

5-Day Devotional — Colossians 1:18

Theme: Christ, the Living Head of the Church

Day 1 — The Church Has a Head (and It Isn't Us)

Read: Colossians 1:18, Ephesians 1:22–23, Ephesians 4:15–16, 1 Corinthians 12:12–13

It's easy to talk about “the church” like it's mainly a place, a schedule, or a collection of people with similar values. But Paul won't let us reduce it like that. He says the church is a body—and Christ is its Head. That's not just a leadership chart. It's a lifeline.

When you think about a body, you realize how dependent it is. A body doesn't decide what it is or where it's going. It doesn't generate its own life. The head directs and supplies. In the same way, the church is not fueled by human energy, personalities, or clever strategies. Christ gives life to His people, and He guides His people. The church is alive because Jesus is alive.

This matters because church life can get confusing fast. We're tempted to treat the church like something we manage, critique, or customize. But when Christ is Head, the church is not a product. It's a people. And your place in it is not “customer.” It's member.

Christ's headship also frees you from the pressure to fix everything. The church does not rest on your shoulders. You're not the Head. That job is taken—and thank God for that. Your calling is to hold fast to Christ, to grow under His Word, and to love His people with the kind of patience you want others to show you.

Reflection Questions

1. When you think about church, do you think more like a member or a consumer? Why?
2. Where are you tempted to take control instead of trusting Christ's leadership?
3. What would it look like for you to “hold fast to the Head” this week?

Practical Application

Come to church—or your next gathering—with one intentional goal: encourage one person. A text, a prayer, a conversation, a kind word. Members build up the body.

Prayer

Father, thank You for giving us Jesus as the Head of the church. Forgive me for treating Your church like a product or a project. Teach me to trust Christ's leadership and depend on His life. Help me love the body the way You love it. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 2 — When the Church Hurts, Look to the Head

Read: Colossians 1:18, John 17:11–17, Ephesians 5:25–27, Psalm 27:13–14

Church hurt is real. Sometimes it comes from harsh words. Sometimes it comes from hypocrisy. Sometimes it comes from being overlooked, misunderstood, or betrayed. The temptation after being hurt is to retreat. To keep Jesus, but keep His people at arm's length.

Colossians 1:18 doesn't pretend the church is perfect. It reminds us who is faithful. Jesus is the Head of the church, and He does not abandon what He purchased with His blood. The body may limp at times, but the Head does not fail. He nourishes. He corrects. He heals. He keeps.

This is why Jesus prayed so intensely for His people in John 17. He didn't pray as someone detached. He prayed as a Savior who loves His own. "Holy Father, keep them," He said. He asked the Father to protect His people, sanctify them in truth, and hold them steady in a world that will pressure and fracture them.

If you've been wounded, this passage invites you to bring your pain to Christ rather than letting pain drive you away from Christ's people. That doesn't mean you ignore sin or pretend nothing happened. It means you refuse to let a bad experience rewrite what Christ says is true. His church is still His body. He is still its Head. And He is strong enough to meet you in disappointment without turning you cynical.

Sometimes healing begins with one honest step: prayer instead of bitterness, conversation instead of avoidance, repentance instead of self-protection. And sometimes healing means asking for help from wise leaders when trust has been damaged. Either way, don't suffer alone. Christ does not heal His people by isolating them. He heals them within His body.

Reflection Questions

1. Where have you been tempted to withdraw because of church hurt?
2. What would it look like to bring that hurt honestly to Christ this week?
3. Is there a safe next step toward healing—conversation, counsel, prayer?

Practical Application

Write a short prayer naming your hurt and asking Christ for healing. If appropriate, reach out to a trusted believer or pastor and ask for a conversation.

Prayer

Father, You know my wounds and disappointments. Thank You that Jesus is the Head of the church and that He does not abandon His people. Give me wisdom, humility, and courage to take the next step toward healing. Guard me from cynicism, and help me hope again. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 3 — The Beginning of the New Creation

Read: Colossians 1:18, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:4–6, Colossians 3:1–4, Revelation 21:1–5

Paul says Jesus is “the beginning.” That’s not just a poetic title. It’s a claim about history. The resurrection of Jesus is the start of God’s new creation. It’s the moment the future broke into the present.

That means Christians are not merely people waiting on new creation someday. In Christ, we already belong to it. “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation,” Paul says. That doesn’t mean your life is suddenly easy or that your struggles instantly disappear. It means your identity has changed. Your story has changed. Your future has been pulled into the present by union with the risen Christ.

Ephesians says God made us alive together with Christ and raised us with Him. That’s not metaphor for optimism. It’s resurrection language. The same power that raised Jesus is at work in believers by the Spirit. Even now, we taste the powers of the age to come—new desires, real repentance, genuine love, and growing holiness.

This is why church life matters. The church is a preview community. A living sign that God is remaking humanity in Christ. We’re not perfect, but we are new. We are learning to live now in light of what will one day fill the whole world: resurrection life with no death, no curse, no sin.

So when you feel stuck, remember this: your daily obedience isn’t you trying to earn a place in the new creation. It’s you learning to live like someone who already belongs to it. The risen Christ is your Head. Your life is hidden with Him. And what is true of Him will one day be true of you in full.

Reflection Questions

1. Where do you forget that you already belong to the new creation in Christ?
2. What “old world” patterns are you being called to put off right now?
3. What does it look like to “seek the things above” in one specific area?

Practical Application

Choose one habit that reinforces “old creation” thinking (bitterness, lust, endless scrolling, anxiety spirals). Replace it today with one “new creation” practice: Scripture, prayer, confession, serving someone.

Prayer

Father, thank You that Jesus’ resurrection is the beginning of the new creation, and that in Christ I already belong to that new world. Help me live today in light of what is true of me in Him. Strengthen me to put off the old and walk in newness of life. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 4 — Firstborn from the Dead: Your Hope Is Not Fragile

Read: Colossians 1:18, 1 Corinthians 15:20–23, Romans 8:1, Romans 8:11, Hebrews 6:19–20

Paul calls Jesus “the firstborn from the dead.” He’s not saying Jesus was the first person ever brought back to life. Others were raised before Him—Lazarus, for example—but they returned to mortal life and died again. Jesus rose into a new kind of life: resurrection life. Death didn’t pause. Death lost.

That’s why Paul calls Him the “firstfruits” in 1 Corinthians 15. If the firstfruits have been raised, the harvest is coming. Christ’s resurrection is not only His victory. It’s the guarantee of yours. If you belong to Christ, your future is not a question mark. It’s anchored.

This is where assurance gets sturdy. When your conscience is loud, and your heart feels shaky, you’re tempted to look inward for proof that you’re okay. But Scripture pushes your eyes outward. “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” That’s a verdict, not a feeling. Your standing with God rests on Christ’s finished work, not the strength of your spiritual walk.

And because you are united to the risen Christ, the Spirit who raised Jesus is at work in you now. Even your fight against sin is evidence of resurrection life. Dead people don’t struggle. Living people do.

So don’t interpret hardship as God abandoning you. Don’t interpret weakness as your faith being fake. If you are in Christ, you are held by a living Head. And the One who conquered death will finish what He began.

Reflection Questions

1. When you struggle, do you look inward for assurance or outward to Christ?
2. What fears about the future does Christ’s resurrection confront?
3. How would your week change if you lived “anchored” to Christ’s victory?

Practical Application

Write Romans 8:1 somewhere you’ll see it. When guilt flares up, read it out loud and thank God for a settled verdict in Christ.

Prayer

Father, thank You that Jesus is the firstborn from the dead and that His resurrection guarantees my hope. When my heart condemns me, lift my eyes to Christ and His finished work. Strengthen my assurance in Your gospel and steady me in every trial. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 5 — Preeminent in Everything

Read: Colossians 1:18, Philippians 2:9–11, Matthew 28:18–20, Colossians 3:16–17, 2 Corinthians 4:5

Paul ends with purpose: “that in everything he might be preeminent.” Not most important in church stuff only. Not first place on Sunday mornings only. In everything.

That’s both confrontational and freeing. It confronts us because we all have something we want to keep “first.” Control. Comfort. Reputation. Success. The approval of others. Even good things can become rival thrones. And the moment Christ is not preeminent, something else will be.

But it’s freeing because Christ’s preeminence is not the demand of a tyrant. It’s the rightful rule of the One who gave Himself for you. The same Jesus who commands all things is the Jesus who was obedient to death for sinners. God has exalted Him, and one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

So what does it look like to give Christ first place? It looks like letting His Word dwell in you richly. It looks like making decisions under His authority. It looks like worship that isn’t performative. It looks like a witness that doesn’t point to ourselves but to Jesus: “What we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord.”

And it looks like the church being the church—imperfect, yes, but alive; ordinary, yes, but faithful; not held together by personality, but by Christ.

Reflection Questions

1. Where are you most tempted to keep control instead of giving Christ first place?
2. What would “Christ is preeminent” look like in your home this week?
3. Who is one person you could point to Jesus through a conversation or invitation?

Practical Application

Choose one “everything” category today—family, work, screen time, speech, money—and make one deliberate decision that puts Christ first (even if it’s small).

Prayer

Father, You have exalted Your Son, and He deserves first place in everything. Forgive me for the rival thrones I set up in my heart. Help me live under Christ’s good rule with joy and freedom. Make my life and my church point clearly to Jesus. In Jesus’ name, Amen.