

Sit, Walk, Stand - Part 3

by Gareth Evans

The sermon emphasizes the profound privilege and identity we have in Christ, as articulated by Paul in his letters to the Ephesians and Colossians.

Duration: 8:36

Scripture: Ephesians 1:22-23, Ephesians 2:6, Ephesians 4:4-6, Ephesians 6:12, Colossians 1:27

Topics: "Supremacy Of Christ", "Unity In Christ"

Description

This sermon delves into the excitement and passion of Paul as he writes to the Colossians and Ephesians, emphasizing the supremacy of Christ and the privilege of being in Him. Paul's enthusiasm for sharing the mystery of God's plan and the message of Christ in us, the hope of glory, is highlighted. The focus is on understanding the significance of being in Christ Jesus and the unity of the body of Christ as a central theme in the book of Ephesians.

Transcript

In him, you have been made complete. He is the head of all rule and authority. He talks about him conquering the enemy.

When he disarmed the rulers and authorities, he made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through him. And he continues to speak about the supremacy of Christ and the work he has done. And Paul gets excited.

You think I get excited when I preach? I do. But Paul gets excited when he writes letters. I don't get very excited when I write letters.

I must be honest with you. I find it a little bit of a drag. I'm not a letter writer.

But Paul sure gets excited when he writes his letter to the Colossians. And I have the impression, the picture I want to portray to you is this man in prison sending Onesimus home with Tychicus. He says, Tychicus, I want you to go down and book a passage on the ship that sails over from Rome, from Italy, over to Asia Minor.

I want you to go to Colossae, tell him all the things that are happening here, and I'll write a letter for you to accompany you on the journey. I want you to take Onesimus with you. And he writes this letter.

And it's a synopsis of all of his understanding of God's mystery, God's plan, God's purpose, God's ministry through Paul, how that God has called Paul to be a minister to the Gentiles. And the Church of Colossae has many Gentiles in it. What a privileged people you are.

And how great is the Lord we serve. That's the message. But I get this picture of him getting so excited as he's writing about Christ.

Christ in you, the hope of glory. God has brought all fullness of himself in this one Christ Jesus. This one who made me a minister of this mystery, of this gospel.

What a privileged man I am. And he gets so excited. He finishes the letter, and he gives it to Tychicus and says, go down and book a passage on the ship.

And Tychicus goes away to book the passage, and Paul is in prison, and he's thinking and he's meditating about the privilege he has of being a servant of Christ. Then the privilege you and I have of being in Christ. Tychicus comes back and says, well, I've made a passage, I've booked a passage, but it's not until week Wednesday.

There's no ship sailing until week Wednesday. Paul says, oh, I've got 10 days. Okay.

I've got to put this down, what I've been thinking about. And I want you to take it with you. And I want you to circle it in all the churches of Asia Minor.

Sardis and Laodicea and Colossae and Ephesus. I want you to take it to all the churches there. A circular letter.

And that's what this letter is. In fact, if you look in the letter to the Colossians, Paul mentions, I believe, the letter to the Ephesians, or the one we call the Ephesians. But at the end of his letter to the Colossians, he tells them, he said, greets the brethren who are in Laodicea and Nympha and the church in her house, these people I know.

And when this letter has been read to you, the Colossian letters, I want you to send it out. Make sure it is read to the church of the Laodiceans. And I want you to read the other letter I'm sending, which will come to you from the Laodiceans.

You see, there was another letter that Paul had written beside the one to Colossae, which he wanted the Colossian church to read. And it is believed that that is this letter, which we call the letter to the Ephesians. The early manuscripts bear no mention of the word Ephesus in them.

It is thought that the earliest copy was found in Ephesus, and that's why it's called the letter to the Ephesians. That's why there's no names mentioned, because it's the circular letter. Paul is writing to people he has never met before.

But he is writing it because he has a goal, he wants all the churches to know. And that is this, same as in Colossians, Christ in you the hope of glory, the message of the book of Ephesians, the queen of the epistles, is that you and I might know the privileged position we have of being in Christ Jesus. My message this evening is going to be that, what it means to be in Christ Jesus.

That's the title of it, In Him. If you look at the first two chapters of the letter of Ephesians, what do you find? To the faithful who are in Christ Jesus. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing, in Him.

He has chosen us, in Him. And throughout the first two chapters, that phrase, in Him, in Him, in Christ Jesus, in Jesus, is repeated and repeated and repeated, because Paul has got so excited about the blessing you and I have of being in Christ Jesus. Does Jesus dwell in your hearts by faith? Do you dwell in Him? Brothers and sisters, the foundation stone of our faith is that we are in Him.

And we need to understand that. Paul understood it. That was the whole reason he wrote this letter, that we are in Him.

So the letter? Well, it's a lyrical poem. It's Paul running off with the mouth of his excitement of being in Christ. In fact, it's not like his other letters, which are quite logical.

He's a well-educated man. He wrote his letters with a purpose and logically to convince his listeners. Not this letter.

It starts off with a greeting to those who are faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace and peace from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ be to you. It's a normal greeting.

Grace and shalom. The Hebrew and the Greek forms a common greeting. It puts them together.

And then from verse 3 to 14, I'm not going to go through that now, but from 3 to 14, it's one continuous sentence. Now, your Bible might not have it in continuous sentence, but in the Greek, it's just a continual running on and running up, because he's just so excited. He does it twice in the book.

And for those who are listening to it, if they read it with the proper grammatical commas and the full stops and the emphasis that Paul wrote it, the writer would have been out of breath by the time. It would have to be a Welshman to read it, obviously, because Paul is just running away with excitement. He's in revival.

He's in prison. But he is thrilled with the reality of what it means to be in Christ Jesus. And I trust that before this week is out, you and I will be thrilled with the reality of what it is to be in Christ Jesus too.

It is important for us to understand. So that's a little bit about the background. It's important for us to get that because I want you to hear Paul's excitement as we look at the various things he teaches in this book.

As commentators look at it, they obviously divide the book up in many different ways. There are some that would take key thoughts. The word unity is a key thought in this book.

And by the end of the week, if you want to know what my soapbox is, you'll find it's unity of the body of Christ. I mentioned it yesterday. I've had the privilege of teaching in West Africa and teaching pastors conferences.

And in Sierra Leone, I had the great joy of pastoring for 11 weeks consecutively 150 pastors who used to come on the ship. And the message that was needed to be preached was unity. There's so much division.

And that's not just true of Africa, it's certainly true of Canada. There's so much division in the churches, so much division between believers, so much competition between churches. Here I find the priority in the Lord's heart is the unity of the body of Christ.

I found Paul teaches much about the body of Christ, the unity. How can the foot say to the eye, I don't need you. And one of my messages will be on the priority in Jesus's heart.

Unity. And that's one of the key thoughts of this book. And commentators and looking at the book of Ephesians will say that's the pinnacle of what he's trying to teach.

Others speak about a phrase that he likes. There are several phrases like the phrase in Christ. There's another one he uses, in heavenly places.

One can teach a whole series of messages of what it means to be in heavenly places. We have been seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. And in chapter 6, for our warfare is not carnal, but it's in heavenly places.

What's it mean to walk in heavenly places? That's a theme that one can follow through the book. Other commentators will divide the book up in its literature. For example, the first three chapters are very clearly teaching.

And Paul is one who always taught his precepts before he gave his lifestyle.

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