Undermining the Headship of Christ
Selected Scriptures
90-454

We started a few weeks ago to think a little bit about the church. As I was mentioning in one of the services this morning, we have a lot of new people in our church. Austin asked a few Sunday nights ago when we were having a little discussion of folks who had come in the last few years. And we were amazed at how many people have come to our church in the last few years. And it seemed important to us to talk about the church so the people understand what a church should be. And, of course, there's a lot of confusion out there about what a church really is.

So we started this little series on how to recognize a church. How do you know you found the real thing? And we started in Matthew chapter 16 with a confession that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And so we said that, first of all, a church is a collection of people who confess Jesus as Lord. It is an assembly of people who worship the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the focus of their life.

And as we continue to think about what distinguishes a church, it is important for me to talk about the role that the Lord Jesus Christ plays in the church. And so tonight I want to talk to you about a very important doctrine in the New Testament, the doctrine concerning Christ as the head of the church.

In Colossians chapter 1, Paul says Christ is the head of the church in verse 18. And in Colossians chapter 2, he repeats it again--Christ is the head of the church. In Ephesians 1 he says it again--Christ is the head of the church. In Ephesians 4 he says it again--Christ is the head of the church. And in that very familiar portion in Ephesians 5:22 and 23, he says that Christ is the head of the church, again in reference to understanding that women are to submit to their husbands as the church submits to its head, who is Jesus Christ. Clearly it is foundational to the understanding of the church that we recognize the lordship of Christ in His church, the dominance of Christ in His church, the headship of Christ. And I have a lot of things that I want to say to you about that. I'm hoping we can get the most important ones in, in our discussion tonight. But let me begin with some history.

One of the great heroes of the faith and one to whom I have been drawn for many years of my life is a man named John Hus, John Hus; well-known and loved by many who know the history of the Reformation and pre-Reformation. He was a Bohemian. He was a pre-Reformation Reformer. He was born to peasant parents. He was born in a town called Husinec. He was at the age of 20 determined to change his name and maybe his identity, and so he dropped the later part of Husinec, the village by which people were known, and he became John Hus.

Now it just so happens that Hus means "the goose." And so through church history he has sort of been labeled the goose. That nickname stuck; it stuck so well that even Martin Luther--100 years later--Martin Luther came along and commented on Hus being martyred. Hus was martyred, and I'll say more about that. And when Luther commented on Hus being martyred, he said, "The goose was cooked," and that's where that phrase came from and it's still around, even in the English language.

The day for the cooking of the goose was July 6, 1415, a hundred and two years before Luther posts his Ninety-Five Theses--July 6, 1415. He was taken to the cathedral in Prague, which was the main cathedral in that part of the world, Catholic cathedral. He was, of course, a Catholic priest because the Protestant Reformation was still a hundred years away. And he was dressed in his full priestly regalia, all the vestments that marked his priesthood were put on him and he was brought out into public. And then one by one he was stripped of each one of those vestments. He was being defrocked. This was the decision of the Council of Constance, which was overseen by the bishop of Constance. The decision of the council was to defrock him and then execute him.

They tied him to the stake where he would be burned to death and history says that he prayed this: "Lord, Jesus, it is for You that I patiently endure this cruel death. Have mercy on my enemies." He prayed like the Lord Jesus, "Father, forgive them." Or like Stephen, "Lay not this sin to their charge. Have mercy on my enemies." He was heard reciting the Psalms as the flames incinerated him. His executioners scooped up all the ashes that remained from the fire and tossed them into a nearby lake so that nothing, absolutely nothing of him would be recoverable. They were afraid that if his followers collected his ashes, that they would become of a shrine that would be enough a symbol and an icon to start a movement against them. But some of his followers did go to where he was burned, and they collected bits of soil on the spot where he died and took them back to Bohemia for a memorial.

Early in his monastic career, Martin Luther was rummaging through the stacks in a library and came across the sermons of John Hus that had been preserved for that hundred years. Luther began to read John Hus and Luther wrote this: "I was overwhelmed with astonishment. I could not understand for what cause they had hurt so great a man who explained the Scriptures with so much gravity and skill." John Hus became a hero to Martin Luther. John Hus had brought up the issues for which Luther was used by God to bring about the Reformation, including the selling of indulgences as if you could buy your way out of a place that didn't exist, purgatory. Hus became Luther's hero because Hus preached the Bible and he preached biblical doctrine that was crucial to the Reformation.

But back to Hus for a moment. Why did they execute him? A little biography. His parents told him, "If you want to survive in this very bleak and difficult world"--and it was a difficult world--"become a priest. If you become a priest, you'll be cared for for life. You'll always have enough money; you'll always have food to eat, and you'll have a place of influence." So he entered the priesthood for the sole purpose of escaping poverty. It just so happened that he was brilliant and so he was sent off to be educated as a priest and he earned his bachelor's degree, his master's degree, and his doctorate. In 1401 John Hus was ordained as a priest. He was so good at communicating that he became the preacher in Prague at the Bethlehem Chapel, and it seated three thousand people and they came. And at first he preached in Latin so no one understood him because the people didn't know Latin. They were, for the most part, illiterate anyway. But the Lord allowed him to come across some of the writings of all people Wycliffe, and Wycliffe was always discussing the Bible. And Wycliffe was always desiring, quote: "To hold, believe and assert whatever is contained in the Bible as long as I have breath in me." And Hus took that as his mandate. And he said, "I will teach the Bible and I will teach it in the language of the people." And so he abandoned Latin and he began to preach the Bible in the language of the people.

The Catholic Church said, "You must stop." He refused to stop. He was forbidden to preach. He kept preaching. He was excommunicated. He kept preaching. He kept preaching in the same place. And his biographer says, "The worse he was treated, the more heavily he leaned on the Bible which he

proclaimed as the sole and final authority." Finally the Catholic Church found a strategy. They made a rule that anyone who was a part of his church would be refused Communion and would be refused burial in an appropriate way as long as he kept on preaching. In fact, as long as he kept on preaching, even if he didn't go here and preach, if you were in the place where he was preaching, in the city where he was preaching, you would be refused Communion and that meant participation in salvation to them, and you would be refused a Christian burial.

So to spare the people in 1412, eleven years after his ordination, he left the city of Prague and he went out into the wilderness and out in the countryside and he began to write feverishly. And what he wrote was taken back into town and it was read to people. And the most important thing that John Hus wrote was a treatise called *De Ekklesia,* the church, the church. It was read publicly in Prague, and it was an anti-Roman Catholic document for sure. His radical views, here they are. Number one, the church is made up of all believers. Did you get that? That was his radical view: the church is made up of all believers. What did the Roman Catholic Church say? The church is made up of the pope and the cardinals, and only the pope and the cardinals constitute the church. And you commune with the church when the wafer touches your lips. But you're not the church.

The second heresy was that the authority of the Bible is higher than the authority of the church. That was radical. The authority of the Bible higher than the authority of the church? That, by the way, he learned from Wycliffe. But the real issue and the reason he was burned at the stake was he said this, "The pope is not the head of the church; Jesus Christ is the head of the church." And for that, they burned him.

You know, we say Jesus Christ is the head of the church and we say it with familiarity and we say it with ease and we don't realize that that doctrine sailed down to us on a sea of blood through the centuries. In fact, Hus in his boldness argued that Christ alone was the head of the church, that the pope was not the head of the church. And he said of the pope, quote: "He through ignorance and love of money is corrupted." To rebel against the popes, said Hus, was to obey Christ, the true head of the church.

Well, he was executed for believing that Christians make up the church. The Bible is the authority, and Christ is the head. No wonder he became a hero to Luther, right? The Husites, followers of John Hus, some of whom gathered that dirt, went back to Bohemia, became a coalition of Husites, refused to submit to the authority of the Holy Roman emperor or the church, were attacked and assaulted and fended off military assaults, repudiated Roman Catholicism, became the foundation for the Moravian Brethren who sent out a lot of missionaries under whose influence John Wesley was converted.

So the truth of Christ's headship may be a rather benign idea to us because it's so familiar, but this is a truth that has been assaulted and attacked and is continuing to be attacked in the same way it was in the day of Hus and Luther when they tell us that the pope is still the head of the church. Luther said this, "I am persuaded that if at this time St. Peter in person should preach all the doctrines of Holy Scripture and only deny the pope's authority, power, and primacy, and say that the pope is not the head of the church, they would cause him to be hanged. Yes, if Christ Himself was again on earth and should preach that the pope is not the head of the church, He is, they would crucify Him again." So said Luther.

What does the Roman Catholic Church believe? Here are the words of the Vatican Council, I quote

them: “If anyone shall say that the Roman Pontiff has the office merely of inspection and direction and not a full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the universal church, not only in things which belong to faith and morals but also in those which relate to the discipline and government of the church spread through the world, or assert that he possesses merely the principle part and not all the fullness of this supreme power, or that this power which he enjoys is not ordinary and immediate, both over each and all the churches, and over each and all the pastors, and each and all the faithful, let him be damned.” So if you say the pope’s not the head, anathema is pronounced on you.

Further, quoting Catholic theologian Ludwig Ott: “A true power, a universal power, a supreme power, a full power is possessed by any pope who can thereby rule independently on any matter without the consent of anyone else, he himself is judged by no one because there is no higher judge on earth than he,” end quote. Luther said, “I owe no more obedience to the pope than I do to Antichrist.”

The popes welcome adoration and worship, call themselves holy father, head of the church. With regard to salvation, quoting canon law: “We declare, say, define and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the pope,” end quote. The Fifth Lateran Council said, quote: “Where the necessity of salvation is concerned, all the faithful of Christ must be subject to the pope,” end quote. And the doctrine of papal infallibility was set in stone in 1870.

This has been the most prolonged, massive attack on the headship of Christ of His church the world has ever known. Not the only one, but the most well-orchestrated, effective, and prolonged. D’Aubigne in his history of the Reformation in the sixteenth century wrote, quote: “Luther’s rejection of the pope as head of the church, inflicted *the* most terrible blow on Rome.” That’s an historian’s view. No wonder they burned Hus. No wonder they chased Luther; never could catch him. Calvin agreed, saying, “Some think us too severe when we call the Roman pontiff Antichrist.” You’ll find that in his Geneva Bible as well as his Institutes. John Knox, the Scottish Reformer, called the pope the Antichrist tyrant over the church. Bloody Mary, who reigned in England from 1555 to 1558, in a period of 45 months slaughtered 283 Protestants. The first one was John Rogers, who along with William Tyndale produced the first Bible in the English language called The Matthew Bible.

What was the crime of John Rogers? What was the crime of the 282 other people that Bloody Mary, the Catholic queen, slaughtered? They wouldn’t obey the pope regarding keeping the Scripture out of the hands of the people, regarding the Mass being the real body and blood of Christ, they denied that. They wanted the Bible in the hands of the people. They denied what the pope said about the Mass, and all 283 were killed for a failure to submit to the pope’s headship. It was a bloodbath; that’s why she’s called Bloody Mary.

Henry VIII, the famous English king, a loyal subject to the pope until the pope refused to give him the right to divorce Catherine and marry Anne, decided that he would no longer be a Catholic because his love life was far more important than his religious life. And so he repudiated the pope’s headship. You say, “That’s progress.” Not really. He declared himself head of the church--Henry VIII, the head of the church. And he said he had absolute authority as head of the church. He required every household in his kingdom to swear an oath and the oath was that he, not the pope, was the head of the church. Those who refused were hanged, drawn and quartered. I don’t know if you know what that means. They were hanged, cut down alive, hacked into pieces. Why? For failing to acknowledge Henry VIII the head of the church.

John Knox confronted this, hated the idea of the papacy, hated the idea of bishops of any kind, and was able by the influence that he had in Scotland to eliminate the very idea of a bishop so that the only leadership in the church was pastors. He confronted Queen Mary of Scots. He was a little bit brash occasionally. He referred to her as a woman of stout stomach. Not a good idea. But history says that she feared him more than she feared any army, any nation. Charles I came along to reign in England, insisted that he would be the head of the church. And so he took the title, “Head of the Church”--Charles I, head of the church.

I was in the parliament with Eric Alexander, one time in the Scottish parliament, and we went into...this is the Presbyterian parliament, not the national parliament, the church parliament. And I went into the parliament building, which goes all the way back to John Knox, his statue is outside of there. It’s a historic building, and you see all these seats all moving toward the middle, and then there are a row of seats above everything, and then there’s a seat up in the rafters. “Who sits in the rafters? Is that security up there? What is it, somebody with a camera?” They said, “No, that’s for whoever is on the throne of England because that’s the seat for the head of the church.” You can see it today if you go to Edinburgh.

This...I’m giving you this history because I want you to understand how precious this truth is. It was 1647 when the Westminster Confession of Faith was made, and this is what the Westminster Confession says, quote: “There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ, nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be Head thereof. But is that Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition that exalts himself in the church against Christ and all that is called God.” That’s the Westminster Confession. That’s the basis of our theological creed. It was picked up by the London Baptist Confession in 1689 and repeated; and it was picked up by the Philadelphia Confession in 1743 here in America.

Ten years before the Westminster Confession, the English tried to impose on the Scots who had been Reformed by the influence of John Knox--the Scots had become Protestants--and the English were trying to impose on them the fact that the English king was still the head of the church. And they were very resistant to that, it turned into a bloodbath in the next century, by the way, but in St. Giles Cathedral, which is a great place to visit, the English showed up and demanded that the Scottish people accept this new prayer book. And so the representative of the English church brought the prayer book, and the story is that there was a lady in there, in the cathedral, who had come to worship on that Sunday named Jenny Geddes. And she was so infuriated at this guy who was describing the prayer book they were all going to have to use, that she picked up her chair and threw it at him and ignited some kind of a riot and a rebellion that led to the famous Scottish National Covenant, the Scottish National Covenant. You’ve heard of Covenanters; tens of thousands of people. In fact at first sixty thousand Scots signed the National Covenant to affirm Christ as the head of the church. Sixty thousand Scots declared Christ as the head of the church.

During that same period, it is that same period from about 1625 to 1675, the animosity was there. It was an absolute bloodbath, a bloodbath, really fifty years where the English massacred the Scots because they wouldn’t acknowledge the king of England as the head of the church. Charles II, king of England, was one of the leaders in the slaughter, chopping, hacking, beheading, drowning all kinds of people. They would put women out in the bay in the inlet and tie them to a stake and let the tide come in slowly and drown them. Children were tormented. Children were dismembered. The son of Richard Cameron: his hands were hacked off and sent to his father in a box, and the next day his father got his head in a box. They were pastors. In one region of Scotland, 400 pastors were

massacred by the English because they wouldn't acknowledge the king as head of the church.

I've stood in the grass market where many of the executions took place in Edinburgh. In 1888, Blaikie, a Scot, wrote a book called *The Preachers of Scotland*. This is a quote: "By the force of reaction, the church was thrown upon the more full assertion of Christ's claims as head of the church and the glorious privilege of the church to follow her head, the more the truth was thought of, the more glorious did it seem."

Here's the good news. In the midst of this assault on the headship of Christ, the true church began to treasure that truth. And some of the most magnificent, sound theology on the headship of Christ comes out of the pressure that was going on from the English on the Scots. Blaikie says the vision of Christ's headship was clarified, was clarified, "that Christ is not only the head over an individual believer, but He is the head over His church, became a precious treasure for which much blood was shed...much blood was shed."

When we talk about Christ being the head of the church, we mean He is the sole ruler of the church. I know; none of us grew up in a monarchy, none of us Americans. We've never had a king. Never been slaves and had a master. We've never had a dictator. We kind of get outraged about one-man rule. You better get used to it, it's coming--the Millennium. We seek to free the world from one-man rule, from kings and masters. We have no experience of absolute sovereignty. We were born in a revolution against it. That is exactly, however, what God claims Christ possesses in His church. Christ is King; Christ is Lord; Christ is Master; Christ is Head of His church.

What does that mean? That means He does whatever He wants in His church. That means His church bows the knee to Him.

It was Charles Haddon Spurgeon, in his inimitable way, who said, "Of all the dreams that ever deluded men and of all the blasphemies that ever were uttered, there has never been one which is more absurd then the idea that the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, is the head of the Church of Jesus Christ. No, these Popes die, and how could the Church live if its head were dead? The true Head ever lives and the Church ever lives in Him."

Christ has always been the head of the church, says Spurgeon. In fact, he goes on to say, "It is awful blasphemy for any man on earth to call himself Christ's Vicar and the Head of the Church. It is a user patient of the crown rights of King Jesus, for the true Church of Jesus Christ can have no head, but Jesus Christ Himself. I am thankful there is no head to the church of which I am a part, save Jesus Christ Himself, nor dare I be a member of any church which would contend to have any headship of His."

Jonathan Edwards follows. "King Jesus is the Head of the Church. Those who are in His Kingdom of Grace all acknowledge the same King, the same rightful sovereign and are willing to be subjected to Him, submit to His will and yield obedience to His commands."

The Reformers all understood that. Now you say, "Well that's kind of a narrow perspective." It isn't just limited to that. Modern liberal theologians deny Christ's headship. Why? They deny His deity; they deny His atonement; they deny His resurrection. So He's dead, and if He's dead, He's not the head of His church.

The seeker movement denies the headship of Christ. They silence His rule. Why? By replacing His Word with all kinds of other things, substituting anything and everything. The emerging church denies His headship by declaring that the Bible's not clear. We don't know what it means. One way or another, all these silence the head of the church.

How does Christ rule His Church? Only one way to rule--speak. How does He speak? Where? In His Word. That's how He speaks. Deny the veracity of His Word and you've taken away His headship. Deny the truthfulness of His Word, and you've taken away His headship. Deny the clarity of His Word, and you've taken away His headship. Replace His Word with anything else, minimize His Word, mitigate His Word, cheapen His Word and you've assaulted His glorious headship. And this is no small crime, no small crime.

Any kind of non-biblical ministry, any kind of non-expositional preaching, any kind of non-doctrinal teaching, usurps Christ's headship because the only way that He can exercise headship in His church is through His Word to His church.

You say, "Well, why are you always teaching the Bible? Why are you always expositing Scripture? Why is it so important to you to go verse by verse and to bring everything out of the Word of God?" Because Christ speaks to His church as head of His church through His Word.

All right, now that's an introduction. You think I'm kidding? It's a long introduction, short sermon. Let me ask several questions and answer them, okay? What does head mean? What does head mean? And we probably wouldn't need to be even bringing up the question to answer if it weren't for the quote/unquote evangelical feminists who don't like the idea that the man is the head of the woman. And so they mess with the concept of head. Wow, when they say the man...when they see in the Bible a man is the head of the woman, they panic. What are we going to do with that? We've got to change the meaning of the word "head." So we've had, you know, a four-decade assault on the concept of what it means to be head. They have assaulted the headship of Christ by assaulting the headship of the husband over the wife as it's stated in Ephesians 5:23. In their effort to strip men of their authority, they have stripped Christ of His. So they say this: "Head means source"; that's what all the literature says. It doesn't mean authority, it means source. It has no connotation of rule or control. The man is the source of the woman. That sounds goofy. What are you talking about? A husband is the source of his wife? It means nothing; convoluted. And they have no linguistic support. Wayne Grudem has studied this issue for twenty years and back in 1985 he studied *kephale*--and that's the word for head--and this would be the way Wayne would do it as a scholar. He examined 2,336 examples of *kephale* in ancient Greek literature outside the Bible. From Homer, Homer's Iliad in the eighth century B.C., to the church fathers in the fourth century A.D.; so he's covering centuries and centuries of literature. He finds 2,336 uses of *kephale*, and here's the conclusion. "Never when the word was used of a person rather than a body part, if it's a body part, the head is clearly the head. But when the word was used of a person, never did it have any other meaning than a governing, ruling authority"--a governing ruling authority--"So when Paul repeatedly says Christ is the head of the Church, he doesn't mean He's the source of the church, he means He's the authority and the ruling authority in the church. *Kephale* is equal to Lord, Master."

Now who made Him head in the church? And for this I want to turn to a passage of Scripture in Ephesians 1. Who made Him head of the church? Now we get very serious and dig down a little bit into this incredibly important doctrine. Ephesians 1, Paul is mentioning in verse 15 his love for the

saints; in verse 16 his unceasing thanks to God for them and he continues to pray for them. And what is he praying? That the "God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory"--he's asking God for something--he's asking God, the "God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, that He may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him." He wants God to open your understanding. He wants God to enable you to grasp wisdom and revelation and knowledge. He's praying that the "eyes of your heart will be enlightened, that you will know what is the hope of His calling and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe."

In other words, he's praying that we would be able to grasp the greatness of our salvation, the massive glories of our redemption. And then this: "which He brought about in Christ," verse 20, "when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come, and He put all things in subjection under His feet and"...here it comes..."and gave Him as head over all things to the church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." He is to the church what a head is to the body, the very source of all its direction. The sovereign Father who chose us, who called us, who saved us, gave us His Son whom He raised from the dead and seated in glory. He gave that Son to His church to be its head.

Now I want to break this up a little bit, so go down to verse 21. Here is a description of the elevation of Christ. He is "far above," not just above, "far above all rule." That's *arche*, firsts, primacies, all primacies, all firsts, all those who are in first place, all those who sit at the top of the heap, the top of the pile--that would be all rulers. He is far above all of them. He is far above all "authority" (*exousia*), all rights and privileges, all those who have the ultimate rights and privileges; far above all "power" (*dunamis*). That means sheer ability to accomplish things. "Far above all dominion," that's *kuriotes*, lordships, sovereignties, thrones; not just above all, but "far above all," "far above" (*huperano, huperano*), "far above." *Ano* is up; *huperano* is above, up, super high, infinitely above all other beings--"every name that is named." That's a way to define persons. Persons are those that are named. Above every person, not just above every person, but verse 22, "All things are in subjection under His feet." So He is far above all persons and all things--all persons in all elevated positions and all things, meaning structures, institutions--far above all of them "not only in this age," verse 21 says, "not only in this age, but in the age to come." That means now and forever, now and forever.

Now listen to the language, it's just powerful. This One who is Christ, whom He raised from the dead and seated at His own right hand in the heavenlies, enthroned there, is far above all others and it is this one whom He gave as head over all things to the church. It doesn't say He gave Him as head to the church, it says He gave to the church the One who was already Head over all things.

I suppose He could have decided that angels should rule the church. I suppose He could have decided that men would rule the church. That's what false religions do. He didn't give us angels; He didn't give us men; He didn't give us the apostles to be the head of the church; He didn't give us pastors to be the head of the church. Her certainly didn't give us bishops, cardinals, and a pope. Do you know who God gave us to be the head of the church? The One who is already Head over everything, the sovereign of the entire universe, He gave as Head of the church. This is the most glorious language that the Holy Spirit can use to express the love of God for His redeemed church. He desires His best for His church, the best and richest blessings, the greatest and most secure protection, transcendent eternal wisdom and knowledge and revelation. He didn't give us Gabriel. He didn't give us Michael. He didn't give us ten thousand super angels. He didn't give us the apostles.

He didn't give us the most gifted preachers and teachers. He didn't give us John Hus and Martin Luther and John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards and Charles Spurgeon and all the rest to be the head of the church. He gave us to be the Head of the church the One who is already the Head of everything, the Ruler of the universe. We are His body, verse 23 says. And the fullness of Him fills us all. He not only is over us...listen...He is...Where?...in us; He is over us and in us.

He is for us. He is over us. He is in us. So I say, "Fall on your faces, you popes, fall on your faces you kings and queens. Fall on your faces, you self-appointed lords of the church who lead in your way and not His. Humiliate yourselves, you who don't take His Word and proclaim it to His people. Take your place on the ground, all of you who put your cleverness, creativity, your will, your wisdom, and your teaching in place of the Head of the church.

Back to John Hus, to close. It is reported at Hus's death that he said this, quoting: "You may silence this Goose, but there will come a Swan you will not be able to silence." He said that to the bishop of the Council of Constance who had sentenced him to death, Hus did. You can silence the Goose but a Swan will come.

One hundred years later, Martin Luther was ordained. Martin Luther was ordained in a little church Patricia and I visited in Erfurt--incredible little place. That's where Martin Luther was ordained to be a priest. The Swan had arrived.

When you see paintings of Luther, some of the old paintings, you will see a swan somewhere in the picture because he was known as the Swan. And if you look closely in the dark background you'll see a Goose, his hero, John Hus. Luther, we were told, was placed on the floor of that little church and stretched his arms out as wide as he could, lying flat on his stomach on the floor which was the position of ordination. He was lying on a crypt. Those old churches, people were buried there. He was lying on the grave. He was lying on the grave of the Bishop of Constance, who had sentenced John Hus to death a hundred years before. The Swan had arrived and was ordained on the grave of the bishop who sentenced Goose.

Now maybe...maybe when Huss said, "You may silence this Goose, but a Swan is coming whom you will not be able to silence," maybe the bishop said, "Over my dead body." And so it was, over his dead body.

You can tell when you found a church; you can tell when you found a real church. You can tell when you found a church where Christ is Head, because He speaks to His church.

Father, we thank You for our wonderful time together today, for encouraging us with fellowship, and worship and Your precious powerful Word. Thank You for all the things that we've enjoyed, it's a banquet. We remember this morning we were reminded in a song that we were gathering around the table of the Lord and what a feast we've had of fellowship and worship and remembering the great truth in the songs that we have sung. And what a feast around the table of Your truth again in the gospel of John and here in Ephesians with a bit of a historical look at it all. Precious, precious truth has been brought down to us, it can't perish with this generation. These things that have come to us, handed down by martyrs, can't be lost to this generation. May we be faithful to uphold Christ as the glorious head of His church. May it be that whenever we come together as a church, it is to hear Him speak through His Word, the One who is already head over everything in the universe, King of kings,

Lord of lords, who speaks lovingly, powerfully to His church for the blessing of His church and the joy of His church. May He be heard in His church. These things we pray with grateful hearts for all that is ours because we hold this treasure in our hands. Amen.

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