

Ephesians 1:22-23 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.

The Head. It is the control center of the entire body. The head is not only important as the location of reason and intelligence. It is also the source of understanding, emotion, memory, and motor skills. It is responsible for almost all forms of learning. It controls and coordinates most our senses, our movement, and our behavior. And it also controls body functions such as heart rate, blood pressure, fluid balance, and body temperature.

Yes one's head is so central to the body that it can be said that perhaps the worst injury one can sustain is a head injury. If a certain part of the brain is destroyed, so are the functions associated with that part of the brain. The ability to speak can be lost. The ability to move limbs can be destroyed. Memories long stored can be erased in a moment. And if the brain is damaged too badly, all of the body systems will simply shut down and the body as a whole will die.

Yes, having a sound head is absolutely necessary to the function of a body. This is true of every physical body that has ever existed. And it is also true of the body of Christ, that mystical body made up of all God's people. You see the bible often calls the people of God the Body of Christ. And our text for today reminds us that the Head of that body is Jesus himself.

In fact, it says that the resurrection of Christ which we celebrate one last time in this Easter season and the ascension of Christ which we also celebrate today were in a real sense the acts of God giving Jesus to the Body of Christ as its Head. Yes in the imagery of our text, God lifted His Son out of the grave, lifted him unto the heaven, and placed him atop the body of Christ. He put all things under His feet and gave him as a Head over all things to the church.

A body cannot function without its head. The same is true of the church. Without a Head, the body of the Christ simply cannot function. If the church leaves behind Jesus as its Head by turning to other people or ideas to control its movement, it will accomplish nothing that it was designed to accomplish.

But when the body of Christ acts in accord to the impulses of its Head Jesus, it can do all things. It can reach out to the world. It can speak the gospel with boldness. It can carry the weight of others on its shoulders. The godly possibilities are endless for we have not just a Head, but the perfect Head, Jesus.

Our Head is seated at the right hand of God and, therefore, has all authority. And by virtue of the body's connection to that Head, the whole body is filled with that power and that authority. It has power because by grace it has been given a share in the authority that is Christ's by virtue of His resurrection and His ascension. This is so true that Paul later in this same letter says that we, as Christians, are already now seated in the heavenly places with Christ. Yes, because we are connected to Jesus, we have ascended with him. We have been given places of authority at Jesus' left and right in the heavenly places.

And what exactly is the authority that we share? Ultimately, it is authority over the spiritual forces of darkness in the world. Later on in this letter, Paul reminds us that our daily struggles are not about the things we see and touch, but our daily battle is against the spiritual forces of darkness in the heavenly places. He instructs us, therefore, to put on the armor of God to defend ourselves against their attacks, and to take up the sword to go on the offensive against them. And what is that sword that we are to wield? It is the word of our Head Jesus. Yes, as His word rules the whole body, it is protected from attacks of the evil one and it is able to slay the spiritual powers of evil.

What good news is this for us, that we by God's grace, have a share in the authority of our resurrected and ascended Lord. In that news, we find our strength to live each day as His people. There is our strength to overcome sin, to witness to our world, and to war against the spiritual powers of darkness at work in our world. Our strength to do this is not our own, but rather it flows from our Head, Jesus himself. It is He that has been raised up as the ruler of all things. And we sit with him in the heavenly places by His grace. Yes the body of Christ taking impulses from its Head is so powerful that the scripture remind us that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. The body of Christ has a Head that is Jesus. It can do all things.

And yet strangely with this analogy or image, one other thing must be noted. A head also cannot function without its body either. Albert Einstein's genius brain lies encased in plastic in the Princeton Hospital. But even His genius brain can not accomplish anything any longer because it has not a body.

And while certainly God can do anything, it is also true that He has chosen to express His authority of the spiritual powers of darkness in such a way that God has made the body of Christ absolutely necessary to the accomplishing of His will.

What a daring choice to make! To rest the expression of His authority over sin, death, and the devil on this earth into people like you and me.

In medical terms, there are cases where the head is fully functional and yet the various parts of the body do not follow the impulses of the brain. In such cases as paralysis, the body simply will not move no matter how much that brain desires movement.

And the church can be this way as well. The church can also refuse to follow the impulses of its Head. Sometimes it is just one part, an individual Christian, that refuses to move at the impulse of the Head Jesus. Other times it is a whole section of the body, what we might call a congregation, that remains still despite His prompting to move. Sometime the dysfunction spread even beyond one section to affect others. But truth be told, whether it is a whole side of the body or simple one finger, refusal to move as the Head directs is destructive to the purposes of the body.

Whether it is refusal to repent of sin, failure to walk in His ways, or silence on matters on which it should speak, each second of stillness thwarts the accomplishing of God's will.

Today, as parts of the body, we must admit to our God that we have at times been obstacles to the desires of our Head Christ. We must admit that although His words have found their way down to us in the body, we at times stubbornly refuse His words and refuse to move at the impulse of His love.

And as we admit such sickness to God, He removes the very sin from us that keeps us from moving as our Head directs. He removes by sending the blood of our Head Jesus flowing towards us again. And His blood brings life. It heals the disease of our sin. And as God sends this blood down over His whole body, He brings fluid movement back to that body.

And that is what God wants. It is part of what His resurrection and ascension were designed to do. They were designed to create a living body of believers ruled by their Head Jesus to do His will on this earth. Almost every Sunday and surely at other times during the week, you and me pray, "Thy will be done on earth as

it is in heaven.” And when we pray that pray, we should realize that one of things we are asking for is that God would continue to give health to the body of Christ through His forgiveness and that He would direct it actions through its Head Jesus. Therefore, let us confess our sins of stillness and be enlivened by our Head to move again according to the impulse of His love for when the body of Christ moves at the impulse of Jesus’ love, it can do all things. Amen.