

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God*

IN CHRIST JESUS.

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

#02-08137

NOVEMBER 4, 2008

THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST

That in all things He might have the preeminence. (Colossians 1.18b ASV)

Lately, I have written much about the shaking that is going on in the world today and what it signifies in relation to God's purpose and plan. We are living in days of shaking that, I believe, will ebb and flow like the ocean's tide until, finally, the end of our present eon arrives as fixed by our Father's authority. However, I also believe that this shaking will intensify in the days ahead. Exactly what it will look like and when it will come, I do not know; but be assured, it will come.

Today is Election Day for the US President, and barring some unknown event or wrench being thrown into the voting process, by the end of the day, we should know who will lead our country for the next four years. I have further thoughts on the outcome of the election and what will follow but will refrain from writing about them, at least for a few days.

One thing is for sure; if all goes as planned, there will be one man who will be prominent in the news. But I have a question for all believers: Who is preeminent in your life today?

The word ***prominent*** means that the object in view (person, thing) has some importance or some influence. Many things in the world can be rightfully viewed this way. Without doubt, whoever wins the presidency of the US will be prominent, not only today but for at least the next four years. Whether or not you agree with the person's politics or worldview will not change the fact that that person will be prominent.

However, the word ***preeminent*** is much greater, for it means that the object in view is something unique, something special, or something supreme. Admittedly, some men are considered preeminent because they are supreme in some aspect or realm of the kingdoms of men, but can any man be described as preeminent in all things, in the heavens and on the earth? Of course, the answer is that there is only one man that fits this description, and He is the Second Man, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider how Paul described the preeminence of Christ.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (Colossians 1.15-17 NASB)

The preeminence of our Lord Jesus demands that He be first in all things, that He be central and supreme in all things. After all, He is the Creator of all things, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible. There is absolutely nothing that has existed that has not come from His loving, creative hands. He is the very Architect of the universe, through whom the Father created. The world was made through Him (John 1.10). He is the firstborn of this creation, which is something many people try to explain away, but Paul was quite clear that He is not only the Creator of all things but He is the firstborn of all things. Absolutely nothing existed before Him and nothing exists apart from Him. If somehow we could get beyond God's Son, which is impossible to do, we would discover that there is

nothing. He is first in rank and supreme in His creation. He is first in death and in life. He is before all things and He holds all things together. If we could see all things of God's creation, we would see Christ in them all. Thus, He is preeminent in all things. The fact of the matter is that He is all.

For us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him. (1 Corinthians 8.6 NASB)

We exist through God's Son, which means our very existence is dependent on Him. Take Him out of the equation and we have no life. The whole universe would have disintegrated and ceased to exist if the grave could have held Him. He holds all things together and upholds all things by the word of His power (Hebrews 1.3). Simply, Jesus Christ is the very glue of all that exists, even down to the smallest atom. Why? Because He says, **"I am the Life."** Apart from Him, there is no life. When He breathed life into man, it was His life, God's life.

Those of us who believe on the Lord Jesus and trust Him need to be reminded, in this day in particular, of the preeminence of Christ. He is the Head of the church (ecclesia) and, in His place as our Head, He is our Leader. As the Lord's people, the danger we face in this day of uncertainty is losing sight of our Head and allowing the things going on around us and in the world to distract us from the one thing that will bring us through these days, and that one thing is the Lord Jesus Himself. We need to fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith (Hebrews 12.2). We need to exalt Him and give Him the preeminence in every aspect of our lives, and all the more so in this day of evil.

Dear beloved ones in Christ, I have heard from more than one source that some Christians are very fearful of the days ahead. Perhaps, some fear the uncertainty of what lies ahead, some fear that unrighteousness and evil might rule the day, and some fear persecution and suffering for being a Christian. Some of these things might in fact come upon us. But are we to fear them? Are we to allow these things to rule our lives? Are we to be defeated by these things? I believe Peter gives us the answer to these questions.

Finally, be ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humble-minded: not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For, He that would love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: and let him turn away from evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears unto their supplication: but the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil. and who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good? But even if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye: and fear not their fear, neither be troubled; but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, wherein ye are spoken against, they may be put to shame who revile your good manner of life in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing. (1 Peter 3.8-17 ASV)

Clearly, Peter tells us how to live in this day, and the key is to sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord or set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts. When we do this, we are making Christ preeminent in every aspect of our lives. This is how we will endure to the end and how we will live righteously, even if the days are filled with unrighteousness. Let it ring in our hearts: **That in all things He might have the preeminence!**