

Christ, the Son Over God's House

by H.J. Vine

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing ourselves as part of the House of God and the role of the Son in caring for it and bringing it to perfection.

Scripture: Psalm 84:4, Isaiah 53:10, Colossians 1:18, Hebrews 10:30

Topics: "Christology", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches about the significance of recognizing ourselves as the House of God, emphasizing the importance of truth, spirituality, and holiness within the assembly. He highlights Jesus Christ as the Corner Stone and Headstone of the House, where spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving are offered. Vine encourages believers to find rest in the fact that Christ, as the Son over the House, is ceaselessly looking after it and will care for it to the end, ensuring that God's pleasure prospers in His hand.

Transcript

Isaiah 53:10; Colossians 1:12-22

We have been encouraged, beloved brethren, during this series of meetings to recognise ourselves through God's grace, as not only of the assembly as the body of Christ, but also as the House of God.

There are things which belong to the House of God which we need to give diligent attention to today if we would be pleasing to God in this regard.

In 1st Timothy we have the House as it is seen in this world before men, and then it is spoken of as the Assembly--the House of God--the pillar as well as the base of truth--the pillar upon which the character of Christ is engraved; the base which supports the truth. One thing we should look for; we should see to it that the truth is there.

Those that are of the House of God need to recognise that the truth is placed there. Perhaps they cannot express it very well in language, but it is there. This is important today when so-called Christian scholars are denying the truth on all sides. Many a humble saint of God has in his or her soul a deeper experience and enjoyment of the truth than many of those who address them; therefore, those who are truly gifted and privileged to do so, should always feel it to be a matter of no small importance to address those who are of the House of God, however few or feeble they may be. In 1st Timothy, I repeat, God is represented outwardly by His house, but in 1 Peter 2 we are told that they are offering to God inside that house. It is a

spiritual building, and there spiritual sacrifices are offered up to God by a holy priesthood. We should look, therefore, for spirituality and holiness to mark those with whom we associate in God's House.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, rejected by men, is the Corner Stone, and the Headstone of the House. All the building is adjusted to Him, and He is also its adornment. The sacrifices are the offerings of praise and thanksgiving which ascend to God within His House. It is a House where spiritual sacrifices are offered up today instead of the sacrifices of old; a House where God is worshipped in spirit and in truth where we delight to tell Him of the grace and the love and the glories of His beloved Son.

Hebrews 3:6 tells us that He is over that House as Son, and our hearts may well be filled with joy and thanksgiving, and we may well find rest in the fact that He is ceaselessly looking after the House, and that He will care for it to the end. "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy House; they will be still praising Thee (Ps. 84:4).

Brethren, we should not be distracted and cast down by dwelling upon the breakdown and failure which was all foretold in Scripture, so that we might be forearmed for the day, when it should come to pass. The failure should be no surprise to us rather should we be surprised if what was foretold did not take place.

The ruin was foretold, but in Matthew 16, it was also announced that the Lord would build His assembly, and the gates of hades should not prevail against it. That, thank God, is as real a fact as the other! His building will go right on to divine splendour and glory! There will not be a single mistake made by the Son who is over God's House, and the Son of God will finish that which He is building in every part perfect according to the mind of God. We are to rest in the fact that all is safe in His hands. "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand" (Isa. 53:10), and "The Lord shall judge His people" (Heb. 10:30). "The Lord knows those that are His," "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."

Brethren, if hard and fast rules are laid down, the wonderful compassions of God will be lost sight of. We shall get out of touch with the tender feelings that mark the Good and Great Shepherd of the sheep, of whom we have heard so helpfully and touchingly tonight. We need to pay heed to such scriptures as Jude 22-23, "Of some have compassion making a difference, and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." Oh we need the ministry of Christ--His grace, His power, His glory, His love, and to keep our hearts right, that He may dwell there and being strengthened to this end in the inner man by the Spirit according to the riches of the Father's glory, we may help each other into a deepening knowledge of the love of Christ in whose hands God's pleasure shall prosper.

It is so beloved brethren there is in that House praise ascending continually. Thank God it has been going on and who has maintained it?

Look at this hymn-book. Some of the hymns were written in dark times. Who gave these songs in the night? The Lord. He has cared for His own all along and will care for them. All this unhappy restlessness would not be if souls were at rest before Him, and kept in the sense that He is over the House, that all is in His hands.

The Father has delivered us from the authority of darkness, and He has given us a new position. He has translated us into the kingdom, spoken of as the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love! He exercises the sway in that character so that we may be there without any fear, but full of thanksgiving, as it says, "Giving thanks to the Father!" "He that fears is not made perfect in love." God's perfect love (fully expressed to us in the death of His Son) casts out all fear. The dear saints of God are to be thankful and happy in His holy

presence.

Beloved, nothing will keep us in holiness like being happy in the presence of God, and what wonderful things He unfolds to us there. The House is built within the kingdom and the glory of the Lord filled it of old. Today, God dwells there and is known there. "One thing have I desired of the Lord," says the psalmist, "that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord" (Ps. 27:4), His beauty is what is seen there.

The Spirit seeks to lift our eyes, not only to what was done for us, but to the One who did it, that we may think not so much of the blessing as of the Blessor. Who is He? The Son of the Father's love. "The image of the invisible God." He has made visible to us, the One who in Himself is invisible. The Son was the only One who was able to represent Him perfectly to us.

You may gaze at the wonders of the heavens and the earth through the telescope and the microscope, and see something of the power and the wisdom and divinity of God displayed, but here we come to the invisible God Himself, He is seen in His Son. No angel, no mere man, indeed, no creature could thus image God, but only the Son by whom "All things were created."

"Thou wast the image in man's lowly guise,

Of the invisible to mortal eyes."

We read of the Word who was God in John 1, becoming flesh and dwelling among us. The written Word--the Scripture--expresses the thoughts of God, but here we have God HIMSELF, perfectly imaged and represented to us. In Hebrews 1, He is the exact expression of all that God is. Here it is Himself and not simply His divine perfections. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness in the beginning, gives today the light of the knowledge of all His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. We need not look elsewhere. God is seen in Him.

Look at the gospels! See Him in the garden of Olives, as that band of soldiers with Judas and others come to take Him! For a moment He shows His personal glory, as He says, "I am He!" and "they went backward and fell to the ground." God was there. Behold Him again standing up in that boat amidst the raging storm, when the little boat was nearly swamped, rebuking the wind and saying to the waves--"Peace be still!" and they obeyed Him. God was there. And when the disciples saw those mothers coming up with their bairns, they sought by turning them away to guard his dignity, but He took the children into His arms and blessed them! There we see God. But ah! let us behold Him hanging upon the cross, dying for our sins. He is telling out all the loving heart of God to us! There God's love is seen and commended toward us.

But in Colossians 1, He is spoken of not only as the "Image of God" but as the "Firstborn of all creation." If He had been the last to be born, He must still have the Firstborn's place, and the reason for this is given; He created all! and when the Creator-Son comes into His creation, He must necessarily have the first place. And, further, new creation subsists in Him. All subsists in Him. The first place must belong to Him, for all that which is here defined stands in relation to Him.

As regards the creation of God, He says, "I am the Beginning and the Ending," as to revelation, "I am the Alpha and the Omega," and as to order, "I am the First and the Last," but here in Colossians 1, it is a question of what is "in" the heavens and "upon" the earth.

In John 1, He is the Word through whom all things without exception received being and in Hebrews 1, God's Son, "by whom He made the worlds," but in Colossians 1, it is clearly stated that the "all things" are--"thrones," "lordships," "principalities" and "authorities." These are the things, that are in view here, positions of honour, and He gets the first place in them all in dignity and glory. The reason being given, because in or by Him were all things created, the things that are in the heavens, and the things upon the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or authorities; all things have been created by Him and for Him. Eternal glory to His holy name! There will not be, eventually, a single throne in the universe but will be filled by some one who represents Christ. All will be conformed to His image and represent Him accordingly. There will not be a lordship but will be possessed for the glory of Christ. There will not be a principality but will be inherited by those who shall be there for His praise, and every authority will be maintained for His honour and pleasure.

"Son of Father's love

Pre-eminence is Thine

O'er all things Head above

For ever Thou shalt shine."

All stand in relation to Him, and in all He is pre-eminent. All are by Him and for Him! Moreover He is antecedent to all--the eternal Son--who created all! He is before all!

Moreover all things subsist together "by Him" and in what relation, brethren, does this wonderful Person of such glorious pre-eminence stand to us? "He is the Head of the body--the assembly." Hallelujah! Oh! to think that we are so intimately united to such an one! He is our Head, and we are the members of His body! He gave Himself for the assembly. He loved us and gave Himself for us, and He was raised from among the dead by the surpassing power of God, and in life, and resurrection, He is our Head, thank God! "The beginning, the Firstborn from [among] the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence."

That is our true beginning--Christ risen--not the beginning of last century, but the first, when Christ rose from the dead! He then sent a message to His brethren and His brethren are here today! The movement then begun still continues and will do so till--in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye--the sleeping saints are raised and the living changed and all are translated from earth to heaven where their glorious Head already is.

We have seen in verse 15, that He is Firstborn in the creation, and here in verse 18, He is the Firstborn in resurrection--in the new creation--the Firstborn from among the dead, and the wonderful thing is He takes the pre-eminence, or the first place in all as the risen Head of the assembly! What dignity does this association give to those who are His!

All things will be eventually reconciled to the fullness which resides in Him. He made peace by the blood of His cross in view of this; and by Him all will be reconciled on that ground for God's pleasure--"The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand!" The "all things" (indicated as we have seen) will be brought into accord with God's holy mind "by Him" on the ground of His blood-shedding. God will find infinite delight in what has been brought to pass "by Him." But we--the assembly--have not to wait for the future reconciliation, for it is said: "You NOW has He reconciled." It is done for us already. "We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. 5:10). Once alienated, now brought back in peace to

God, once enemies, we are now reconciled! And not that "all things" will be "BY" Him, but notice "IN" Him! And in what way? Oh! how it touches our hearts!--"In the body of His flesh through death." In that body--the body of that perfect Man, our precious Saviour, still incarnate He sits upon the very throne of God, for He is still Man, as well as the "Supreme One" who is "over all God blessed for evermore" (Rom. 9:5).

We are brought into all the favour of God now; but let us ever remember it is in Him, and through His death. Thus the marvels and the joys of this reconciliation will more and more fill our hearts as they give pre-eminence to Him. All is ours "in Him," through His death! and God grant that one outcome of these times of refreshing may be that we truly know the Lord Himself a little better than we did before, and therefore rest in the fact that "the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." If so, if we have got a little deeper view of His grace and glory, it will stimulate us to increasingly seek a deepening knowledge of Himself, and thus we shall respond to the exhortation of the Spirit, "Grow in Grace" (this will keep us right as to our state beloved!), and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (that will keep us right objectively). "To Him be glory both now and for ever, Amen" (2 Peter 3:18).

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