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Aspects Of The Preeminence Of Christ

Introduction

The state of many churches today

Some time ago I was in a hospital room and on the bed was a young man of twenty-three years of age. To all appearances he was very healthy, good color and pale pink cheeks. His blood pressure was excellent and heart beat was regular. Yet, despite all the apparent functions of life, he had been dead for approximately thirty-six hours! He was not in a coma, he was dead!

Having travelled the world seeking to present the truths of the scriptures, that which I have seen is a none effectiveness in gospel outreach. In many places, if there is one, only a few are in attendance and they are there because it is what one does on a Sunday or Wednesday night. Zeal in many is a forgotten experience, and the blessing in souls beings saved is an ancient memory. Churches are dwindling and dying, inexperienced and unqualified men are the hierarchy, often remembrance meetings are repetitions of parrot like phrases, void of freshness. What is wrong, for clearly there has been a loss of focus and prioritizing. Is it possible that there is a similarity between ourselves and the young man in the hospital bed, there is the appearance of life but an absence of it.

This was the problem for ancient Israel for they had mistaken liberty for license, and functioning for fruit. Then, despite all the warnings, it happened! The city was being taken captive, the temple destroyed, then, seeing the best of their people going into captivity, they wept, but too late. Is that what is happening in many churches today?

What is the answer?

One thing we can be sure of, it is not casting aside Biblical principles but the outliving of Biblical truths and how can that be done? There is a three-fold answer:

- a) Individuals seeing of the glory of the Lord:
 - i) "But we all, with open face beholding . . . the glory of the Lord, are changed . . . from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18).
- b) The partaking of the character of the Lord:
 - i) "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. 5:11).
- c) The abiding in the Lord:
 - i) "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (Jn. 15:4).

Avenues In Which Christ Is Preeminent In Personal Excellencies

It would be very foolish to indicate that the following list is all the ways the Lord is preeminent, but it is the ways I am aware of.

- 1) His Attraction:
 - a) The question is asked, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" The answer is a compiling of his physical perfections, and having begun with the thought of his positional glories, "He is the chiefest among ten thousand." She ends by saying, "He is altogether lovely" (Song of Sol. 5:9-16). She does not say, "He is lovely" but "He is altogether lovely", that is, there is not a facet of His person that is not to her perfection and pleasing.
- 2) His Accomplishment:
 - a) "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:14-15).

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- 3) His Authority:
 - a) The Lord has been set by God, “At his own right hand in the heavenly places, 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: And hath put all things under his feet” (Eph. 1:20-22).
- 4) His Distinction:
 - a) There are multiple ways the Lord is preeminent in multiple distinctions, such as:
 - i) Being the sole/exclusive:
 1. Mediator between God and men (1 Tim. 2:5)
 2. Advocate with the Father (1 Jn. 2:1)
 3. High Priest who is perfect (Heb. 2:10), and perfects forever them that are sanctified (Heb. 10:14).
 4. Legislator (Matt. 28:20)
 - ii) Being the only human being:
 1. In whom God was well pleased (Matt. 3:17)
 2. Who could forgive sins (Mk. 2:7)
- 5) His Glorification:
 - a) “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go” (Acts 3:13).
 - b) “Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God” (1 Pet. 1:21).
- 6) His Justification:
 - a) “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit” (1 Tim. 3:16).
- 7) His Liberation:
 - a) “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free” (Gal. 5:1).
- 8) His Moral Perfection:
 - a) “Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully” (Psa. 24:3-4).
- 9) His Preserving Abilities:
 - a) “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless” (Jude 24)
 - b) Able to save to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25).
- 10) Qualifications:
 - a) “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev. 5:9-10).
- 11) Resurrection:
 - a) “And he is the head of the body, the church . . . the firstborn from the dead” (Col. 1:18).
 - b) “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Cor. 15:20).
- 12) His Revelation:
 - a) “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?” (Jn. 14:9)

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Avenues In Which Christ Is Preeminent By Divine Decrees

- 1) Divine decree of administration:
 - a) I will make Him higher than the kings of the earth (Psa. 89:27).
 - b) “And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 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: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:19-23).
- 2) Divine purposes:
 - a) “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion” (Psa. 2:6).
 - b) “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool” (Psa. 110:1).
- 3) Divine Proclamation:
 - a) “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (Heb. 5:6).
 - b) “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue should confess” (Phil. 2:10-11).
 - c) “That in all things He might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18).
- 4) Divine Salutation:
 - a) “Called (addressed /saluted) of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec” (Heb. 5:10).

Conclusion

I fear for some it is too late to change the inevitable result of years of apathy, of hiding things under the mat so that the boat does not get rocked and “Diotrephes” ruling. Facts are oftentimes not pleasant but they remain facts, and reality is, unless there is a change in leadership from “my buddies” to real spiritual men, many churches will die. We must face the truth of scriptures that not all “seen to be elders” and on the signing committee are true shepherds, as Paul said so plainly (Acts 20:29-30). For many churches they are in a “do or die” state, and only time will tell. All I can say is, “God have mercy on us all”.

. . . *Rowan Jennings*