

“Christ as Head of the Church”

By Kirk Orelup

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Please, please, please be seated. This is Kirk here; you can sit down. Now, we know that the theme for the month has been this verse Matthew, sixteen, thirteen to nineteen. And, I think maybe I'll do Andy a favor, as well, and read this one through, because we're probably both going to reference it a little bit, and save some time, there. It's one message, in two parts. And, I'm looking forward to hearing the second half myself. Matthew sixteen, and I'm going to read it:

Matthew 16:13-18 *When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, **Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?** And they said, **Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.** He saith unto them, **But whom say ye that I am?** And Simon Peter answered and said, **Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.** And Jesus answered and said unto him, **Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.***

Shall we pray for a moment? Lord, Father, we ask, God, to bless us, to revelate to our minds, our hearts, to transform our lives. Let your fullness be manifest in us, in this message, in our hearts, in Jesus name. Amen.

So, Jesus is ministering for three years, intensely. Ministering for three years, and, maybe you could look at it as He's making a little progress survey, you know? He stops, and He asks, “Who do men say that I am? How am I doing? Who do men say that I am?” And, He asked another question as well: “Who do you say that I am?” So, the first question, it's the easy one. The second question, it's the hard one. The first one, who do men, who do men say that I am? It simply says, “...and they said...” It doesn't tell us specifically who said, just, whoever they were among the disciples, one said this, one said that; it doesn't say who. They said. Because, really, it doesn't matter. For a question like that, a parrot can repeat what it's already heard. It doesn't take anything special. So, they don't even get an honorable mention for their answer. But, the second question is the difficult one. “Who do you say that I am?” So, the first one is easy, it's not personable, it doesn't have any personal knowledge required. The second one, though, is difficult; that one requires a personal relationship with God. And, you remember, Philip had asked a similar question, or he set himself up for a similar situation, when he said to Jesus, “Lord, show us the father and it's sufficeth us. And Jesus said, “Have I been so long time with you and yet, thou has not known me, Philip?” (John 14:8-8) For Philip to not know Jesus at that point this ministry was really an insult. It would be like a friend of mine, his name is Bryan, and we call each other up, every now and then; we have been friends since high school, and, his birthday was coming up, and I don't usually do this, but, I said, “Well, I'll send him a card.” So, I sent him a card. And, then, a week later, I got a phone call from him; I thought he was going to say, “Hey, thanks for the card.” And he said, “You know what? After all these years we've known each other, and I can't believe you still don't know how to spell my name!” I said, “No, no, I'm spelling it right; you're spelling it wrong!” But, you know, that didn't work so well. So, it's an insult if you don't know somebody like you should know somebody after the years, or the time that you spent together. So, the only way for Peter, or for anybody, to get the right answer, was to have a real relationship with Jesus, and Peter apparently, knew Jesus. And this is why he was blessed. So, Jesus continued:

Matthew 16:18 *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

So, out of all the people, I don't know how many countless people had seen Jesus, heard Jesus, had been healed by Jesus, or whatever He had done, three long years of him doing intense ministry, one person, one man answers the question correctly and, already, Jesus is building his church. He says, "On this rock I will build My Church." It's like the old adage, or however you call it these days, the old maxim, "How do you eat an elephant?" You know, "One bite at a time." How do you build a church? One rock at a time. Okay, that's what He did. He started with one. It takes one. But it begins at a personal level, and that's really the point. Peter's answer was twofold, first he said that art the Christ. The word Christ means anointed, Christ is a specific term that the Jews knew well. It meant that He, Jesus, was the King who was prophesied about, who would establish His Kingdom on the Earth. Do you know who the very first king of Israel was? God was, yeah. Yeah, God was. He was. God was the first king of Israel and the people rejected him, and, therefore He appointed Saul as king, and he was everything that the people expected and wanted. He was tall, handsome, stately, he was kingly. But, he was everything that God hated, because he was faithless. God rejected him, and He said that He would put somebody else who would reign on the throne forever. Peter identified that that was, that was Christ. And, He was the king to sit on that throne. All right. And, we know that, because He says, in verse nineteen, "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." Now, you can't give something unless you own them or possess them. And, the King owns the keys to the Kingdom, so He was able to give them to somebody else. And, He gave them to Peter, and that means you entrusted Peter to give access, or deny access to whomever he will. And that's why it says He gave you the keys, and then said "Whatsoever Thou shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven," that's access denied. And, "Whatsoever Thou shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven," access granted, okay? The second part of Peter's answer was, "Thou art the Son of the Living God." This expression is also an expression that the Jews knew well. The phrase means God manifest in flesh. I'll explain it. In our individualistic society today, we may not fully appreciate the expression, "Every son is the fruit of the father," but, in Jesus' day, every son is the fruit of the father. If the father is an apple, the son is—? an apple. If the father is a hamster, the son is—? a hamster, and the mother smells of elderberries, I think it goes. And, if the Father is God, the Son is God. Yet, He is in a body, so Jesus asked, "Who is the son of man?" referring to the body, and Peter answered, "He is the Son of God," referring to who was it in that body. So, all men are sons of men, but the Son of God is the vessel that contains God. And, Peter understood this, that Jesus was God, manifest in the flesh. And, Peter also says, "...Living God." Of course living means active, powerful, efficacious, not inert, lifeless, or dead, as those idols that people worshipped, this means He is transforming, He transforms our lives. So, to tidy this section up, Jesus is the King, the Kingdom on Earth is the church, and we are his rocks that make up His church, and by preaching and baptizing we grant, or deny, access to the Kingdom.

So, then, let's go on. So, Jesus being the Son of Man, being in a human body, He's like all of us. He has a head; He has a body. Everybody that's living has a head, has a body. Being the Son of God, that head, though, was God. Since He ascended into Heaven, He remained the head, He remained God, but, what happened to the body? Well, the church became his body. We are the vessels that God dwells in today, so, He, He abides in us. But, to be the body, for us, He must be our head. Oh, we must abide in him. So, the body has to do whatever the head tells it to do. And, every member receives instruction directly from the head, and responds directly to the Head. Just as every organ must receive and respond to the brain. If the brain and the body don't communicate, then the body is dead, or it's epileptic, which means it's getting all the different communications, and doing all things, and going all places, all at one time, which can also be a problem in the church. When Christ is the head, it's alive, and it's harmonious,

and all the head is manifest in the body. All the head is going to be manifest in this body. Just as all of God was seen in Christ, all of Christ should be seen in His church.

Okay, so let's look at the following verse. It describes this for us in Colossians, two, nine through eleven:

Colossians 2:9-11 *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye [I'm going to read in verse 10] And ye [which means you and I] are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:*

So, Abby was a principal, when she was principal of the school, she had all the authority, the power that goes with that office. She wasn't all principality and power, because she had a school board, or she had a school district, or she had, you know, somebody else that she answered to, but Christ is above all principality, and had the power that goes with that. And full and complete in this sentence: "...all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," and "you are complete in Him," they are basically interchangeable words; they mean about the same thing. They come from the same root. So, Christ, the fullness of God, in body, that's who He is. And now, Christ, as the head of the church, His body contains the same fullness. And, this is important, because, we look at the church, and what we have, what we do, how we should function, all that we see, and read about in Christ, we should then see reflected in the body of Christ, in the church. So, the church is just as full in him today as He was in the flesh, if He is the head, and we are His body. And, it says again in Ephesians, Ephesians, one, twenty-two and twenty-three:

Ephesians 1:22-23 *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

So, again, the body is the fullness of God. The fullness of God that Christ is now in the church. The fullness of the one who fills all in all is now in His new body, the church. Any restaurant you go to you can place an order you can order a small, medium, or large, or all you can eat, right? The endless supply is the measure of Christ. And this word measure, we see it comes up quite a few times in Ephesians, which we'll read really soon here. So, it means He's limitless, the measure of Christ we know is limitless. So notice the frequency of words in the following passage, which is Ephesians four, measure, fullness, perfection, the repetition in the use of these words in relating to us, the correlation between Christ's fullness and the church.

Ephesians 4:7 *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

So, according to what limitation? The fullness of Christ. According to this limitless measure of Christ.

Ephesians 4:8 *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*

It was His, as we said, He ascended, and He gave it to us. What He had, we now have, just like the keys to the Kingdom. Okay? Now it goes on:

Ephesians 4:9-11 *(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he*

might fill all things.) And he gave [SO, it's about to tell us what He gave, and in what measure] some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Note the word "some" here; I'll just point this out quickly, I think: actually, in the original Greek, it only appears once in the very, very first time so He gave some Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. And, the word used actually means like it is abundantly apparent; truly, verily also can replace that word. So, it's like, it's evident this what He has done. And, I believe it was. It was evident in the early church that these things were placed, that these five gifts were placed in the church. So, verse twelve tells us what it's for:

Ephesians 4:12-13 *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, [and, now we're back—it's talking about knowledge of the Son of God—we're back to this revelation that comes from the Father.] unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

So basically saying we can have the same measure that He has.

Ephesians 4:14-16 *That we henceforth be no more children [which would be immature, or incomplete], tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men [remember who do men say that I am? Not the opinions. That's not what we're going to be edified by.], and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up [or mature] into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body [so we have the head and the body again described] fitly joined together and compacted...*

Now when we talked about fitly joined together and compacted, we're talking about this interconnection, this finely-tuned and balanced body. What happens to one member affects the other member. You ever see a mobile, a mobile that hangs, you see the different ends that extend, and the different parts that hang below, and if you take one, and you add a paperclip onto one, everything else shifts. So, it's just like that. They all work together, they all balance. When the body is perfectly tuned, then the body's in balance, and without it, it's dysfunctional, it's diseased. The repetition of the measure of fullness and perfection of measure. Christ's measure is fullness; therefore, the church's measure is fullness. Christ's Perfection is now the church's perfection.

So, what exactly are these gifts given to the body, and, how do they fill it? It said it already, we read it, and He gave, without a doubt, if you will, Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. If Christ gave these gifts to the body, to fill the fullness of the body, then we should be seeing them in the body. Correct? So, let's go on. I like how this next verse summarizes these functions, I'd love to be able to breakdown each of them. First Corinthians, twelve, twenty-seven and twenty-eight. It says:

1 Corinthians 12:27-28 *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*

I had to look at this verse many times, and, one day, I realized it was actually talking about an order of growth. An order of church establishment. It says it, here, He had set some in the church, remember we're talking about the church, and He said first this, secondarily that, thirdly that, and after that this, and then there's that, and so forth. Okay? Apostles and prophets lay the foundation. And I always—just consider the Apostles are the ones that laid the foundation, but the Apostles and the prophets do it together, and if you look a lot of verses you'll find that, and, again, that will have to be

saved for another topic, another time. But, the prophets, they have been given the word of wisdom. And that's what they speak, they speak the word of wisdom. They are the mouthpiece of God. And there's another word, call the word of knowledge, and that comes through somebody else, which is the thirdly, it comes through the teachers. The teacher, when the Apostles and prophets are there and they are establishing the churches, there has to be people to come teach people how to live their daily life. What happens if we don't teach them to continue daily in the Word of God? Then, of course they wither and die. Okay. And, so, when this happens, and they're teaching, and they're learning to live their lives daily they start to see miracles take place, right? This transformation starts to take place where their lives start to change. They were doing one thing, Ashley spoke of it, she said, "What was I before? Well, I was lost. But, no, I'm not that now. I did these things, but now I'm not doing them." Okay? Her life changed, and if you would look back, I don't know her story, but if you were to ever tell us the full story, we would go, "What? Sweet Ashley?" You know? "What?" Okay, the miracle working power, miracle and power, actually, are also interchangeable. Miracle working power to transform, to become the sons of God. To them that believe Him, gave He them, power to become the sons of God. And, when that transformation takes place, then comes the gifts of... What's next? Healings. Physical and spiritual healings start to take place in the lives of the people are transforming under the Word of God. Which is next in the order here, as it says? And, then it says, then comes helps. Helps is no small thing, actually, helps covers a big gambit, a big gambit. Now, the Bible says the whole need not a physician, correct? But, if you're whole, what do you do? You help those that are sick. So, the helps is covering all those people who are now doing the work of the ministry, because the church has been established to the point—the apostles came, the prophets came, the teachers came, you start to see the transformation to take place. And, the church is at the point where the people, themselves, are whole and transformed, and miracles are happening, and they're healed of their spiritual disease, and now they're doing things to help others in the church, and we see the gifts of helps. All right, and this is what it is. Okay? We are now looking at the people starting to function as the body of Christ should be functioning, and this is how we start to see the fullness of God manifest in His body. All right? Next thing is what? Governments. From that, when we start to see the Miracles in the power of God working within the people, we start to then see leadership manifest or emerge, from within the church. Governments. You have you got your elders and deacons coming up out of the congregation. Okay? And, then it says tongues, diversities of tongues. And, this completes the circle because tongues is a sign to whom? The unbeliever. Now the church is now reaching outside the church, and starting to bring them in, and the cycle continues, and continues, and continues. Okay? So, how is the cycle of our church growth today? Are we where we want to be? How does Bill do that cricket sound? Like, cue the cricket? All right. We need to ask ourselves a question in order to answer this: is Christ our Head? Who do we say that Jesus is? And, that ties right back in. If we understand who Jesus is, and start to recognize him as the head, and let Him manifest in the body, we will see these things happened. So, Christ, as acknowledged in the body must be revealed to us by the Father, okay, and this is actually ordination. God has set some in the church, we read in Corinthians. So let's look at First Thessalonians, five, twelve and—twelve to thirteen. I've got to wrap it up, I guess.

1 Thessalonians 5:12 *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;*

Now all five gifts do admonish, okay? All five gifts.

1 Thessalonians 5:13 *And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. [And this work's sake, it's talking about function.] And be at peace among yourselves.*

Now, the fruit of the whole body effectually working together is peace. That's what we have. Can you imagine the church just, I know we have peace, I appreciate the peace, I think Ashley almost got choked up over the peace, right? But, that is the fruit of the church working together, all the parts manifesting and working together within the body as they should. To know them which labor among you, means to acknowledge them that labor among you, and it's talking about eldership, it's not just saying know who likes anchovies, know who likes pepperoni, who likes rap, who likes rock, it really is talking about acknowledge those that labor among us. As we see these helps, to start to identify, "Oh, I see this gift in your life, I see this gift in your life." Okay? So Jesus asked His disciples if they acknowledged Him, when He asked, "Who do you say that I am?" And Philip, as we said, "Have you been so long with me that thou hast not known me?" And, Ephesians, four, it says until we all come into the unity of the faith unto the knowledge of the Son of God (Ephesians 4:13), so all these things knowing, acknowledging him. So, today, Christ is asking each of us, every one of us, personally, "Who do you say that I am?" Will we acknowledge Christ in the fullness in the body of Christ? Will we allow the Father to reveal Christ to us, in the form of the Apostles, prophets, pastors, evangelist, and teachers? You know He was all these things. You can actually look up verse by verse where it says he's an Apostle, Prophet—it doesn't say He's an evangelist; it says He is the Good news. You know? got that one covered. Okay? And, it all begins, individually, with personal knowledge; it does come from revelation from the Father, so, you have to look and ask yourselves, look at yourselves across the table, across the room, who am I looking at? Who is the apostle? Who is the prophet? Who is the evangelist? Who is the pastor? Who is the teacher? Because God has placed them all within the body. When we start to see it, acknowledge it, look for it, let God reveal to us, and revelate to us the power within this ministry, what more do you think we'll see happen within the ministry? I think so many times we have been guilty of going, "Well, I can't do this, I can't do that. Nobody's asked me to do. I'd love to do it, but until somebody tells me, 'Go do it,' It would be presumptuous of me, I don't want to be proud, you know?" And I think we do that. I've certainly done it. And, yet, God is saying, "No, I'm in you. I'm giving my fullness to you. And, this is what I need for the body to function correctly so that we can now see souls saved." We want to see souls saved; we've got to get out there with it.

So, I don't know where I left off. So, is this a salvation issue? Remember Malcolm's big question from last Wednesday night, when Bob and Malcolm talk on being born again? He said, "Can we love God, and not be baptized?" That was a tough question. We also heard crickets, I think, that night. All right? But, it was a great question, and we gave a true answer. But that one comment was made, "But not all have heard the message?" was asked. Is ignorance acceptable when Christ asks "Who do you say that I am?" I would say no. So, can we be saved without acknowledging Christ as the Head of the church? Ephesians, five, twenty-three answers this well; it says:

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.*

Like Malcolm's answer on Wednesday, the answer isn't always easy to accept, but the answer is clear, the only way the body can be saved is by acknowledging the Head. Who do you say that Jesus is? Andy, it's you.