

Christian Health

Ecclesiology Part 4

It's all in our Head

INTRODUCTION – We've been exploring the ramifications of Paul's letter to the Ephesians as it pertains to our corporate life together, the oneness of the Body. Today we're going to explore the Headship of Christ, what it means, and why it's necessary. Then we'll see how the principle of headship works, shining out from Christ into our personal walk, into our homes, and into the Church. We're going to look at our tie to Christ that binds us together in Christian love and fellowship.

Let's begin as we always do, with a corporate prayer to Our Heavenly Father.

PRAYER

Please open your bibles to Eph 1:15-23 and stand with me as I read.

Ephesians 1:15-23 ⁵ ¶ For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering [making mention of] you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you [the hope of his calling], what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

May God bless this reading from his holy word.

Thank you. Keep your Bibles open... Please be seated.

In this passage we just read, Paul prays for the church at Ephesus. He has been listening for reports of them so that he can keep watch over them. He never ceases to give thanks to God for them, as he remembers them in his prayers. This is one aspect of headship. Paul was imitating Christ who prayed for us in Gethsemane on the eve of his crucifixion. He prays to the Father, as Christ prayed to the Father, asking him to give this struggling church at Ephesus “a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him”. Wisdom is a GIFT from God. It's discovered in our

KNOWLEDGE of God, which He reveals to us as *another* gift, as if wisdom were wrapped in it. The word for knowledge here is *epignosis* – *epi* means above, superior, or complete, and *gnosis* indicates experiential knowing. It's what we have when any theory is put to the test. The way this is worded, Paul is asking God to give the Ephesians a revelation, an epiphany; and that revelation will be found in their full knowledge of God in Christ, as they put that knowledge to work.

This passage goes on to describe a process by which we come to this experiential knowledge. Look at verse 18: “[having the eyes of your hearts enlightened.](#)” That's preliminary, and it's not something we do. It's done to us by God's Spirit – that's part of His ministry to us (Jn 14:26). And there is a purpose for being enlightened: “[So that you may know](#)” – this word for know is different, by the way. It is *oida*, which deals with perception. Perceive what? **Three things:** As we put our knowledge to work, we will perceive *first*, “[what is the hope to which he has called you;](#)” *second*, “[what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints;](#)” and *third*, “[what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe.](#)”

OK, let's unpack that. Keep in mind the last two verses of this passage: God [put all things under \[Christ's\] feet and gave him to the church as head over all things.](#) The knowledge of himself which God reveals to us, after enlightening us, includes the HOPE to which we have been called. What is that hope? Gal 5:5 says it is the hope of justifying righteousness which comes by faith alone and leads to eternal life. Other passages confirm that (e.g. Col 1:5, 23; 1Th 5:8, Tit 3:7). In Col 1:27, it says that the hope is Christ-in-us: the “[hope of glory.](#)” What a fascinating way to put it. It isn't faith-in-us, but Christ-in-us that gives us hope of the glory to come. The actual phrase in Colossians is “[Christ in you](#)” – the “you” is plural. We're confident because all believers are united to Christ. *Hold onto that thought.*

What we perceive, secondly, includes the RICHES of God's “[glorious inheritance in the saints.](#)” *What does that mean?* It's not talking about our inheritance, but about God's inheritance, and that inheritance is IN the saints: **Christ-in-you.** We are God's portion and heritage it says in Jer 12:7-10; we are a precious possession (Isa 43:1); we are his RICHES it says here. How can that be? *Because Christ is in us!* We were bought with a price (1Co 6:20). Having paid for us, His name has been placed on us for our preservation (Jn 17:12); we are set apart for his use and his delight (Ps 147:11). We have been united to Him, and we have become One Spirit with Him (1Co 6:17). So Of COURSE we are God's inheritance, because Christ abides in us through His Spirit; and we *abide* in Him by that same Spirit. We no longer live, but Christ lives in us (Gal 2:20). His Spirit is “on deposit” with us (Eph 1:14), and He will pay dividends back to the Father through us – Jesus told us that when His seed

falls on fertile soil, it will produce 30-60-100 fold what was sown (Mat 13:8). Our hearts are that fertile soil prepared by the Spirit.

Finally, applying this knowledge leads to perceiving the *immeasurable greatness of God's power*. It comes to us “according to”, or in line with, the working of His great might in us and through us. Paul’s great desire was “to know Christ and the power of his resurrection” (Phil 3:10), which is what it says here in verse 20, “that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead.”^{NKJ} That same power which raised him from the dead is at work in us, and among us. In Col 1:29 Paul writes, *To this end I also labor, striving according to HIS working, which works in me mightily*. Paul describes the enabling power of God that inexorably produces and multiplies the crop. And yet we must labor and strive ourselves. Justification is one-sided and God-initiated; but Sanctification, working out our salvation, is a “cooperative venture.”

And yet I find myself asking, like Mary did, “How will this be?” What do we labor at and strive to do to obtain it? The enlightenment of our hearts is not going to yield these things on its own. That’s just a precondition to receiving our knowledge of God. Believing is not going to yield them on its own. Belief is what receives Christ-in-us. Jesus being raised from the dead wasn’t an end in itself and it will not yield these things either. He didn’t live a righteous life for its own sake, and he didn’t live it simply to qualify us for eternal life. He lived and died for a much larger purpose: HIS purpose, and HIS calling, was indeed to redeem us, but his work didn’t *stop* there! *Look at the end of verse 20*. It says that as a result or a reward for his work, Christ has been seated at the right hand of God the Father in the heavenly realms. And what does he do there? He **RULES!** verse 21, “far above all [other] rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every [other] name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.”

THAT’s the Headship of Christ! God gave him to the Church to be its Head, to rule over ALL things, over each and every aspect of the Church. In verse 23, Paul gets more specific. He ties this back to the idea of Christ-in-us: “he gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.” That’s a mouthful. The Church is His Body. We – together, united, and submitted – are filled with the fullness of Christ, who is the fullness of God (Col 2:9). Christ rules over us as the **Firstborn**, the One given pre-eminence in all things (Col 1:18), and the One whose name is above every name (Phil 2:9).

Colossians 1:15-18 ¹⁵ ¶ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and upon earth, visible and invisible, **whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.**

All things were created through Him and for Him.¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.¹⁸ AND He is the head of the body, the church;

LISTEN: We cannot perceive our hope of glory, or the riches of the saints, or the immeasurable power of God working in us, if we do not FIRST have Christ as our Head. Let me repeat that. We CANNOT

- see the hope of glory which is Christ-in-us, or
 - evidence the riches which God has placed in us, or
 - exercise the power which God wants to display in us,
- if we do not FIRST have Christ as our Head.

We would literally be a body without a Head, unable to know the fullness of God who lives in us – there would be no Head to direct us, inform us, and rule over us. Everything that God intends for His Church flows from this FIRST Principle of having Christ as our common Head, the One who rules over us *together, united, coordinated, and combined*. The cross is the sign of his Headship, the emblem of his RIGHT to rule over us, the mark of his ownership, and the hope of our glory: The cross is the source and the promise of Christ-in-us.

Paul is praying for the Ephesians to come to know Christ and to strive towards embodying the fullness of God in complete order, unity, and harmony, just like a marriage. Turn to chapter 3, verse 16 for a moment... Listen to Paul's prayer and his plea for the Ephesians:

Ephesians 3:16-19¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches [out of the riches of the saints who house and share His Spirit, exercising the gifts with which the Spirit has empowered them] I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. [dwell here means to abide, to find a home, to take possession of it as His very own – if you've read 'My Heart – Christ's Home, you know exactly what this means] And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,¹⁸ may have power, together with all the saints [not in addition to, not *like* the other saints, but in *unity* with them, *together* with them, acting as One], to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Paul has just repeated and then expounded on what he said in Chapter 1. Do you see it? But do we see it among ourselves? Are we practicing and experiencing the wisdom of God, outworking our knowledge of God as he mightily works it in his people. Do we see his riches manifested in us? Do we see his immeasurable power

working mightily among us? Is He multiplying the love of Christ through each of us, working it into the lives of others, his love that surpasses all understanding? (Eph 3:19) ***You look nervous. Take heart: I see it.*** And I see it often. When I'm WATCHING for it, and when I'm PRAYING for it, I can *see* it. And I watch and pray because Christ is my Head and he expects it of me. May we have eyes to see what God is doing in our midst, and ears to hear what the Spirit is saying among us as he sanctifies us one to another.

We hear from Christ when another believer brings His Word to us. Because the Spirit of Christ dwells in his people, we ARE Christ to one another and to the world. When we do not speak the words of Christ, and instead we speak our own words to one another, we *silence the voice* of Christ. When we do not love one another as Christ loved us, and instead we love as we think we should love, we *withhold the touch of Christ*. We stumble and fall into personal sin because we do not ask the Spirit of Christ to rule over our flesh. We stumble and fall into corporate sin because we do not ask the Spirit of Christ to rule over our Body, we don't listen for his voice. The cure for every ill that exists among us is to be found in our Head, Jesus Christ, our Great Physician, who speaks healing to us. Hence my title: "Christian Health – It's all in our Head."

The Voice of Christ

So how do we hear the voice of our Head, Jesus Christ? How does he rule over us and exercise his Headship? The answer is that His rule and authority are found in his word alone. We live by the Word of God or we do not live at all. *Sola Scriptura*. John 6:63 – **The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.** God's word is our daily bread; it is our manna from heaven that sustains us in the desert of this world. When we fail to nourish ourselves every day with the Word of God, we become weak and emaciated.

John 6:55-58 **“For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever...”**

Verse 63, **The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and they are life.**

God's Word gives us everything we need for life and godliness (2Pet 1:3-4). It gives us the mind of Christ by which to discern the things of God from the things of this

world (1Cor 2:11-16). When the Bible ceases to be our only rule of life, faith, and practice, we are cast adrift. We *must* embrace and submit to its authoritative control over us. Christ rules over us, as our Head, through his Word. But his Word cannot mean whatever we want it to mean. And his Word is not subject to private interpretation so that every interpretation of it is equally valid. If that were true, his Word has no meaning, because it has every meaning. And so some believers have been gifted by the Spirit to teach. Are these special people? Are they to be exalted among us? No more than those with other gifts. The one gifted with exhortation is to respect the counsel of the one gifted with mercy. And so the counsel of each is to be respected as the voice of Christ. It is authoritative in their area of giftedness. This lends balance to the Body. The counsel of an elder is not beyond question, but his counsel and instruction is not to be lightly dismissed. And so we don't entertain accusations against an elder without witnesses (1Ti 5:19). Like the Bereans, we compare his counsel to Scripture, Christ's voice, recognizing that we are outside our area of giftedness here and so we're more prone to error. Thus when we deal with one another, we approach with a humble and contrite of heart, just as we would with Christ Himself, recognizing the authority of Christ's voice in each area of giftedness. As Head of the Household, he has assigned and distributed those gifts according to his own design.

When discipline does take place in the Church, the Headship of Christ comes into play immediately. Here's a verse we often hear misused: "wherever two or three gather together in my name, there I am with them." Mt 18:20. Those two who are gathered together in his name are witnesses, and the reason for their gathering is to conduct a disciplinary proceeding. Christ has come as a witness too, an all-seeing witness. He has also come to preside over the trial as the all-wise and all-knowing Judge between them. He is Head over them all. They look up at him, not across at one another. Our own words spoken at these proceedings will convict us come Judgment (Lk 19:22). So we are circumspect in every aspect of this process. Christ's Headship is crucial here because such proceedings directly involve the exercise of authority. So let's get into that issue right now.

AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH

How is the authority of Christ exercised in the Church? How do we submit to him when he is not physically present among us? You may not like the answer. We submit to Christ by submitting to our elders. They are his under-shepherds, his doorkeepers, and the managers of his household. They must give an account to Christ for us. Listen to how serious a business this is for them:

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

^{ESV} **Mark 13:34** It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake – i.e. to watch over the household.

We might think this refers to our own work or giftedness, and it includes that. But when Christ “puts his servants in charge” it’s not suggesting a free-for-all, with each servant doing whatever he wants without regard to the others. The work of one or a few of these servants is to administer the gifts and services of the others so that the household runs smoothly. They exercise headship. This is better explained in Luke 12:35-50. There we find Christ admonishing the disciples and the crowds to be ready for action, to light their lamps and stay awake, for they won’t know when the master will return to the house. Peter thinks he’s already doing that, so he asks Jesus whether he is addressing the crowd or the disciples. Jesus responds to his question with a tale very much like the Parable of the Talents,

Luke 12:42-44 ⁴² "Who then is the faithful and wise **manager**, whom his master will set **over his household**, to give them their portion of food at the proper time? ⁴³ Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. ⁴⁴ Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.

Who are these managers? Are they appointed? Or do they respond to Christ’s call, recognizing their responsibilities in this regard, doing what is required of them? Christ responds to Peter saying that the faithful and wise manager is the one who knows and does what is expected of him. Christ himself, as our Head and our example, is girded and his lamp is burning as he awaits his crucifixion. That’s what he was called to do, and he is “in distress until it is accomplished.” (v. 49-50) The word for “distressed” is *sunecho*, holding-together, keeping things from falling apart: he is under pressure or constraint, knowing his responsibilities and the difficulty of what lies ahead. We too are not just “participating” like volunteers who can come and go at will. This call upon our lives by Christ our Head involves thoughtfulness, preparation, and skilled execution, because we know that we must give an account; our service to Christ isn’t unexpected or voluntary, and it shouldn’t be haphazard.

The doorkeeper, or manager of the household, is the elder or pastor. He doesn’t speak to the other servants or manage them on his own account. He speaks as if he is in the very presence of his master. He rules or manages on behalf of and for the benefit of his master’s household. He speaks with the voice of Christ because he knows that the

sheep will not follow another voice (Jn 10:5). And so, even though we may submit to another believer, we never submit to the rule of another believer. We always submit to Christ and we submit to his rule alone. That's a slight twist on our usual understanding of Col 3:23: [Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.](#)

So when Heb 13:17 tells us that we are to "[submit to their authority](#)", it's not referring to their *own* authority. That's how we prevent abuse of authority. The only authority any believer has is what Christ has delegated to him or her. All authority in heaven and on earth has been give to *Christ*. In the same way that we don't submit to a man, we don't submit to the office. In the military we tell our soldiers to respect the rank if they can't respect the man. That's not what's being said here. The authority of an elder is the authority bestowed on him when Christ called him to that office; and that authority is maintained by his own submission to Christ's authority, that is, by doing what Christ has asked of him

In other words, Christ's authority flows through an elder only to the extent that the elder is submitting himself to Christ and imitating his way of life. The life of the elder is a difficult one because he cannot live just for himself and Christ; in his service to Christ – just as in the Son's service to the Father and submission to the Headship of the Father – the elder must live for all those placed in his charge under the Headship of Christ. And so he is on display day in and day out. Whether he brings them to the faith himself, or he is watching over those led to Christ by another, he becomes their spiritual parent; he is like a father to them in Christ's name. And as any good father would do, he sets an example for them to follow. That example is Christ himself, who is Head over all (Eph 1:22; Col 2:10).

And so Paul admonishes the Corinthians, [Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me. 1Co 4:15-16 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. 1Co 11:1](#)

The writer of Hebrews admonishes his Jewish brethren the same way: [We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised... Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.](#) (Heb 6:12; 13:7)

The Headship of Christ is a necessary consequence of being united to Christ, and of being "in Christ." We are the *Body of Christ* because we have all been united to Christ. As I said earlier, we all share Christ: His Spirit, his Gospel, his Kingship over us individually, and his dominion over us corporately. We are mutually submitted to

Christ, but only because we are individually submitted to Christ. That's where the power and authority exercised by any one of us comes from. So let me repeat that: **We are mutually submitted to Christ, only because we are individually submitted to Christ.**

Unless that is true, unless we are individually submitted to Christ, He *cannot* be our mutual Head. We are individually submitted to Christ by acknowledging him individually as our King. Everything we have as believers was given to us by God. This passage we've been exploring from Ephesians 1 says that Christ was given to The Church, to be its Head, its Lord and King. I cannot say, "Jesus Christ is Lord" and not submit to that Lordship in my relationship to other believers. I cannot experience Christ as my Lord apart from my relationship to other believers. This is a package deal. I don't COME to church. I am IN the Church. And I am IN the Church because I am IN Christ. I was not only baptized into Christ at my conversion, but I was baptized into the Church.

Turn to 1Cor 12:13 for a moment. Read with me:

1Co 12:13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

THAT's the baptism of the Spirit. We were baptized into the Body of Christ which is made of many members. Why? Because if we were not, then we could not obey Christ's commandment to love one another as he loved us. And so he gave us a family to love, and to love us. We are members of the same household, and He is the Head of the House. His dominion extends to every corner of his house and thus of our lives. We have no life apart from Christ, or apart from His Household. We abide with Him here, among our brothers and sisters who follow Him together. We love, comfort, share with, and forgive one another for one reason alone. Because God first loved us and sent his Son to the cross to die for us to purchase a people for himself to call his very own, his portion, his precious possession. **THAT ACT, THAT PROVISION, THAT GRACE,** is what makes Christ our Head. And it is in looking at the cross that we submit to his Headship, and exercise proper headship over one another by watching over and praying for one another, by serving, encouraging, and edifying one another, because Christ did all that and more for us.

Christ admonished his disciples at the Last Supper, telling them that the one who intended to be greatest among them must be servant of all. And then he knelt and began to wash their feet. He said to them,

John 13:14-17 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

There it is! There we see the wisdom of God at work, and the revelation, and the experiential knowledge, the *blessing* that the disciples will gain if they do these things which they now know. In the Garden, Christ prayed to the Father: “**Not my will, but Yours be done.**” (Lk 22:42) *That's Headship in action.* That's our godly example to follow. Paul may have had this scene in mind when he wrote to the Corinthians, **I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ... is God.** (1Co 11:3) Paul understood that this principle of Headship is pervasive in our lives. It applies to every aspect of our Christian walk. We are no longer our own. And so Paul states this principle of Headship to the Corinthians just as he did to the Ephesians:

1 Corinthians 15:27-28 ²⁷ For he "has put everything under his feet." {Ps 8:6} Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. ²⁸ When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to *God* who put everything under *the Son*, so that **God may be all in all.** Headship flows down from the top, filling everything below with all the fullness of God as we submit to Him.

OUR AUTHORITY IN THE HOME AND THE WORKPLACE

This is a whole message to itself. So I'm just briefly going to apply this principle of Headship to our homes. I'm going to read from Ephesians, chapters 5 and 6 if you want to follow along. Paul begins by stating the primary principle of Headship in Ephesians 5:21: “**submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.**” Then he unpacks the principle in the context of our most important relationships.

Ephesians 5:22 - 6:10 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. [Does she submit simply because he is her husband? Yes and No. If she submits only because of his office, then she will resent him and become bitter. And so Paul provides the basis for her submission] ²⁵ ^aHusbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or

wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because ^awe are members of his body. ³¹

^{ab}"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and ^bthe two shall become one flesh." [Husbands, is that how you love your wife? Is that your intention for her? Is that how you exercise headship in your household, for the good of your wife? If it is, then she will be delighted to submit to you. It's to her advantage to submit to you. But if you lord it over her, as the world does, then you have broken fellowship with Christ who forbid that kind of behavior, and you have removed yourself from the vine.] ³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³ However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. [Let me ask again, have you strived to earn your wife's respect by exemplifying Christ to her? Wives, have you strived to earn his respect and his sacrificial love for you by being obedient to him, thus making his task easier? Do you see the correlation to submitting to our elders in the Church?] ^{ESV} **Ephesians 6:1** ¶ ^aChildren, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² ^a"Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³ "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." [As children of our parents, even though we are grown men and women with our own children, have we honored our fathers and mothers? Or have we resented them, and grown bitter towards them? Do we blame them for our own stubbornness and rebellion? Do we justify ourselves to them? Or do we submit to them as to Christ? Children, do you honor your father and your mother? Honoring involves not just obedience, but speaking well of them, and representing them to your friends and neighbors. Do you do that? Or do you gossip and backstab and try to weasel out of your chores or what they have asked of you?] ⁴ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, ^abut bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. [Do you respect your children as the possession of Christ? Do you treat them with kindness and fairness? Do you respond to them with anger when they disobey, or with loving correction, correction designed to restore and not to punish? That's how God treats you: with mercy and kindness, despite his correction which is never done in anger, but lovingly designed to bring you back into fellowship with Him.] ⁵ ¶ ^aSlaves [employees], ¹ obey your earthly masters [employers] with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, ⁶ not by the way of eye (or lip)-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. ⁹ Masters [bosses], do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality [no favoritism] with him. ¹⁰ ¶ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of HIS

might. [not your own might, not your own wisdom, not your own insights, not your own knowledge]

CONCLUSION

Disease always begins *inside* the Body, not *outside* of it. A healthy body seldom succumbs to the disease which is all around it. I've tried to show that the health of the Church is a direct reflection of the Headship of Christ as acknowledged and as practiced among the people of God. We grow strong and healthy by eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood, by submitting to him as our common Head, and by laboring in his fields. When we stop feeding on Christ, and abiding in Christ as our Head and our Vine, we have no life in us (Jn 6:53). We become so weakened by our fast from Christ, and from being couch-potatos, that we cease to be salt and light in the world! We ARE being renewed in our inner man (2Co 4:16); that's a promise. We ARE being strengthened with power through his Spirit in our inner being (Eph 3:16); that's a promise. Why? So that we may know God, experientially, and so that we may *make* Him known.

We are a public Body, a reproductive Body, and a Body that is on the move in the world. We are individually united *in* Christ, and we are united in common *with* Christ. He is our Head and our King. He rules over us all as his subjects in a kingdom that cannot be overcome by the world if we will only follow Him. We were designed and built to overcome the world (1Jn 5:4), to tear down strongholds (2Co 10:4), and to storm the very gates of Hell (Mt 16:18) – which we will do in our season, if only we will remember to keep Christ as our Head and not go our own way, seeking our own comfort, and falling asleep on duty.

Therefore, let's WATCH and PRAY so that we will not fall asleep. For the Spirit is willing – only the Body is weak. THEN we will see the “[the hope to which he has called us;](#)” “[the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints;](#)” and “[the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe.](#)”

Amen.