

EPHESIANS 1:22a
The Wonderful Work of Salvation
Message 32, February 6, 2000

INTRO: In the last number of messages we have been looking at Paul's prayers for the Ephesian believers. He desired that God would grant to them the spirit of wisdom and revelation. These were available to these believers and to you and to me in the knowledge of God. Now the way we gain knowledge of God is through the Word of God. How are your personal studies? I have said before that I have never seen great men and women of God who are not people of the Word.

Paul further desired that the spiritual eyes of the Ephesian believers might be opened so that they might understand three great and fundamental Christian truths. First: What is the hope of His calling. Second: What are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. The first one gives us the benefits to be experienced by man, the second the benefits of God. Third, Paul wanted them to know what is the exceeding greatness of God's power toward the believer. This power was demonstrated for us graphically in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In our last message we saw this power as compared to all principality, power, might and dominion and we were told by the Word of God that God's power was FAR ABOVE any of those.

I mentioned to you that I think Paul had in mind particularly the powers of the arch enemy of God; the devil and his demons. So we saw that Christ had been set over all these. This morning we will look at:

c) The outcome of God's power

-All things put under His feet

So we come to Ephesians 1:22 where we read that all things have been put under the feet of Christ. Now Paul, no doubt, has in mind Psalm 8:6b. But when one looks at Psalm 8:6 we must ask the question: Who is the Psalmist speaking of? Man or Christ? When we look at verses 7-8 we find that he is speaking of the dominion given to man at creation. But Paul seems to

indicate that the divine meaning speaks also of Christ and His dominion over all things and especially His enemies. And it seems to me that the expression "under His feet" intends more than simply man's dominion over creation for this expression has an unfriendliness to it. It seems to indicate one victorious over enemies.

This phrase "under His feet" occurs four times in the NT and two of those two are in 1 Corinthians 15:25-27. Verse 25 says, "For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet." Death is an enemy of God and it is in the domain of the Devil. In verse 27 Paul quotes from Psalm 8:6 where we are told that God has put all things under Christ's feet. Paul points out here that only God Himself is not put under Christ and rightly so for He it is who puts all things under Christ's feet. We have seen earlier that Christ is at God's right hand, the position of privilege and power. Verse 28 tells us that when all is said and done, God will reign supreme and Christ will be under Him and all others will be under Christ.

But the Corinthian passage indicates that this putting under the feet of all things has not actually occurred in its entirety yet. Verse 25 says He must reign *until* he has put all enemies under His feet. In Ephesians 1:22 it sounds as though it has already taken place. So we turn to yet one more passage that speaks of this, Hebrews 2:8. The writer here argues against the Hebrews exalted view of angels and he says in verse 5 that God has **not** put the world to come in subjection to angels. The writer then quotes Psalm 8:4-6. Verse 8 closes with these words, "But now we do not

yet see all things put under him." Now the writer, on the surface, seems to be referring to man rather than Christ in Psalm 8:6. However, the Messianic connection is clear when one considers the argument of the book of Hebrews and how the writer is seeking to show the superiority of Christ over angels. The prophecy as used here is very involved and we shall not seek to clarify it, except to say that it ultimately refers to Christ and that we do not yet see all things put under Him.

Our question now is: Which text is right? Are all things put under His feet? Or are not all things yet put under His feet? Well, both are true. In order to understand this we will need to understand this morning the difference between positional truth and practical truth. Some refer this to one's standing and one's state. Let me illustrate:

Let us say that someone from Ontario moves into the neighborhood. They are outsiders and shy but as a neighbor you approach them and make them feel welcome. And soon, when they have questions about community things they come to you. Let us say that after a few years you have become much appreciated by your new neighbors. Now since I like horses let me use a horse for this illustration. Let us say your new neighbors still have some fine horses back in Ontario. But now they have received word that the place that is looking after the horses is closing down and they will have to do something with those horses. Among those horses is a young unbroken but very valuable race horse because of its ancestry.

Your neighbor has learned that you like racing horses in particular. He is planning to sell all his horses but because this young unbroken horse is special to him and you are special to him as a neighbor he gives you the horse under the conditions that you will move the horse by the given time of those who are now taking care of it. Now you can hardly believe your ears and without a moment's hesitation you say that you will move the horse by the given time. And so your neighbor gives you a bill of sale and the horse is yours!

Now here is the point. The horse is yours positionally. It belongs to you. Now let us say another neighbor who also has horses hears of the highly prized race horse you now possess and he comes over to see it. And so you say, "Yes, it is true. It is my horse. But I do not have it in my fence yet." You see, he owns this horse and positionally it is his but it is not yet in his possession. And before this horse will race many events must take place. First the horse must be brought home. Then it must be cared for and trained to ride and then trained to race.

Now I propose to you this morning that when it says that all things have been placed under the feet of Christ it speaks of position, not actual practice. Therefore Paul can say in Ephesians that all things have been put under His feet. And in Corinthians he says that He must reign until all things are put under His feet. And the writer to the Hebrews says that we see not yet all things put under His feet.

I want to dwell this morning on this thought. You cannot nap if you wish to understand this great truth. Radio Bible Class Ministries just has a little booklet out on *Studies in Contrasts*. I was surprised that they did not deal with this one: the contrast of position and practice.

Let us begin by looking at positional and practical truth in the OT. Israel was to leave Egypt and go to Canaan and put all the enemies of God under their feet (Read Numbers 33:50-56). Now from verse 49 we find that Israel is not yet IN the land. They are camped before the Jordon. Canaan is on the other side. But in verse 53 God says, "I have given you the land." Question: Was the land theirs? Answer: Positionally? Yes. God had given it to them. But did not possess the land practically yet, that is they had not yet conquered any part of it? No. Now they were to enter the land and make it theirs practically.

You know how that Israel was disobedient to God to go and take the land for some forty years. After Moses' death Joshua, one of the two spies of faith became leader of Israel and Joshua began to put the land God had given them under his feet. We want to look at this as recorded in Joshua 10:1-27. Joshua has already conquered Jericho and Ai just as God said they should. Now the Gibeonites who were a powerful kingdom in the land became afraid and they made peace with Israel and became servant to Israel. Now the King of Jerusalem sent to the king of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon and gathered them together against Israel. During this battle Joshua commanded the sun to stand still and for about a whole day it stood still while he

fought with these kings. Well, Joshua and his army are victorious and so let us read Joshua 10:22-26. Now in our Christian lives, that is how we are to deal with every area of sin in our lives. We are to conquer every stage and area of life.

When, in life, we allow some pet sin room in our life, that one sin may in the end lead to our own downfall. You see, if in my life I cannot overcome certain sins, then we see not yet all things put under His feet. We learn from the life of Saul, in the OT, the consequences of not obeying God in getting rid of everything that should not be in our lives.

There came a time in the life of Israel when God said it is time to deal with Amelek. So God instructed Saul to go and destroy them entirely. He was to take nothing. Everything was to be destroyed. That is a picture of sin in our life. I think, along with others, that Amelek is a picture of the flesh. Well the Lord was with Saul and they had good success only they did not quite obey the Lord. There were certain things they simply wanted to keep (1 Sam. 15:9 then 13-21 then 24 then 32-33).

Now Saul had spared one Amelekite. That is like leaving one area of sin in our lives. We leave it in our lives because it is not horrible to us. We might even think it is something pretty or something we can boast about. We do not think it horrible. As a matter of fact we rather like it. And so we leave it. I want to show you what happens when not yet all things are put under Christ's feet in our lives.

Well, one day Saul was fighting with the Palestinians, excuse me, I mean Philistines (1 Sam. 31). Well Saul was injured so that it was certain that he would die and he asked one of his men to kill him. His man would not do it and so Saul tried to commit suicide by falling on his own sword. Well, let's read 1 Samuel 1:1-10. Now my point is not to debate if this Amelekite actually killed Saul. My point is that Saul let one Amelekite live and one Amelekite lived to claim the death of Saul.

You see, I think that the OT accounts of Israel's battles are pictures of our battles with sin and that from these we can learn how we must deal with sin.

Now Ephesians 1:22 says that God has put all things under Christ's feet. Now let me show you His feet. Our verse says that God put all things under His feet and He gave Christ as head over all things to the Church which is His body. Every born again believer is a part of the body of Christ. We are His hands and we are His feet. So when we have not yet conquered sin, we see not yet all things put under His feet as to actual experience.

So let's make this verse even more practical. The enemies in Canaan were a picture of the enemies in our lives as Christians. Whatever may be standing in our way to complete Christian victory is to be dealt with. It may be dishonesty, cheating, lying, anger, hate, worldliness, or any practice contrary to Scripture. We are to overcome each one by faith. Through Christ, God has already given us the victory positionally. But now we must

make it real in everyday life by living by faith. You see, I am positionally righteous in Christ Jesus but I am to become practically righteous.

When a person accepts Jesus Christ as Saviour that person becomes positionally righteous. This is justification. But now he is to become practically righteous. This is sanctification. Do we say, "Well, now I am a Christian and I'm on the way to heaven so it does not matter how I live?" May God forbid. If I name the name of Christ I am to depart from sin.

But some of us want some part of the things of this world. We want to be Christians but we want part of the world too. Or we may not seem to be able to overcome certain sins and so we excuse them and explain them away with, "Oh well, everybody has some problem." And we feel that makes us OK and so we see not yet all things put under His feet.

Our text this morning says that God has put all things under His feet. That is true positionally. But when we look at our lives and sin and death in the world we see not yet all things under His feet. But the Hebrews passage says, "But we see Jesus..." and we need to keep looking at Jesus until all the enemies in our lives too, are under His feet.

CONCL: I close with Romans 6:6, "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him..." That is our position in Christ. Positionally we are perfectly righteous because we have died, we were buried and we rose again with Christ (if we have accepted Him as our Saviour). But this verse further says that we were crucified with Him, "...that the body of sin might be done away with..." This is what God wants to happen. We see not yet all things put under Him,

but we see Jesus. Every wrong area in life, every area of sin is to be slain as Samuel slew Agag. Nothing is to remain precious in our sight that is not right. Now notice the last part of this verse. All of this is to take place in order that, "...we might no longer be slaves of sin."

As long as some area of our lives does not come under the dominion of our Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, that area has the neck under the feet of the evil one.

J. Oswald Sanders gives in his little book, This I Remember, this little story, "On occasion I was invited to speak at the Whitsuntide Convention at Cliff College near Sheffield in England, of which Samuel Chadwich had been the Principal and which attracted thousands of people. While dining I found myself sitting alongside an elderly man who told me he came from Huddersfield. I was immediately interested because I had sometimes used an illustration which involved that town, but I had never been quite sure of its authenticity. So I told him the story, and asked if it were true.

"Yes, it is true all right", he replied. 'When I was a boy I used to run messages for the old Quaker you mention and he used to give me an orange and a penny. It is true all right.'

And this is the story.

As a young man, Sir John Ramsden established his textile mill in the small town of Huddersfield. As his business prospered, he bought increasing areas of land to enlarge his mill and accommodate his growing band of employees. Eventually he was able to purchase the whole town with the exception of one house adjoining the mill which was owned and occupied by an old Quaker.

At last, in order that he might be able to boast that Huddersfield was all his, Sir John determined to pay the Quaker a personal visit, and make an offer so generous that he could not refuse it.

'I suppose you know who I am,' said Sir John, when the door opened.

'Oh yes,' responded the Quaker in his quaint English, 'I know who thee art.'

'And I suppose you can guess why I am here?'

'Oh yes, I can guess why thee art here.'

'You know I have often tried to buy your property but you would not sell it. Well, I will make a very generous offer. If you will sell your property to me, I will cover the land with gold sovereigns.' He did not dream that such an offer could meet with refusal.

For a few moments the Quaker was silent, then with a quizzical smile he said, 'If the wilt put them edgeways we might talk business.'

Angry and crestfallen, Sir John turned on his heel and left the house. When he had reached the gate, the old Quaker called after him,

'Sir John, remember that Huddersfield belongs to thee *and to me.*'

In order to reach his home, the Quaker could walk all over all the rest of Sir John's Huddersfield. If there is some area of our lives on which Satan has some claim, he can tramp through all the rest of our lives to reach that part in which he has a vested interest. And he can say, "Christ, remember that that soul belongs to you *and to me!*"