

## Sermon #73 — *Ephesians Sermons*

Title:            **“CHRIST IS THE HEAD  
OF THE CHURCH”**

Text:            Ephesians 5:23

Subject:        *Christ’s Headship of the Church*

Date:            Tuesday Evening — June 20, 2017

Readings: *Allen Kibby and Mark Henson*

Introduction:

My text is also my subject. You will find it in Ephesians 5:23 — **“CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH.”**

(Ephesians 5:23) “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”

This is a matter of great importance. Christ’s being the Head of the church is something so important that the Apostle Paul was inspired of God to make it a dominant theme in two of his epistles.

**EPHESIANS**

**“CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH”**

In this book of Ephesians, the Apostle deals with this subject three times. In **Ephesians 1:22** we are told that God *“hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be Head over all things to the church.”* There he shows us that one aspect of Christ’s sovereign Lordship is the blessed fact that he rules all things in creation, providence, and grace for the salvation, welfare, and everlasting glory of his church.

In the **fourth chapter** the apostle is anxious to promote Christian unity. He knew that there is no surer way to promote the unity of believers than to convince them that all true believers are members of one mystical body of which Jesus Christ is the head. In that fourth chapter, he shows us the responsibility of those who preach the gospel, whether they be apostles, prophets, evangelist, pastors, or teachers. This must be the constant goal of God’s servants in their labors. — *“The edifying of the body of Christ.”* It is our responsibility to be always *“speaking the truth in love,”* so that God’s saints *“grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ.”*

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Then, in **Ephesians 5**, Paul exhorts us to demonstrate the truth of the gospel in every relationship of life. He begins by telling wives to submit to their own husbands. And the basis of that exhortation is this — *“Christ is the Head of the church; and he is the Savior of the body.”*

## **COLOSSIANS**

Christ headship of the church is also a dominant theme in the companion book of Colossians. In **Colossians 1:19**, we read, *“he is the Head of the body, the church.”* In that text, we are taught that the headship of Christ is to be held in the highest esteem by us, for it is placed alongside the highest honors of our Lord. In the same breath, the Son of God is called, *“the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature,”* that is the Creator of all existence, and then *“the Head of the body, the church.”*

Then, in **Colossians 2:19**, we read that Christ is *“the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands*

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*having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.”*

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— For any mortal to assume the title of the church’s head, is equal to the blasphemy of a mere man assuming the mediatorial office. I would not be more shocked to hear a man assert that he is “*the creator of all things,*” than I am to hear men assert that the pope in Rome is “*the head of the church.*”

- To say that the pope is the Head of the church is to say that the pope is the Savior of the church, “*the Savior of the body!*”
- To say that the pope is the Head of the church is to say that the pope is God!
- The pope is the head of Babylon, nothing else! He is antichrist, not the vicar of Christ!

**Proposition:** I want to show you one blessed truth from our text. I pray that God the Holy Ghost will give you a heart to rejoice in it. — The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of his body the church, and all true believers are members of him.

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**THE CHURCH**

What is this church of which Christ is the head? The word “*church*” means assembly. The church of Jesus Christ is an assembly of believers. It is the entire company of God’s chosen and called people. It is the whole community of the true followers of Christ. It is the assembly of those whose names are written in heaven. The church is that entire body of men for whom Christ died at Calvary. This is the church of which Christ is the Head. Part of that church is in heaven, triumphant. Part is in the earth, militant. But there is no division in the body. There is but one church in heaven and earth. Neither time nor place makes any division in the church. The church of the Old Testament and the church of the New Testament is one. The church of the Apostles and the church of the reformers is one. The church of the first century and the church of the latter day is one. And of this one and only church, Jesus Christ is the one and only Head. It is —

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- The family of God.
- The kingdom of God.
- The body of Christ.
- The whole assembly of God’s elect.
- “*Jerusalem which is above.*”
- The whole “*Israel of God.*”

**To be saved is to be united to Christ the Head. To be saved is to be a part of that church of which Christ is the Head.**

As one with Christ, our vital Head,  
We act, and grow, and thrive;  
And by His Spirit, though we were dead,  
In Him we’re made alive!

God’ saints on earth and those above,  
Here join in sweet accord:  
One body, all in mutual love,  
And Christ, our common Lord.

Christ, His whole body will present,  
Before Jehovah’s face!

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Perfect, without wrinkle or spot  
Her beauty to disgrace!

**TWO HEADS**

There are but two heads of mankind, Christ and Satan. **If you are not joined to Christ by a living faith, then you are of your father the devil, that spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.** Oh, tremble at the thought of it! Make sure you live in true union with Christ, the living Head. Make sure that your soul is joined to him. Make sure you are his. **Blessed is that company of men who can say of Christ, “He is my Head.”** If you are not now united to Christ, I pray that God the Holy Ghost will join you to him by his grace, giving you life and faith in him this very hour. And for you who are Christ’s people, I pray that God will enable us to live as the members of Jesus Christ our Head. Happy is that congregation of believers who can say, “We have no Head but Christ. He is our Life. He is our Head. And he is our only Master and Lord.”

## **“CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH”**

**Divisions:** In setting forth this subject, I want to raise four questions and answer them for you from the Book of God.

1. What is meant by Christ’s headship of the church?
2. What does this headship of Christ imply?
3. What is the foundation of Christ’s headship of the church?
4. What is our responsibility as members of Christ our head?

## **THE MEANING**

1<sup>st</sup> — **What is meant by Christ’s headship of the church?** When we read that “*Christ is the Head of the church,*” we are taught that **Christ is everything to the church that the head is to the body.** He is everything to the church that the husband is to the wife.

## **COMPETENT HEAD**



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**The Lord Jesus Christ is the competent Head of his church.** —

Let me show you four or five things that demonstrate the competency of Christ as the Head of his church. As the head of his church, our Lord shows many things that demonstrate the fact that he is just such a Head as we need.

1. **Christ is our sovereign and supreme Head.** —

The head has preeminence in the body. It is placed by nature as the uppermost member. All the body is below the head. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ was exalted *“as the Head over all things to the church,”* *“that in all things he might have the preeminence.”*

**God has made Christ preeminent over all his creation as a man.** It is written of him,

*“Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee forever”* (Psalm 45:2).

**As the Triune God has made Christ the Head over all things for us in creation, each of us should make Christ the Head of all things in our hearts.**

We should rejoice to say of him, *“My beloved is*

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*white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand*” (Song of Solomon 5:10).

- Make him the Head of all your loves.
- Make him the Head of all your hopes.
- Make him the Head of all your joys.
- Make him the Head of all your desires.

As the Triune Jehovah has exalted Christ to sovereign dominion, he should be exalted in the hearts of his people to the place of supreme delight.

2. **Christ is our suitable Head.** As his body, the church, has a human nature, so does our Head.

- It was necessary for him to assume that human nature that had sinned, if he was to be the Savior of the body (Hebrews 2:14-16).
- We should never cease to marvel that the Son of God would stoop so low to ransom such rebel worms as we are! — *“What is man that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor”* (Psalm 8:4-5).

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3. **Christ is our supplying Head.** He nourishes and cherishes his body, supplying it with all that is needed.
- Our blessed Savior has supplied us with all that our souls need forever (Ephesians 1:1-7).
  - Christ supplies us with our daily needs upon the earth.
  - He supplies us with wisdom and grace.
  - He supplies us with guidance and direction. — *“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye”* (Psalm 32:8).
4. **Christ is our sympathizing Head.** — Our living Head has a fellow feeling with all his members. He is concerned with everything that concerns us. Oh, how my soul is comforted to know that Christ my Head is touched with the feeling of my infirmities.
- He knows our temptations, and helps us through them (Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:15-16).
  - He feels our afflictions. Therefore, he will arise to deliver us. — *“In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved*

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*them: in his love and pity he redeemed them, and bare them, and carried them all the days of old”* (Isaiah 63:9).

- We rejoice in heart to know that our Redeemer shares all our joys as well (Matthew 25:34-40).

(Matthew 25:34-40) “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: **(35)** For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: **(36)** Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. **(37)** Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? **(38)** When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*? **(39)** Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? **(40)** And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye

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have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.”

5. **Christ is our saving Head.** — Our text says, “*Christ is the Head of the church; and he is the Savior of the body.*” His name is Jesus-Savior. And as our Head, he could not be complete without his body — “*the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*”

**COMPLETE HEAD**

In all of this, we see that Christ is in every way competent to be the Head of his church. But I want you to see, also, that **Christ is the complete Head of his church.** There are many ways in which Christ fills his office as the Head of the church. I will mention only a few.

1. **The Lord Jesus Christ is our Head, because he is our Representative.** — The head is the representative of the body. When we count the number of people in a place, we say we are counting heads, because the head stands for the

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body. **It has always been God’s pleasure to deal with men collectively as a body, by means of representation.** All his great covenant transactions are with men in a body, not as individuals (Romans 5:12-21). We fell in our father Adam, because he was the head of our race — our representative before God. Now Christ is the Head of God’s spiritual creation, the church, the Head of an elect race. He is our Representative before God in the Covenant of Grace.

- We were chosen in him.
- We were redeemed in him.
- We were called in him.
- We were accepted in him.
- We live in him. — *“Because I live, ye shall live also.”*

2. **Christ is also our Head in a mystical vital sense.** — We read about this in **Ephesians 4:16** — *“From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual*

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*working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”* — As the head is indispensable to the life of the body, Christ is indispensable to the life of his people. He is our vital Head. *“He is our Life.”* We live in him, only in him and by him!

**Separation from Christ is spiritual death. Union to Christ is spiritual life.** The life of every member of Christ’s church is entirely dependent upon the life of Christ our Head. Through Jesus Christ alone, every member of God’s church and family continually derives his life. — *“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”*

**The head is not only the source of life, it is the seat of government.** A person walks, sleeps, eats, drinks, and speaks according to the direction of his head. Thus, Christ our Head is the supreme Governor of the church.

**The head is also the glory of the body.** The chief beauty of manhood is in the head. The remnant of the

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divine image in man, if indeed there be a remnant, is best seen in the head. The face of a man is his distinguishing glory. He holds his head erect toward heaven. His face is not turned toward the earth as a beast. Beauty chooses the head as her favored seat. It is in the features of the face that you see the signs of majesty and tenderness, wisdom and love, courage and compassion. In this sense, too, Christ is our Head. He is all the beauty of his church. She is properly called the fairest among women, because Christ her head excels all things in beauty. We are made beautiful before God by his beauty which he put upon us (Ezekiel 16:6-14).

**CONJUGAL HEAD**

The figure that is used in our text to describe Christ as the head of the church is the conjugal, or marital Head.

1. As Eve was taken from the side of Adam, the church was taken from the side of Christ.



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2. He is espoused to us; and we are espoused to him as a chaste virgin; and we are both anxiously awaiting the day of our marriage.
3. As the husband is the head of the wife, so Christ is the Head of the church.

### **ROYAL HEAD**

Once more, Christ is our Head as the King in Zion. He is our royal Head, the crowned Monarch of Zion! The church is the kingdom of God among us. It is purely spiritual, comprehending only spiritual men, and existing only for spiritual purposes. And Christ alone is the King of his church (Psalm 2:1, 6; Ephesians 1:21).

### **IMPLICATIONS**

2<sup>nd</sup> — Briefly, I want us to consider this question: — **What does the headship of Christ over the church imply?** — All professed Christians acknowledge that Christ alone is the Head of the church. But very few gladly bow to the implications of that headship.

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**Since Christ is the only Head of his body, the church, he alone can determine her doctrine.**

Christ alone is Rabbi; we call no man master.

- Our doctrine is not derived from the reason of man.
- Our doctrine is not founded upon the opinion of the church fathers.
- Our doctrine is not formulated by the councils of men.
- Nothing is to be received as a doctrine of Christ’s church except that which is plainly revealed in Scripture.

**Since Christ is our Head, he alone can lay down the laws of his church. Christ is our only Lawgiver.**

- The church has no right or authority to make laws for herself.
- We do not have the right to formulate laws upon the opinions and traditions of men.
- The law of Christ’s church is plainly set-forth. We would do well to abide by it (1 John 3:23).

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— It is a law of faith. — It is a law of love. —  
Whatever contradicts this, we must oppose.

**King Jesus is our Head. He is our Governor.**

- He orders our worship.
- He determines our ordinances.
- He regulates our affairs.
- He governs our business.

**Our hearts are assured of this fact: — Since Christ is the Head of his church, then all things concerning her welfare are safe.**

- Our head is safe, so we are safe.
- Our inheritance is safe.
- Our triumph is sure (Matthew 16:16-18).
- Christ’s glory is safe.

**THE FOUNDATION**

3<sup>rd</sup> — I want to show you the satisfying answer to this question. — **What is the foundation of Christ’s headship of the church?** — We know that Christ is

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the Head of his church; but how did he come to be the Head?

**Beyond all dispute, Christ is the Head of the church by the decree of God.** — *“Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee: sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool”* (Psalm 2:7).

**Christ’s headship rests upon the supremacy of his nature and the success of his work** (Philippians 2:8-11).

1. He is overall God and blessed forever.
2. He is the perfect Man, the firstborn among many brethren.
3. The headship of Christ is the necessary and inevitable result of his substitutionary accomplishments at Calvary (Isaiah 5:10-12).

“Thou hast redeemed our souls with blood,  
Hast set Thy prisoners free;  
Hast made us kings and priests to God,  
And we shall reign with Thee!”

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He loved us. He chose us. He bought us. He redeemed us. He washed us. He set us free. He saved us. He upholds us. He intercedes for us. Is it not right that he be Head?

**The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of his church by the universal acclamation of all the members of his body.**

The saints in heaven and earth proclaim “*Worthy is the Lamb!*” (Revelation 5:9-10) —

“Let Him be crowned with majesty,  
Who bowed His head to death;  
And be His honors sounded high,  
By all things that have breath!”

**We rejoice that Christ is our Head, and we reject all others.**

- We have no pope but Christ.
- We have no ruler but Christ.
- We have no authority but Christ.
- We have no law but Christ.

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**OUR RESPONSIBILITY**

4<sup>th</sup> — In the last place, let’s give some consideration to this very practical question — **What is our responsibility as members of Christ our head?** — I will give three points of direction.

1. **We have a responsibility with regard to ourselves.**

- We must make sure that we are united to Christ, not by a mere dead profession of religion, but by the living union of faith.
- Let us grow up into one perfect man in Christ our Head (Ephesians 4:13-15). — We grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we walk with him by faith, feeding upon his Word, strengthened by his might in the inner man.

2. **We have a responsibility to Christ our head.**

Christ is our Head; let us then be subject to him in all things.

- Submit to his Word.

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- Submit to his will.
- Submit to his worship.
- Submit to his providence.
- Submit all things to his glory.

**Christ is our Head. Let us, then, be satisfied with him.**

- Satisfied with his love.
- Satisfied with his righteousness.
- Satisfied with his ways.
- Satisfied with his purposes.

3. **We also have a responsibility to our brethren as members of Christ.**

- Let us show them charity, brotherly kindness, and gentleness in all things.
- Be careful not to hurt nor offend your brethren in word or deed.
- Learn to be content with your place in the body of Christ; and serve the Lord with singleness of heart.
- Highly esteem all your brethren for Christ’s sake.

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- Be compassionate toward your brethren. Suffer with them in their afflictions and sorrows. Rejoice with them in their joys.
- Seek the frequent fellowship of your brethren.
- Be ready to help your brethren in any way possible.
- Are they fallen? — Lift them up.
- Are they hungry? — Feed them.
- Are they thirsty? — Refresh them.
- Are they tempted? — Pray for them.
- Are they weary? — Support them.
- Are they broken-hearted? — Comfort them.
- Are they discouraged? — Encourage them.
- Are they fearful? — Assure them.

**APPLICATION**

Sinner, you must come and bow before Christ, the sovereign Head of all things, and trust him to be your only Head.

- Your only Salvation.
- Your only acceptable Representative.
- Your only Hope of life.



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- Your only Lord and King.

**“Christ is the Head of the church; and he is the Savior of the body.”**

- The gates of hell cannot prevail against us.
- As the Head is in heaven, so all his members must be.
- Our triumph is sure.
- His glory is sure.

Amen.