

BODY OF PROOF: WEEK THREE
THE PEACE OF CHRIST'S HEADSHIP

The first time in Ephesians that Paul talks about the church directly, he refers to the church as the body of Christ. And the context in which Paul introduces the concept of the church as Christ's body is not our sense of community, but Christ as head over all powers.

The Father has raised Christ from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. The Father has put all things under Christ's feet and gave Him as head over all things to The Church,²³ which is Christ's body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. [Ephesians 1.20-23].

It is significant that in this letter, Paul's first direct mention of the word "body" doesn't come in the context of community, but rather the authority Christ has over every power possible. Paul makes quite a list of all the powers and authorities that come under the authority of Christ. And then he says that Christ's superintending, oversight type of authority has been given to the church who is His body.

We're not just talking about our authority to resist the enemy, although that is a wonderful truth here; we are actually talking about His governing authority. Christ not only has the authority to protect us, but He has the authority to work everything together for our good. It is this truth that every power – demonic power, political power, cultural pressure, even the free choices of other people – **Jesus is governing for an ultimate good.** This is a great comfort to us!

Sometimes we live as though we really don't believe this. We feel anxious over things happening around us or to us because we subconsciously feel that our well-being is threatened. Part of understanding [Romans 8:28] "*all things work together for good to those who love God*" is precisely because the Lord Jesus is governing everything, the good and the bad. And though we cannot always see it, we can trust Jesus with this as surely as we are trusting Him for our salvation.

Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where have you experienced God work together difficult things in your life for good?• How do you know if you trust in Christ's headship? What is the evidence in your life?
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The primary reason Paul begins his discussion of the church as Christ's body here with describing the scope and breadth of Christ's headship is far more than just a focus on spiritual warfare. Paul is going into greater detail about God the Father's purpose to center all of creation in and under God the Son. When we see how magnificent God's sovereignty over all things is, we can be released from trying to hold onto control ourselves and be at peace trusting in Him.

These verses in Ephesians describe everything that has already been done and accomplished since Christ's ascension. We don't have to wait for all of these powers to come under the feet of Jesus; they already are. What we do, is keep confessing the reality of this. So, for example, when we repent of a certain sin, we can command any spiritual powers of the enemy to go to the feet of Jesus. And when we pray this, it's not that satanic powers are rogue forces roaming the earth until we tell them to come under Christ's authority; Christ already has every demonic power on a leash. In one sense they are all already under Christ's feet. We simply have the privilege of "standing against Satan", just as Paul is going to explain in the latter part of his letter. [Ephesians 6]

Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you ever experience fear of the enemy? What beliefs are behind that fear? Why would Satan want you to fear him? (Jesus holds all power and authority. It is not an equal battle, God vs Satan.)• Have you experienced exhaustion in warfare? Why was it exhausting?
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Paul's reason for introducing the concept "the church is the body of Christ" is not to show us the authority we have; but rather the peace it provides for us to live in. For us to live membered together as His body, we need to settle into the peace that only a vision of God's sovereignty can produce. This is a huge theme for Paul. When he exhorts that we are to "maintain the unity in the bond of peace" [Ephesians 4.3], the Holy Spirit has already established the bond of peace which we all share in Christ's headship, so our action is to "maintain the unity (which we already have in the Holy Spirit)."

To live healthy together as members of The Body we must each be ruled by peace in Christ (His headship). Listen to how Paul talks about the importance of peace to function as one body, "**Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body**" [Colossians 3.15]. As peace is allowed to rule, our sense of oneness as Christ's body flourishes!

Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When we live in greater peace, it gives us more emotional margin to reach out and tend to each other. Do you feel you have compacity to tend to others in the body of Christ? Why?
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We are not called to create peace, just simply recognize what is already there because of the totality of Christ headship.

The most accurate translation of what Paul writes in Philippians 4:6-7 is "be anxious for nothing" or "stop worrying." Once you have truly presented your petitions before God that are causing the worry, every part of the worry belongs to God, including your emotions. You are committing everything to Christ's headship and letting go of the battle (over your emotions, the situation) even before you see its resolve. The control is shifted from your hands into God's sovereign hands.

Stopping the worry by committing/releasing in prayer to God's sovereignty is another way we sow to the Spirit (like sowing seeds). Once we put the worry in God's hands, it's God's hands that bring forth the fruit of peace. We can water the situation by worshiping and fertilize the situation by staying in the Word (which are themselves acts of sowing to the Spirit). But we no longer fight the anxiety; we simply rise above it and let God bring our emotions in line in His way.

Final Take-Home Thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotions are indicators of what is going on in us. God purposed for us to feel but we can't easily control emotions which is why the enemy loves to rage warfare in our feelings, exhausting us in the battle to <u>feel</u> something. However, we can take our thoughts captive according to 2Co 10:5 and can submit them in petition and surrender to Christ's headship. What connection is between our thoughts and feelings? Why does the enemy want to distract us by being ruled by our feelings? Releasing the control to God does not mean neglecting what the Spirit is leading you to do. But the responsibility is on God to lead you and to help you follow through. What false responsibilities do you carry?
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Prayer Tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take time presenting your petitions before God and then releasing them to God, acknowledging Christ's headship, God's sovereignty.
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Share With The Lost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those outside of Christ have to resolve anxiety on their own. When someone shares about negative emotions, you can share the freedom you have found in releasing your emotions to God instead of having to constantly correct them. That the only true peace you have found is in trusting God is in control. Share a personal example.
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