

All Things in Christ

by Chip Brogden

Chip Brogden's sermon emphasizes the preeminence of Christ in all things, highlighting His role as Creator, Sustainer, and ultimate purpose of creation.

Scripture: John 1:3, Ephesians 1:10, Colossians 1:20, Hebrews 1:3, Revelation 21:5

Topics: "Christ Preeminence", "Reconciliation"

Description

Chip Brogden emphasizes the preeminence of Christ, explaining that it means giving Jesus the highest position of ascendancy over everything else. He delves into the significance of Christ being preeminent in all things, from creation to the ultimate reconciliation of all things back to Him. The sermon explores how all things are 'Of Him' - created by Christ, 'Through Him' - upheld and working according to His purpose, and 'To Him' - moving towards a Christocentric universe where all things will be reconciled and filled by Him.

Transcript

"For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory for ever. Amen. (Romans 11:36)."

In my written and spoken messages I make frequent reference to the preeminence of Christ. Just what do we mean by Christ having the preeminence? What do we mean by giving Christ the preeminence in all things?

"Preeminence" literally means having the first, highest, chief, and best place in a position of ascendancy over everything else. It is an ultimacy, a glory, an honor, a distinction, a prestige, an illustriousness, a renown, a notability, and a nobility that surpasses all others. Paul simply says that the aim of God is for JESUS CHRIST to have THAT kind of position in - all things. That explains everything God has done, is doing and will do. But what does he mean by "all things"?

Whenever I teach from a passage that includes the phrase "all things" I usually stop and ask, "Now how many things does 'all things' include?" And the people always respond, "Everything!" That word "all" is a very large word, a very encompassing word. There is nothing outside of "all"! How casually and easily we allow our eyes to glance past these words. We have not comprehended them. If we comprehended them we could not read them with a yawn, but we would read them with a shout!

If we intend to make some exception to "all" we might say something like, "everything but" or "everything except" in order to qualify what we mean as something less than "all". But "all things" is without qualification. "All" is "all", and "all things" is everything. Nothing is left out, nothing is excluded. It is not necessary for us to list every single thing that "all" includes, because "all" is all-inclusive. But what about this, you ask? It is among the All. And what of this, you say? That, too, is included in the All. And what about this thing, or that thing? Oh yes, they are in the All as well. You cannot come up with a single thing that is not included in All.

So in Romans 11:36 Paul sums up the preeminence of Christ into three expressions: "Of Him... through Him... to Him... are ALL THINGS." "OF HIM" says that everything which exists - things in heaven, things in earth, everything that was created, everything that has come into being, everything that will come into being - is created by, and because of, CHRIST. "THROUGH HIM" says that everything which lives, moves, breathes, operates, exists, or functions in this universe, whether animate or inanimate, whether biological, chemical, spiritual, natural, or cosmological - does so THROUGH CHRIST, Who sovereignly upholds all these things, determines their place, and keeps them in order. "TO HIM" says that everything, no matter how far from God's Thought it may be, no matter how chaotic things may appear, is being directed, summed up, and gathered together INTO CHRIST. As the Alpha, all things flow FROM Him; as the Omega, all things flow TO Him.

That is quite a paragraph. A paragraph like that cannot be grasped in one reading. But that paragraph is, in essence, what Paul means, and what we mean, by Christ having the preeminence in all things. We are talking about Jesus as Lord over us individually, over the Church corporately, and over all creation collectively. We are talking about a preeminent Christ Who is exalted above every principality and power, rule and dominion; things visible, things invisible; things past, things present, things future; things in heaven, things in earth, things under the earth: all things are OF Him, all things are THROUGH Him, and all things are TO Him. That is preeminence.

Let us go through the Scriptures and bring out a few gems from the storehouse of tremendous wealth and riches in Christ. Our criteria for selecting these particular Scriptures was very simple. We wanted to look at every reference that mentions Christ in connection with His preeminence over "all things". We found quite a number. There are dozens more references that support our study, but we have included only the ones which contain the phrase "all things". Once we gathered the references together, we sorted them according to Romans 11:36 - those that are OF Him, those that are THROUGH Him, and those that are TO Him.

The result of that study is the basis of this writing. I pray these will not be mere verses of Scripture to us, but will be the very means through which the Father gives us greater illumination and revelation into His Son. We ought to meditate on this daily and ask the Lord to open our eyes to see the height, depth, width, length, and breadth of this JESUS Whom we say we serve. May God deliver us from our own idea, concept, perception, and illusion of a small Christ and give us revelation into the preeminence of His Son.

I promise that if you will read through these verses once or twice a day, every day, it will be impossible for you to remain unaffected by the Truth they present! I am affected just in the preparation of this material, and how much more in the application and apprehending of it! When we see Christ as All in All then it will be impossible for us to ever again be reduced to the small, the trivial, the petty things which occupy us and waste so much of our time. Our only hope is seeing a Christ that fills us, a Christ that is greater than us, a Christ that is larger than we can fathom, an indescribable Christ that overshadows, overwhelms, and

consumes us through and through!

OF HIM ARE ALL THINGS

"All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made (John 1:3)."

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:9)."

"For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him (Colossians 1:16)."

"For Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things (Hebrews 2:10ff)."

"But to us there is but one God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we by Him (I Corinthians 8:6)."

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created (Revelation 4:11)."

The Father declares the preeminence of His Son by involving Him in the process of creating all things. As a result, nothing was created apart from Christ. Of Him are all things - things in heaven, in earth, visible, invisible, spiritual, and physical. Scientists believe there may be as many as twenty-four dimensions in this universe, of which we only know five. However many there may be, He is preeminent over them all. Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Alpha, the Beginning, the First, the Source. This establishes Him as preeminent over all creation.

All things were created by Him, and everything was created for Him. For Him! Why this earth, the moon, the stars, the galaxies? Why the animals, the birds, the fish, the insects? Why men and women, angels, cherubim, and seraphim? For Him! All for Him! God's original thought is for Christ to fill every created thing with His Life, Love, and Glory. A design implies a Designer, a plan implies a Planner, and a creation implies a Creator. We are not drifting along aimlessly, and we did not come into being by accident. We were created by Him, and we were created for Him. We were created to love Him, and to be loved by Him.

Of the three spheres - of Him, through Him, and to Him - "of Him" is probably the easiest to grasp. It is easier for us to look backwards and see Christ in retrospect than it is for us to perceive the present and to discern the future. But He is All of these at once. It is not that in times past He was the Alpha, and after a lengthy period of time He become the Omega. No, "I AM Alpha AND Omega, the Beginning AND the Ending, says the Lord: which was AND which is to come, the Almighty (Revelation 1:8)." And, "They rest not day and night saying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, AND is, AND is to come (Revelation 4:8b)." He always has been AND He always is AND He always will be; hence three "Holies" are necessary. What a mighty God!

So we progress forward and see that...

THROUGH HIM ARE ALL THINGS

First, all things are in His hands:

"All things are delivered unto Me of My Father (Matthew 11:27)."

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand (John 3:35)."

"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God (John 13:3)."

"All things that the Father hath are Mine (John 16:15a)."

"[God] hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed Heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2a)."

His hands speak of His Ownership, His Authority, His Possessing of all things. The Father gave all things to the Son. Then, because all things are in His hands, all things are under His feet. His feet speak of His Dominion, His Rule, His subjecting of all things to the authority that is in His hands.

"Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; thou has put all things under His feet (Psalms 8:6)."

"And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church (Ephesians 1:22)."

"And He is the Head of the Body, the Church: Who is the Beginning, the Firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence (Colossians 1:18)."

"Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. (Hebrews 2:8a)

This possession and subjection of all things to Christ is not a passive, disinterested, distant, absentee ownership, like a clock that was once wound and now ticks all by itself long after the watchmaker has left it. Make no mistake: at the core of this spiritual and physical universe is a living, powerful, proactive Personality at work to bring fallen creation back to its original state, back into line with God's Purpose, Heart, Mind, Desire, and Plan, which is CHRIST FILLING ALL THINGS, CHRIST UPHOLDING ALL THINGS, CHRIST AT THE CENTER OF ALL THINGS! Come quickly Lord Jesus! May Your Kingdom be manifest!

"And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist [Greek: find their being, take their place] (Colossians 1:17)."

"Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:3)."

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28)."

"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do (Hebrews 4:13)."

"For the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God (I Corinthians 2:10)."

Everything is upheld by His power, and all things are working together according to His Purpose. The Spirit searches all things and reveals them for what they are. Before Him everything is manifest, and there is nothing hidden from Him. There is no darkness that He does not penetrate, no deception that He cannot illuminate, no evil that He will not eradicate.

"He must increase, but I must decrease (John 3:30)." Christ is ever increasing in order to fill all things, conforming them to His image, so that His glory is manifest in every corner of Creation - and He begins with individual disciples. The increasing of Christ and the decreasing of Self in every individual disciple is but a fragment of an ultimate Plan which extends from each disciple, to "two or three gathered together", to the Church, and finally to all Creation. We should be able to look at each disciple and see a demonstration of Christ filling All in All: "Look, this is what I intend to do with all Creation." He will continue to increase, and everything outside of Him will continue to decrease, until there will remain nothing outside of Him. He is Lord!

TO HIM ARE ALL THINGS

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself (Philippians 3:21)."

"And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be All in All (I Corinthians 15:28)."

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him (Ephesians 1:10)."

"And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven (Colossians 1:20)."

"He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things (Ephesians 4:10)."

Everything is moving back TOWARDS a Christocentric universe, so that as it was in the beginning, so it will be in the ending. Just as all things have their source and beginning in Christ, so all things will have their ending in Christ. He subdues all things, in order to gather together and reconcile all things, that He may fill all things. What a task that is! How can that be? How can all things ever be subdued, gathered together into one, reconciled, and filled by Christ? We cannot say how, but we know that "He is able". Praise God, how can we doubt Him? How can we question this Man? Do we not yet know that He is the Preeminent One? Let us bow down and thank and praise God that He is able!

When we pray, "May Your Name be hallowed, may Your Kingdom come, may Your Will be done: as in heaven, so in earth", this is the End we have in mind: "all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even in Him." This reconciliation and marriage of heaven and earth is a tremendous thing. In heaven, His Word is settled forever (Psalms 119:89); but on earth, things are very unsettled. In heaven, we see Jesus seated at the right hand of God, exalted above all principality and power, name and dominion; but on earth, "we see not yet all things put under Him (Hebrews 2:8b)." We see that "the heavens are the Lord's: but the earth has He given to the children of men (Psalms 115:16)."

One day that discrepancy and unceasing conflict, that great chasm between Heaven and Earth, will be healed.

"And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new (Revelation 21:5a)."

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and He shall be my son (Revelation 21:7)."

"How shall He not, with Him, freely give us all things (Romans 8:32b)?"

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us (Romans 8:37)."

"Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; Christ is God's (I Corinthians 3:21-23)."

How glorious! How tremendous! He is doing all of this for us! Everything He has is freely given to us, and through Him we possess all that He possesses. When He has all that we have, then we have all that He has. When we give Him all that we are, He gives us all that He is. Oh, the depth of this love! Oh, the depth of the richness of His grace to us! Who can understand it? Who can know it?

The chorus to a song comes to mind, that says

How could you not love Him back?

How could you hold out your heart

For even another day?

How could you not love Him back

When you've learned every loving fact?

How could you not love Him back?

Oh Jesus, may You have the preeminence henceforth and forever!

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