

Christ's Ascension Victory Is Yours - Part 2

by Erlo Stegen

The Lord Jesus' rebuke of his disciples is an example for believers today, showing the importance of dealing with sin and having a humble and repentant heart.

Duration: 1:15:33

Scripture: Matthew 26:38, Mark 16:14-19, Hebrews 2:9

Topics: "Resurrection"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on a passage from the Gospel of Mark, specifically chapter 16, verses 14-20. The sermon begins with Jesus rebuking his disciples for their unbelief and hardness of heart. Jesus then instructs them to go into the world and proclaim the Gospel to all creation. He assures them that those who believe and are baptized will be saved, while those who do not believe will be condemned. The sermon also touches on the signs that will accompany believers, such as casting out demons, speaking in new tongues, and healing the sick. The preacher expresses deep emotion and gratitude for the angels who came to strengthen Jesus during his time of sorrow in the Garden of Gethsemane. The sermon concludes with a prayer for the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of the listeners and for the words spoken to bear good fruit.

Transcript

Today's text, we find in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 16, from verse 14. Afterward, he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table. And he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen.

And he said to them, go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned, and these signs will accompany those who believe. In my name they will cast out demons, they will speak in new tongues, they will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly poison it will not hurt them, they will lay their hands on the sick and they will recover.

So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. We will read thus far. Actually, I'd intended to speak about each of these verses we've read.

But as I was writing down points about them, I got stuck and I couldn't continue to all of them. Couldn't go forward. So I'm just going to speak about one important point.

Which is the first part of this story. When I read this matter this morning it broke my heart. I cried, I wept to the point that I prayed and said Lord please help me control my tears so that I will not then be teary when I preach this.

This matter stirred me. It shook me. I prayed and said Lord I really need weeks and months to be able to dig around these jewels, these diamonds embedded here.

And I realized I cannot touch the length, the breadth, the heights of this even till I die. And I believe even on the other side in eternity in heaven we will still be pondering upon this. I said Lord I cannot exposit and preach on this because it is unfathomable.

It's heights are too great. But the little bit which I will share, the bit that I share then, I pray that God would make it to be not in vain to you. When it says that afterward he appeared to the eleven while they were reclining at table.

Now I don't know exactly what they were doing here, whether they were eating, whether there was literally a table but because we have seen that the Lord when he ascended he was in the mount of olives. Now they didn't eat and sit like we do in the west at tables but rather they would recline lying on their side supported by their elbow and eating. Like we find in the story of that woman who wept because of her sins, cleaning the Lord's feet, crying tears over his feet while he was reclining.

Not that she came under the table as we think in the west but rather as in the east till today you find that they have the smallest height of a table. Although in the east it's not exactly as it used to be in the time of Jesus. I found it quite difficult to do that folding my legs like that while reclining as they do hiding their legs so I chose to be against, lie close to a wall so that at least it would support me as I got up.

The Lord and his disciples would recline with their feet pointing backwards and so it was with the woman who wept. I have heard that when he ascended he was on the mount of olives and how he was together with his disciples as he ascended. Whether they had brought their food along like a picnic or padkos I don't know.

But while they were here at the table there the Lord appeared. There the Lord appeared on that very mount where he had suffered in the garden of Gethsemane where his suffering began. They lowered down on the hill.

On that very same mount where he had suffered humiliation there he revealed himself in his ascension. There where he was with the eleven disciples Judas having rebelled and having betrayed him. There where the Lord said now let's go together where he had gone with them into the garden of Gethsemane.

Judas had gone then to the high priests and the Jewish leaders and said you can catch him there because that's the place where he prays with his disciples. And indeed with Judas leading them the soldiers and them came to the Lord in the garden. Judas betrayed him.

The disciples had asked Lord who is it among us who would betray you? Is it me? The Lord said the one to whom I give the bit of bread which I have dipped He it is that would betray me. The Jewish custom of respect one would show and Jesus knowing Judas would betray him said go and do it quickly. For the Bible says At that moment that Jesus then shared that bread with Judas, Satan took full control of Judas.

It is a fearful thing to give the devil even the small finger because he will demand the hand. And then he will take full control and make you do things that he wants not you. And Judas had gone running to them and said quickly if you go to that garden there you will catch him.

So in Psalm 41 verse 9 it says In the prophecy Even my close friend in whom I trusted Who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me. Just notice You see it says Judas was a friend of Jesus. Jesus entrusted him.

But finally he lifted his heel against him which means he kicked him. May God be merciful to us that there wouldn't be a Judas Iscariot in our midst. But he came like a friend embracing him and that was the sign for he had said to them the one whom I embrace he is the one that should be arrested.

But that warm embrace But that warm embrace was hypocritical because it was in that very act that he was lifting up his heel against him. Now Jesus was still in the garden of Gethsemane. He had gone in there with the eleven.

Then he had said you eight remain here. And he took three of the disciples Peter and them and went with them. Saying remain here and pray.

And it's recorded that he was a stone's throw away praying. Dr. Luke records that Jesus knelt there praying. And most of the paintings the portraits that we see one sees Jesus in that position kneeling and praying.

However in other gospels like in Matthew it says he cast himself down on his face. His forage in the soil. Praying.

And it's written that he was full of sorrow and bitterness. He prayed and prayed. Saying father if possible let this cup pass from me.

But let it not be my will but thine. And he got up and went to them and found the disciples asleep. But Jesus had said pray that you enter not into temptation pray for yourselves.

And then he said could you not watch with me for one hour only? He got up and went and said are you really asleep? He said pray and pray that you enter not into temptation. And they were made more drowsy with their sorrows. Then he went back and continued praying.

Prayed even more. More urgently than before. With more passion full of sorrow.

And bitterness. Says he was sweated because of this battle that he was in. Says the sweat drops were as of blood dropping down onto the earth.

One of the disciples, one of the authors said it came out as blood. And dripping down. If you investigate the meaning of that it's like clots of blood.

I don't know what his garments must have been like but if that is the way we interpret it correctly it must have been full of blood. The second and the third time in this battle in which he was, this war. Like a person more than a woman in childbirth, in the pains of childbirth.

His blood became like great clots of blood dropping down upon the ground. You know German. You understand German.

If you can get the Eberfelder translation study bible and you'll see how it, even if you don't understand the Hebrew and Greek but it explains it for you. You who speak English or Afrikaans or Zulu get yourselves an amplified bible and look at that particular meaning. It explains it very well.

The word says he began to suffer with great sorrows and bitterness. In Greek *lipeu* it means the deepest sorrow. Agony.

The opposite of the word for joy. And bitterness. Deepest sadness.

The meaning implying also a foreboding of what is to come. So in other words, it was the very first time since man began. And it was the last time and never will there be a man who suffered like he did.

Doctors do explain that when a person is in the deepest agonies of sorrow and death, he sweats like blood. And the Jewish doctor writes of it explaining that it implied that he was at the point of death. And Jesus Jesus Jesus in this great agonizing passion, going up and down, casting himself down in prayer, wrestling against the devil and hell, and your sins for God was punishing him because of your sins.

His sorrow was so deep that he felt the pain, the agony of it. Being in agony and nobody ever in the world, in man's history, in the history of before the foundations of the earth were laid, before there was an angel, there has never been such fearful, such painful agony. And he went back again and prayed more earnestly, more earnestly and intently.

So that his sweat became like clots of blood that dropped on the ground. He knelt, went to them, said, you slumber still? The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. He says, I am sorrowful and have bitterness as unto death.

He was right at the very edge of death. It was right there seeking to kill. It's not that he was trying to put on a show.

Like some people try and impress with their loud shouting and seeming agonies, but it was a genuine agony of soul. Isaiah the prophet saw that agony and suffering, that bitterness, that great sorrow. We find that in Isaiah 53.

Isaiah 53, from verse 2 towards the last part of it. He had no form or beauty that we should desire him. Psalms 52, verse 15.

Chapter 52, verse 14 and 15. His appearance was so marred beyond human semblance and his form beyond that of the children of mankind. His visage damaged and so marred beyond human semblance.

That's why it says he had no beauty. He was despised. Rejected of men.

A man of sorrows. Acquainted with grief and sickness. As one from whom men hid.

Sorry, despised. As one from whom men hid their faces. And we esteemed him not.

But surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. Yes. He was wounded for our transgressions.

Was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace. And with his stripes we are healed.

For we have gone astray like sheep. Everyone has turned to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

God Almighty cast upon him all our iniquities. He was oppressed. And though afflicted he opened not his mouth.

Like a lamb led to the slaughter. And like a sheep that is before its shearers is silent he opened not his mouth. And so he was oppressed and judgment was upon him.

Sorry, at the end of verse 8, stricken. For the transgressions of my people. And they made his grave with the wicked.

And though he had done no violence. Though he had committed no violence. And there was no deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him. He has put him to grief. He has made his soul an offering for guilt.

Indeed he drank that cup. That cup of being struck for you and for me. He drank that cup of being struck for me and for you and for me.

He drank that cup of being struck for me and for you and for me. This needs no exposition for it is self-explanatory. If it doesn't stow you to the deepest depths of your soul of what Jesus has done for you.

Then I would be amazed if you can escape hell. Jesus took his disciples to that place. His final meeting.

His final meeting with his disciples. As he participated with them and spoke to them. As Jesus was about to depart from them.

And leave them in bodily form forever. But he wanted to be with them there. In that very place.

The place where he was to ascend into heaven was from that place. And then he departed from them. He said never will we participate in this last supper.

Of broken bread and the wine until we enjoy the new wine with you. And the new bread in heaven. In the kingdom.

In the kingdom. It is amazing that the Lord Jesus survived that ordeal in the garden. That's why he took them to that very place where his sweat was as of clots of blood.

And he found them to be slumbering. And it makes me to feel Lord I need your forgiveness. How often have I slumbered.

While he was in agony. And asleep. He said let's go.

There it was that he met them. I don't know whether he whispered to them on which particular day. I don't know.

The eleven were with him there at the table where Jesus manifested himself to them. Remembering it was his final farewell. Now listen.

What did he say? So what did he say then in Mark 16? No. Appearing to the eleven reclining at the table he rebuked them for their hardness of heart and their unbelief for not believing those who had seen him after he had risen. They didn't believe when he revealed himself to them for the first time.

Other disciples like Thomas said we will never believe it. It was difficult for them to believe when the women came and some of them ran and then to see it and they came back and said he has risen. But now that was old news after his resurrection 40 days have gone by.

He rebuked them. Scolded them. Rebuking them harshly.

For their unbelief. That he had risen when the disciples, when the women came. He said oh your unbelief because of the hardness of your hearts.

Well what? What does it mean? After so many days. After so many days after he had risen he still raises the issue. And you say it's old already.

40 days ago. If you want to get places with God that sin has got to be dealt with. Don't cover it.

He doesn't. He got annoyed with them. He shunned their unbelief and their hardness of hearts.

This was the celebration of his departure. He was saying goodbye. He was to leave them.

What Lord? What Lord? How could you be so unaffectionate to them about an old sin? In his harsh. Aye. We have a son.

We have a last. We have a last. Saying brother, brother.

How then could he have spoken such harsh words, a rebuke of their hardness of heart and unbelief? They were to receive their commission going to all the world. But he says before you do that, this hardness of heart has got to be dealt with. And this unbelief.

One may say, oh, don't touch those old things. That's all forgiven. If you haven't repented in remorse, in dust and ashes before that sin and confessed it, it's not dealt with.

Learn that from this, from the story. It's not a story. It's not a story.

Yes, he was about to commission them. He was about to tell them of the ministry that they had of going to all the world to tell them. Are you going into all the world? Bringing the gospel starting in Jerusalem? Starting with your neighbors? Where are your neighbors today? You have come today.

Have you brought your neighbors with? Infatuated with your cell phones. Have you used that same cell phone to invite others to bring them to services? And you say you're on the way to heaven. How can it be so? Not that he didn't love them.

He loved them indeed. But a father that does not use the rod on his child hates his child. And yes, God is the liar.

And you are the truth. Ha. No, his rebuke was wrapped in love.

This very rebuke revealed his love. Those whom I love, I rebuke, the Lord says. Closing an eye to sin does not show love.

Ha. He is not the type of love of a mother who takes the side of a child in its evil. That you side with the evil of your child, you take its side in its evil? No.

You lack God's love. Apes, monkeys in the bush have that type of love. Many mothers have got the love of monkeys.

And that's what they use for their children. Not like the mother of John Bunyan. That godly mother who looked at her boys and said, I have observed you in your wickedness.

I will be on judgment day a swift witness against you. That's the right mother. Wow.

Not the type of siding with your child where it brings back illegitimate children and you look after them. And the child continues in its iniquity. No, that's the wrong type of love.

When it speaks about the rebuking of Jesus of his disciples and their hardness of heart and unbelief. That is not. That's no excuse or justification for being unnecessarily harsh, shouting at your child, kicking it out.

That's a wicked anger. That's not the attitude of our Lord Jesus Christ. God.

But Jesus saw it as his holy duty to reveal and expose their sin. You preachers. You're preaching to your congregations.

Rebuke them in the same way that Jesus rebuked his disciples. If you don't. They will go to hell, but you too with them.

But. Be like the Lord Jesus. Follow him as he commanded us to follow in his footsteps.

Otherwise, if you don't have this attitude, rebuking those in sin. Yes, they will die, but their blood will be required of you. La la la.

Listen carefully. You preachers, lest you do not follow the Lord as he was about to ascend into heaven. Now, when.

You man. Or disciple. The priest of your home.

You don't. You. You don't know how to rebuke your own wife and children to help them.

I don't want to be in your in your shoes one day. I don't want to be in your shoes one day. You need to be able to correct your children in the heavenly manner.

Not in a bitter way. With grudges. In just.

Just with a carnal harshness. But no. With the love of God.

The agape love. Maybe at the very same time that you rebuke your child. There is hardness of heart and unbelief in your heart.

You need to examine yourself. You need to repent yourself before you rebuke them. Unbelief and hardness of heart is a terrible wickedness.

Despicable. Good. The.

Now. You may have this heart of unbelief even while you're trying to correct them. But you are rebuked by the Lord Jesus.

They die but you with them. We. Or you have the attitude.

I'm the boss of the home. I pay dowry for my wife. But no.

Remember the Lord Jesus paid for you. He bought you. May we not have the mindset of this world.

Failing. To humble ourselves. Bowing to the will of God.

Where doesn't matter in what way it comes. He who has a hard. Hard.

And sitting. With this. Hardness.

A hardness which nobody's rebuke is able to help. And though people try and enlighten him. He just refuses to budge.

You sticking to a carnal attitude. The mind of the world. With your own.

Hard headedness. City. We say we are believers.

We're on the way to heaven. But you do not show. That that is actually true of you.

You don't take things seriously. Instead, you trample them underfoot. While you say that you're on the way to heaven.

That's why we say we believe there's there is a hell. While we say we claim to believe there is a hell. The very character that we display.

The mindset we show that it's a lie. We do not believe. While we claim.

To keep them at the moon. We claim that we believe that there is a hell. But you're on the broad way to hell.

Even though you say it is true. You need to be delivered. Maybe you need prayer to get rid of the demons in your ears.

What? At the very same time that we claim to believe there is a hell. We're on the road to hell on the broad way. We're lying.

There's no. There's no. There's no humbling of yourself.

Pleading for forgiveness. Your life will not improve. You will continue in the very mindset you are in now.

Right to the end. Your life will not improve. You stay who you are.

You are a liar. You say you believe there is a hell. And you stay on the broad way.

You say there is a heaven. The whole story is a lie story. A lie.

Bible says seek for the things above. Not the things of earth. Not your own bright ideas and your own thing.

I can inform. The place where you live. What is it called? What's it named? There where you are.

Where is your heart? Jesus said there where your treasure is, will your heart be also. You stick to the things of the world. There was a certain German man from here in this province.

Yes. Not very far away from us. He said I don't fear death.

But said my problem is how will I ever part from my money. I don't fear death he said. He said my problem is how will I part from my riches.

You then. Where is your treasure? Where are your riches? What is your life display? Where are you at? Time has flown by. Let me leave it.

Jesus about to ascend into heaven. Revealed himself to his disciples. And then says I am departing.

But he started with rebuking them. Disciplining them for not listening to what the women said. Those who are despised.

Those women who are despised in their eyes. Maybe to you you see a person who is much younger than you and you say I can't listen. You say I am much more mature than that person.

Why should I listen to him? But that's because. That's because of the hardness of your heart and unbelief. How is your heart? Is it hard? Your heart is hard.

Cry to God with all your heart. Repent humbly if you have never cried. Cry to him.

And plead with him to take out this heart of stone in you. Because if you continue with a hard heart you are headed for hell. You are going to hell.

Don't wait for somebody else to help you. Repent yourself. You need to repent before heaven and earth.

It was difficult for our Lord. His death. His sorrow.

His bitterness that he met with. It was something that led to death. Can you take it lightly? If you do not take it as it is.

You are headed for hell. And go and tell your children that. Plots of blood falling into the soil.

Where Jesus said. I am sorrowful even unto death. Angels could not restrain themselves as they came to strengthen him.

Blessed angel. One day if I am in heaven by God's grace. I would like to have a drink of water.

Take a chance. To go to this angel. Shake his hand.

And say thank you. That you helped my Lord. Shall we pray.

Lord. I don't have words to describe. But I say Holy Spirit.

Work. Make these words. Alive in the heart of each and every one.

Might not be in vain. But. Bring forth good fruit.

Lord may you look upon your passion and suffering. And say one day. I have not suffered.
And died in vain. Amen.

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