Which way do you choose? That is the reason why you find, in the Word of God, such exhortation that we have to have the right mindset. You know, Ephesians, for instance, chapter 4, it says, I, the prisoner in the Lord, exhort you therefore to walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye have been called.

We have been called to be the body of Christ. It is a high calling, a holy calling, a heavenly calling. Now how can we walk worthily of the calling wherewith we have been called? Listen.

With all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, bearing with one another in love, using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace. Philippians 2, verse 1. If then there be any comfort in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and compassion, fulfill my joy that ye may think the same thing. Having the same love, join in soul, thinking one thing.

Let nothing be in the spirit of strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind, each esteeming the other as more excellent than themselves, regarding not each his own qualities, but each one is those of the others also. For let his mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. The mind of Christ.

Humility. Willing to enter yourself, humble yourself. Colossians, chapter 3, verse 12.

Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, bearing one another, forgiving one another, as any should have a complaint against any, even as Christ has forgiven you. So also do ye, and to all these add love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ preside in your hearts, to which also ye have been called in one body, and be therefore.

Now these are only a few illustrative passages. So in order that we may be submissive to one another in fear of Christ, we need to develop a mindset. We need to have the mind of Christ.

We need to look ourselves, not above what we should think of ourselves, but we need to see our brothers and sisters as more excellent than we are. And if we have that kind of mindset, then the Holy Spirit is able to use the cross to work in our lives, to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him. Brothers and sisters, unless we have that kind of mind, the mind of Christ, there is no way to deny yourself.

There is no way to take up the cross. There is no way to follow the Lord. This wonderful, beautiful, heavenly, glorious body life demands terribly, greatly, our Lord Jesus Himself has gone through it.

So He's able to save us to the uttermost. We have to confess we are not able. Who is able to live such a heavenly life, the body life? We cannot.

He is a great high priest, interceding for us incessantly to bring us into that full salvation to the eternal purpose of God. Brothers and sisters, that humbles us. Who are we? What are we that He can do such a work as to bring us into the beauty of that body life? Isn't that wonderful? Our hope is in Him.

May the Lord really speak to our hearts. Brothers and sisters, the time is short. His will has to be done.

He will have a glorious church without a spot of wrinkle or any of such thought to be presented to Him when He comes back. The Lord help us. Dear Lord, we do realize that it's not just an individual thing that is involved.

We realize that it involves your eternal purpose. We come before Thee in fear and trembling, lest in any way we come short of Thy glory. We pray that on the one hand, Thy glory will so attract us and make us willing to pay any cost if it can be said as a cost.

Lord, our heart's desire is Thy will be done. Not our will, but Thy will be done. We look to Thee knowing that Thou art the one who is able to do exceedingly above all that you can even ask or think of.

We ask in Thy precious name. Amen.

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