

Ephesians 1:20-21

Verse 19 ends by extolling the great power of the Lord, which has been demonstrated towards “us” (believers). Paul’s desire for the church, in fact his prayer for the beloved saints is that they would see and savor this great power and this desire unveils his motivation behind verses 20 and 21. It could be rightly stated that verses 20-21 constitute some of the evidence behind Paul’s assertion in v. 19, namely that God’s power is immense. We see a glimpse of His power in these two precious verses.

1. Power in resurrection

- a. The Christian faith is grounded in this one truth: Christ died and rose again
- b. This is the central tenet of our confession
 - i. Scripture tells us that if Jesus did not rise, we have no hope and, therefore, our faith is frivolous (see 1 Corinthians 15)
 - ii. The resurrection is so important because it is the demonstration and declaration of God’s power to liberate man from the greatest enemy in the universe... death
- c. Death’s standing as an insurmountable obstacle is unquestioned
 - i. Every faith system has to have an answer to the problem of death
 - ii. While those “solutions” are unique (ranging from annihilationism to reincarnation to nirvana), they all speak to the human longing to prevail over death
- d. Paul’s reminder here is that God has not only taught us something about His plans to overwhelm the grave... He has actually done it!
 - i. This leads to one of the motivations behind Paul’s inclusion of this truth in his prayer for the Ephesians
 - ii. If Paul’s prayer is for their good (implied in his intro to the prayer in v. 16 whereby he is “giving thanks” for the believers) then it makes sense for him to speak about the thing that is “most good” in the entire universe!
 - iii. Indeed, the point here is that God is powerful and that power is reassuring... why? Because there is a connection between Christ’s resurrection and mine
 - iv. Paul calls attention to Christ’s resurrection because it is Christ’s resurrection that is the “firstfruits” of our own
 - v. Stated differently, Jesus’ getting up gives me comfort because I know that I, as a believer in His, have been promised to get up as well!
 1. Charles Hodge states, “The resurrection of Christ is both the type and the cause of the spiritual resurrection of his people,

as well of their future rising from the grave in his glorious likeness.”

2. Dear church, we revel in the power of God as seen in the resurrection because we know that His power will be sufficient in our resurrection as well

2. Power in ascension/authority

- a. Christ’s power is displayed now in His location
- b. The Bible tells us here, and in other places (see 1 Peter 3:22; Hebrews 1:3; Acts 7:55-56) that Christ is now at the right hand of the Father
- c. What does this mean?
 - i. Kings place at their right hand those who are worthy of honor and those who share in the authority of the throne
 - ii. In this case, Jesus’ ascension to the right hand of the Father is a place designed to demonstrate His authority
- d. Indeed, Christ reminded the disciples after His resurrection that “all authority” had been given Him (Matthew 28:18)
 - i. Notice the universality of the claim
 - ii. He didn’t say that He had authority over “some things” or “in some realms”, instead Jesus claims that He has it all!
- e. Christ is the authority over every square inch of this universe
 - i. There is no realm, no subject, no household, no place of worship, no business, no government, no angelic being or anything else that exists outside of His Lordship
 - ii. This is the point of v. 21
 1. Notice what Christ is “far above”
 - a. He isn’t just above the beggars or the commoners according to Paul
 - b. He is above ALL “rule and authority and power...”
 - c. Our Savior is not in subjection to anyone or anything
 - i. This language suggests both physical realities (things that are “seen”) and spiritual powers (things that are “unseen”)
 - ii. See Colossians 1:16; Ephesians 3:10; 6:12)
 - iii. The point is that this is an exhaustive authority... nothing that exists is above our great Lord and Savior

- f. We know that this is true because God has declared it to be the case and has made it so that the principalities can see Christ's preeminence in where He is seated
- g. There are at least two reminders here:
 - i. First, we do not serve a weak Savior
 - 1. Christ does not exist to do our bidding nor are we in a position to command Him to do anything
 - 2. Instead, Jesus is the authority over heaven and earth and our job is to submit to His Lordship in all things
 - ii. Second, we serve a mighty God who is able to command all things to work out for His glory
 - 1. The Sovereignty of Christ (the fact that He is in authority over all things) is the only thing that gives us reason to believe many of the promises of the Bible
 - 2. If God isn't Sovereign, He cannot keep His promises (like Romans 8:28)! If He is not in total control, we are in big trouble
 - 3. Conversely, if God is in control, then we have every reason to find comfort and hope in our relationship with Him