

NOTES FOR SPEAKING

Meeting: Freshwaters

Date & Time: 06th March 2011 10.30am

Title: Eph 1:19-23

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Introduction

This concluding passage of chapter 1 of Ephesians emphasises the power of God demonstrated in Christ and living in and so available to the church, which is Christ's body.

Eph 1:19-23

The incredible greatness of God's power for those that believe.

Paul wants us to understand the incredible or surpassing greatness of God's power for those who believe. The word used for incredible or surpassing is 'Huperballo' which means 'to surpass in throwing, to throw over or beyond any thing, to transcend, surpass, exceed, excel, excelling, exceeding'

To throw beyond is a great picture – we throw, God throws beyond. Kings and governments and the powers of this earth throw, and God throws beyond. Satan and demons and all the power of hell throw and God throws beyond. Nothing in heaven or on earth is greater than God's power for those who believe.

Paul illustrates the extent of that power by highlighting that it was by God's power that Jesus was raised from the dead and seated in the heavenly realms. It is a power greater than death, a power challenged by the devil himself but the challenge was futile.

Notice that this all surpassing power is **available to those that believe Him**. Do we believe in the Lord, do we believe that He is good, kind, just and that He is all powerful. When trials and troubles come, do we believe God is greater and that He will work through them for our good? If we do then there is an opportunity for peace. We can choose to trust God and to believe Him when He says I love you, I will protect and watch over you, I will provide for you, I will guide you.

Risen and Seated

God's mighty power delivered Jesus from death. Jesus was not asleep, not in a coma; He was dead, with a spear through his side. For many death is the greatest power, something that claims each one of us, something we cannot escape from, something so powerful that the great, the rich and the famous all fear, but for the Christian that fear should be broken. We know that there is one who is greater than death, Jesus Christ. Death did not have the power to hold Him – death made its best throw but God threw further. The same power that raised Jesus from death is available to us. Death will not hold us but as Jesus was raised so we too will be raised. **1 Cor 15:51-58**.

Jesus was of course not just raised from death, but He was also exalted to a throne at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.

Far above all other authority

The throne is significant because it is the place from where the king reigns. The right hand of God is important because it is the place of authority. That authority given by the Father is far greater than every other power and authority in heaven or earth, in this world or in the next. **Jesus has ultimate authority and ultimate power to exercise that authority.**

Satan cannot challenge God directly; He does not have the authority or the power. That same power is at work within us, that means that Satan cannot challenge us directly – if it comes to a showdown, Satan will throw, but Christ within us will throw beyond.

Satan's trump card is not his power; it's his cunning and deception. If he can get you to believe that this circumstance, this sickness, this money trouble is greater than the power of God within you, then he doesn't need power. **In fact the only power he has we give to him.**

Now I am not speaking about something that I have never experienced, I know how the enemy casts shadows over the goodness of God, I know what it is to wrestle with circumstances and situations which challenge the goodness of God and challenge your own sense of worth and calling. At such times we need to remind ourselves that Jesus has greater authority and power and that all things are under the authority of Christ and that Jesus is the Head of the Church.

Jesus the Head of the Church, His body

So here is something really important, Paul has been emphasising the power and authority of Christ, he has said that Jesus is head over all things and then says He is the head of the Church which is His body.

Now I'm not sure what you think, but I am pretty convinced that the head is an important part of the body. The body cannot survive without the head. It is possible to lose an arm or a leg, even an organ or two, but without the head no life is possible.

The head gives direction, the head enables you to see, the head is the command centre for the body. The head has authority over the body, imagine the consequences if every part of the body just did its own thing, you could not survive; you need the head to send its instructions that each part would play its part.

So the Church needs Christ, it cannot survive without Him. The closer the church to Christ, the clearer its instructions, the better the church operates. The more distant we are, the more dysfunctional we become.

Let's also take note that Jesus is head of the church, but also head over all other things. **Now if we, the church, are connected to Jesus the head, and Jesus is above all other things, then where must all other things be?** – Yes that's right, beneath our feet. So where are the great powers and authorities of the earth – under the feet of the church, where is Satan and all the powers of hell, yes under our feet. Anything in heaven and on earth, in this world and the next are under the feet of the Church whose Head is Christ.

It reminds me of a chorus that I often use when I am leading worship – he's under my feet, he's under my feet, he's under my feet, he's under my feet, Satan is under my feet!

Now strictly speaking of course it's not quite accurate, Satan is not under our personal feet, he is under the feet of the Church Christ's body. That's one of the reasons why being part of the church is so important. We cannot separate ourselves from the church without also separating ourselves from Christ who is the Head.

Now of course when I speak about the church I am not just talking about Freshwaters, I am talking about the church throughout the town, the nation, the World – and throughout history and into eternity.

Let's just read another passage that puts this aspect more clearly, let's turn to **1 Cor 12:12-31**.

Here the illustration of the body really comes alive; **we are all important within the body but not all the same**. We have our role to play which fits in with how God has created us. It is no use a hand trying to hear or a foot to smell (well maybe it does!) we all have a place in the body that we need to operate in. One is not better than the other, leaders are not worth more than those called to reach out to others, prophets are not worth more than those called to care for others, teachers are not worth more than those called to serve. We all have a place, a role and a worth within the body of Christ.

Here are some statements about the body that are also true of the church:-

1. For the body to operate to its full potential then every part must be present, in the right place and carrying out the right function.
2. That when one part of the body is hurt the whole body suffers.
3. That if the body turns on itself there is chaos and destruction, the body can become paralysed.
4. That when one part of the body is honoured the whole body is honoured.
5. That food and drink are good for the whole body (as God's word and His Spirit are good for every member of the Church).

Conclusion

So let's finish by reminding ourselves that God's power is greater than any other, in any competition, God always has and always will throw far beyond anyone or anything else.

That God demonstrated His power in raising Jesus from the dead, defeating the power of sin & death, drawing its sting.

Jesus has authority over all and the power to back it up.

That Jesus is the Head of the Church and that all other things are under our feet.

That each part of the body, that is each congregation of believers and every member of each congregation has a place they were created for and a role to play, that there is no place for jealousy or pride, we are of equal worth and value, if one part suffers all suffer, if one is exalted all are exalted.

Praise the Lord!