

The Book of Ephesians

Ephesians 1:15-23

Session Eleven B-3: Positions of Governmental Authority

We left off last time looking at “things under the earth.” This came out of Philippians 2:10 where it says that “at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, things in earth and things under the earth.”

To illustrate some of that hierarchy of those “things under the earth,” we looked at the unclean spirit called “Legion.” Of course there is more to it than that, I was just giving us an example.

Then, we returned to 1 Timothy 6:15 to the “names” of the Lord Jesus. It is at these names that “things” everywhere will bow. As King of kings and Lord of lords, things in the earth and under the earth shall bow. As the Blessed and Only Potentate, things in the HP will bow. Those will happen at different “times” because the Son is manifestly only in one place at a time.

This is unlike the Father who is a spirit and can manifest Himself in many places at the same time through His omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. It is important to know about, understand and trust those attributes. Why? Because understanding them helps us obey the doctrine, such as Romans 12:19 – which we saw last week.

Romans 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

We talked about several reasons why believers do not obey this form of doctrine: 1) our upbringing did not acquaint us with God’s ways, but the world’s; and the world’s ways teaches us to avenge ourselves 2) After we were saved, we brought all of that human wisdom into our Christian lives and thought it was normal, we continued to live out of it. And it seemed normal because everyone else around us was doing the same thing.

There is something else that sometimes happens to keep us from practicing the doctrine; 3) when we go through some traumatic experience.

It could be the loss of a parent, spouse or child. It could be losing your job and experiencing extreme financial hardship. Murder, rape and incest are on this list. People have been victims of identity theft and lost their homes. It could be catastrophic injury from a car accident or some kind of sickness or health issue such as cancer, lupus or heart disease.

If we do not have the doctrine working in us, a traumatic experience produces a worldly coping mechanism; a way to deal with what has happened. This becomes a pattern of our flesh.

The rulers of the darkness of this world take full advantage of this. They plant the ideas and as a person entertains these thoughts, emotions take over. For example: A parent loses a child and they become bitter against God.

One former preacher and theologian (who had a testimony of salvation as a teenager, and went to college and seminary, and pastored for years), upon viewing all the suffering in the world concluded the God of the Bible does not exist; there is no loving and omnipotent God.

But let's take the verse at hand, Romans 12:19. The thought being planted in those who have been wrongly treated or hurt in some way might be: "What they did wasn't right. They should be accountable for what they did, but it looks like they are going to get away with it. So, I am going to do something, and I am justified in my actions."

Let's boil this down to "They did wrong and they are going to get away with it." (We are talking about personal vengeance, not governmental recourse). Or how about this one: "What they did made me angry so I am going to do to them what they did to me. Let's see how they like it."

It does not matter what the issue is, (you fill in the blank for their offence) personal vengeance denies three truthful things:

- 1) God is totally just. Do you know what it means for God to be just? He cannot be unjust, not even for a moment. Because of who He is, it is impossible for God to be unjust.
- 2) He is aware of everything. This is His omniscience. There is nothing that escapes Him. His memory is perfect; He is not going to forget.

I can hear someone objecting by referencing the book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 8:12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and **their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.**

Hebrews 10:16 This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; ¹⁷ And **their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.**

God is not saying that He will lose His memory of them, He cannot do that. What His is saying is that He will not hold those sins and iniquities against them. When the Father looks at us, He sees the righteousness of His Son, but that does not mean He has no memory of when we were lost sinners. It does not mean He knows we were sinners, but He doesn't remember what we did wrong. It means He will not remember it against us.

Let me make another point here; when I say that God is not dealing with us out of His omniscience, I am not saying God does not know, I am saying he is not dealing with us out of that knowledge. These are two different things.

So, God's memory is perfect. When it comes to doling out justice, we will not need to remind Him at the JSoC to address something that was done to us. (He also will not need to be reminded of the things we have done, either.)

3) He will deal with every injustice. He says that vengeance is His and He will repay. He has the power and authority to do that.

These come out of the verse. Can you see how knowing the divine attributes of God assist us to live out of the doctrine? They give us a perspective (a thinking) that is different.

If you think someone will get away with some wrong which they have committed, then think about these three truths and let them renew your thinking. This is what it means to live out of the doctrine. It means we are going to trust God's word rather than our emotions. This is how we deal with the wrongs committed against us.

But, we have to **believe** the doctrine before we can **obey** the doctrine; we have to believe that vengeance is the Lord's and He will repay. We have to believe that God knows about the injustice. We have to believe He will keep His word about dealing with it. If we don't, we will likely not obey the doctrine. But if we do trust that God knows and He will deal with it, then we can rest in the verse, we can leave it with the Lord.

So, when someone does something to us, it makes us angry; but what does the Bible say?

Ephesians 4:26 Be ye angry, **and sin not**: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Notice the verse opens with "be ye angry" (which is not a command to be angry) and ends with "don't let your anger continue." That's the way I am saying it. People take this and say, "Don't go to bed angry." Well, that is true, but Paul is saying, if you are angry, let it be short-lived, do not let the sun go down (the day come to an end) and you are still angry. You should have dealt with that anger in short order.

The point here is that if we entertain our anger, when we roll it over and over in our minds, it will increase our anger and the likelihood that we will sin in connection with it. And certainly, we will not obey the doctrine of Romans 12:19 and Ephesians 4:26, 31.

What we experience emotionally comes from what we think. So, it is important as to how we think. No wonder we are to renew our minds and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Our emotions are primarily a product of our thought life. **If what we believe does not reflect truth, then what you feel does not reflect reality.**

This is where sonship prayer comes in. When you find that someone has done something to you that makes you angry, then that is a signal to take this issue to the Lord and talk to your Father about verses like Romans 12:17.

Why should we deal quickly with our anger? So that 1) it does not lead us to sin and 2) so that it does not produce a root of bitterness in us. So what? Bitterness is like taking poison, hoping it will hurt the other guy. It doesn't; it hurts you.

These instructions to leave vengeance to God are, among other things, about protecting you. Spiritual harm comes from disobeying this doctrine.

Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

Anger, bitterness and evil speaking can lead to sinful actions and it can produce a bitterness that actually allows principalities and powers to erect a lie in our thinking. Do you know what "evil speaking" is? It is talking badly about someone. It is criticism which is meant to discredit them. And the issue in evil speaking is not whether the things you say are true or not. That is not the issue. The issue is how evil speaking affects your soul. We used to have a saying when I was working in Baton Rouge, when we heard someone being critical denigrating someone or something, we knew it would not be long before they were gone. We just saw the pattern. But now I am showing the biblical principle.

Our apostle writes for us to put that away from us. Don't engage in it. Why? Because it will damage you spiritually. It will restrict some area of your sonship life. As long as we engage in that kind of behavior, the life of Christ is not being made manifest.

This lie which results from our worldly way of coping with the offense will establish itself in our thinking and it will become the foundation for a stronghold to be built up in our soul.

In every situation, the PoE is at work to make us believe a lie about God, about ourselves, about our situation, or about our offender.

The lie can be a lie about God: God is not really going to sort all this out at the JSoC (for saved) or at the GWT judgment (for unsaved). If I don't do something they are going to get away with it. Both of those statements are lies that become false guides in that they guide your actions to be ungodly while at the same time, cementing the lie even more in place.

The lie can be about yourself: "I get angry and harbor resentment in my heart, but I can't help that, it's just who I am." That lie will convince you that you cannot change. But the truth of

God is that you can; there is no lie that cannot be countered by the truth. There is no stronghold that cannot be pulled down.

There is no thought that cannot be brought into captivity to the obedience to Christ.

Let's talk about three things for a moment: justice, mercy and grace.

We know what **justice is**, it is **getting what we deserve**. If we all got justice we would all wind up in the lake of fire. Here is the truth: God is a just God; it is impossible for Him to be unjust. Justice is God's nature therefore God cannot be unjust, not for a moment, not even once. When justice is dispensed, people are getting what they deserve. When we sinned, God's justice will not allow Him to overlook sin and forgive. Instead, God gave the justice (what we deserved as sinners) to His Son; He gave Jesus what we deserved.

God is also rich in mercy. To throw yourself upon the mercy of the court is to admit you are guilty, but please do not give me what I deserve. **Mercy is not giving people what they deserve**. Because God poured out His justice on Christ, He can grant us mercy.

Grace is different from both of those. **Grace is giving to someone that which they do not deserve**. As members of the body of Christ, we are supposed to be godly; i.e., like God. In what way? Instead of giving our offender what they deserve, we give them mercy when we decline to render evil for evil, and we give them grace when we give them what they do not deserve, as in "if your enemy hungers, feed him."

But let's get back to where we left off. The Father is a Spirit who is omnipresent; who can manifest His presence in more than one place at the same time. But the Son is manifest as "flesh and bone." When Jesus was resurrected from the dead, when He appeared to His disciples, they thought they were seeing a spirit.

Luke 24:36 And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. ³⁷ But they were terrified and affrighted, **and supposed that they had seen a spirit.** ³⁸ And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a **spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.** ⁴⁰ And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them *his* hands and *his* feet.

So, why are we talking about this? We are talking about this in reference to 1 Timothy 6:15, "in his times..."

1 Timothy 6:15 Which **in his times** he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

During the time that that Jesus sits upon the throne of David and rules as King of kings and Lord of lords, He is manifestly only in one place at a time. This means when He is in Jerusalem on the earth, He will not be seated in the HP. But, as the members of His body have His life being actively lived in them on a moment by moment basis, He is, not by His physical presence, but by His spiritual presence in us, filling all things in the heavenly places, even though He is not manifestly seated up there at that time. Do you see?

By the same token, when He assumes His throne in the HP as the Blessed and Only Potentate, that will be at a different time.

But, even when He is seated on David's throne, on the earth, in the millennial kingdom, He still holds the position of being the head of the body in the HP. With Israel, he is not functioning as the head of the body, but, he does hold that position. It will not be held by someone else in His absence.

That brings us full circle back to Ephesians 1:21.

Ephesians 1:21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, **and every name that is named**, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

Thrones were not in the Ephesians list and we covered that.

"Every name that is named" is talking about every position of authority that exists in the HP.

Before we leave this issue of thrones, I want to mention one more. The throne of the Son is subject to the ultimate throne of everything, and that is the throne of the Father.

So, here is what we have: some members of the body of Christ will have thrones in the HP, as we will reign with Christ, but our positions of authority will be subject to Christ, who will be subject to the Father. The various kings on the earth will be subject to Christ who is subject to the Father. The point being that in its particular scope of jurisdiction, a throne is the ultimate authority, while at the same time it can be subject to a different throne with a greater sphere of jurisdiction.

Is it no insult to say that the Son is subject to the Father. It does demonstrate that the Son has a role to fill. In the same way, when the Bible says let the wife be subject to her husband, that in no way speaks to her being inferior. It is that each of us have a place, position, or role. The man is subject to Christ and Christ is subject to the Father. This is a structure of authority, not a commentary on worth or value.

1 Corinthians 11:3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.