

EPHESIANS 1:22-23

CHRIST OUR HEAD

²² *And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,* ²³ *which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

The biblical concept of the church portrays an intimate relationship between Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the community of believers. In a culture that places a heavy premium on individualism and a Protestant tradition that emphasizes individual salvation, it would serve us well to take heed of Paul's words. Here we have a great corrective for our attitude which is practically expressed through our understanding of the church as the institution to which I belong in order that my spiritual needs might be met. I evaluate my experience of a church on the basis of whether the worship warms my soul, the teaching edifies my mind, and the community welcomes and values me. Effectively, I often act as though the church needs me more than I need the church.

Nothing could be further from the message of Scripture. As the glory of God filled the Temple according to Isaiah (6:2), so too, Christ, the glory of God, fills the Church. And this Christ is the One through whom God expresses his inconceivable power in the world. As the Son chose to become incarnate (Philippians 2:7) in order to bring salvation to all who believe in him, he has chosen to manifest his continuing power to save through the Church. We have been told that this power is greater than death; is that through which the world was created; and that which sustains the world. It is a power that is greater than any of the principalities and realms of the world, physical and spiritual. It is also an eternal power.

The Church is about God, not us. The Church exists to demonstrate and announce the message and purpose of God in the world. When we join the church we are joining ourselves to others and to God in order to do his great work in the world. It is a matter of God's will and our obedience – God's power and our submission. But it is also our true and eternal fulfillment.

Lord Jesus, in my own power I am hopelessly self-absorbed and addicted to having things my own way, even my church. Through your Spirit enlighten me as to your understanding of the Church so that I may fulfill my call to participate in the community of witness to your truth and glory. Amen.