# Eyes of your heart enlightened

Will Fitzgerald

Kalamazoo Mennonite Fellowship

May 17, 2015

Ephesians 1:15-23 (NRSV).

**15**I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your lovetoward all the saints, and for this reason **16**I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. **17**I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, **18**so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, **19**and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. **20**God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him 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 age to come. **22**And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, **23**which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

# Introduction

Here’s one of those strange coincidences – having decided that we should look at the letter to the Ephesians, we did an overview last week, and looked at the first few scriptures. And now, the lectionary passage for today is exactly the next section of Ephesians!

This passage claims that God raised Jesus from the dead, and “seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places.” In the Greek, that says Jesus is seated “in the heavenlies” and I like that, just because I have no idea exactly what that means, and the phrase “the heavenly places” *seems* like something I should know, but of course it’s just as weird. A lot of times, I think we should just allow the scriptures to keep us off balance.

Because where are these heavenlies? Can we fly there? Yuri Gagarin was the first human in space, and after his flight, Nikita Khrushchev said Gagarin didn’t see God there. No astronaut nor cosmonaut nor astronomer has ever seen the right hand of God in the heavenlies.

Yet, Paul says three important things about the ascended Jesus:

1. He is above any earthly power – any person, any nation, any system, any thing with a name
2. Everything earthly has been put under his authority
3. He is the head of the body, his church

# Lord over everything

So, just think of that. Let’s *name* earthly things, and declare “Jesus is Lord over *X*.”

Note, there are about 5 million articles in the English version of Wikipedia these days, and this certainly names most systems and rules. Jesus is Lord over each of these. For example:

* Accessible Computing
* Anarchism
* Afghanistan History
* Afghanistan Geography
* Afghanistan People
* Afghanistan Communications
* Afghanistan Transportations
* Afghanistan Military
* Afghanistan Transnational Issues
* Assistive Technology
* Amoeboid Taxa
* Autism
* Albania History
* Albania People

There are over 7 billion people, almost everyone with a name. Jesus is the Lord over each person. For example:

* Will
* Bess
* … everyone at worship…

# Our job in the meantime

From Michael Gulker:

We all ask of Jesus, “Are you now going to restore the kingdom?” (v.6). Are you finally going prove to the world, indisputably, that we are right and they are wrong? That we’re the winners and they’re the losers?

But Jesus responds to his disciples, both then and now: “It is not for you to know the times or dates” for that kind of victory. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be ***my witnesses***in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (v.7-8) Jesus doesn’t answer their question as they asked it. He refuses to meet their expectations, and ours, not because our demands are too big, but because they’re way too small. God’s plan was never simply to take the side of one people or one issue over against another. He has little interest in declaring a winner in whatever culture war is currently being fought. Rather, he intends something far more beautiful. Jesus, the Jew from Nazareth, ascends in his human flesh, to the right hand of God. Human nature, in Christ, is being raised up, beyond its bickering and polemics and wars and atrocities, to its intended place beside ***God himself***.

We are meant for more than fighting our petty wars. Nature is about more than surviving by being red in tooth and claw. We have been created in God’s own image and that image has been revealed in Christ’s life, death and resurrection. And by the power of his Holy Spirit, is being restored in us. And now, we are sent out as Christ’s witnesses, to the very ends of the earth to testify to a fragmented, degraded and violent humanity a message of hope. As the body of Christ, we are sent out to embody that hope, to present, through our life together, an alternative to wars and rumors of wars.

But that means we are sent right into the midst of those wars and rumors. Those conflicts are precisely the places where we learn to pick up our cross and follow Jesus, to allow him to use our conflicts as the crucible by which we become a people formed in his image, a people meant for heaven – a people of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

As we grow into his image, we then bear that image, an image of healing and hope to a world that desperately needs it. Thanks be to God