

Develop Your Full Potential in Christ: Magnitude of Grace

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon emphasizes the importance of presenting our bodies to God, allowing Him to live His life in and through us, and to use us as channels of His power to bring men out of death into life.

Scripture: Ephesians 2:1

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Living"

Description

Paris Reidhead preaches about the importance of understanding God's plan to live in us, His purpose to bring people to Himself, the power available through Christ's resurrection, our position seated with Christ in the heavenlies, and the need to enforce His victory over the defeated foe. He emphasizes the significance of presenting our bodies to God, being willing instruments for His work, and recognizing the spiritual battle at hand. Reidhead urges believers to pray for laborers in the harvest field, to stand on the victory of Calvary, and to be part of God's workmanship for good works.

Transcript

Develop Your Full Potential in Christ: Magnitude of Grace By Paris Reidhead* Brother Jones we are so glad you're here today, glad the Lord has given you strength to be with us. Having you here is such a benediction and blessing. Knowing that you are praying that our Brother Jones is going to just have life from the Lord service by service to be with us. We were yesterday in Ephesians this marvelous manual on developing your full potential in Christ. And I trust I'm sure for you that are here this morning at least that is the desire of your heart and consequentially I feel as though the seed is being sown on good ground with you.

Will you turn please to that first chapter? I had intended yesterday to get where I hope to be able to get today. I'm not going to promise because this is so rich you know every time you stoop down you're picking up diamonds truly acres of diamonds in the epistles to the Ephesians. I'll begin reading with the 15th verse so that you get the background of the text. "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you," having put you on my prayer list. (Eph. 1:15,16) Well, better than that "making mention of you in my prayers;" Elsewhere he said, "I labour and travail in prayer night and day," "until Christ be formed in you." (2 The. 3:8), (Gal 4:9b) I am praying for you believers said the Apostle.

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling," and that is where we stopped yesterday. (Eph. 1:17,18a) "The hope of His calling," that we redeemed by His blood would count it our reasonable service to present our bodies, our blood ransomed personalities, all we are to Him, so He could have them to live again His life through us.

That's only one of three important aspects of this prayer that He might know the whole hope of His calling and now the second segment, "and what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," (Eph. 1:18b) Now we saw in the previous segment that it is His calling. The call He had that drew Him out of eternity in time to redeem us. Most of the expositions I find on this particular section of this verse speak of it were the riches of the glory of our inheritance as saints.

And there is much said in the Scripture about that, but just because we are so eager to find out everything the Lord has for us should not close our eyes to the fact that He has something for His Son. So look at this, "the riches of the glory of his inheritance --his inheritance-- in the saints." Or in other words, the saints are His inheritance that's what we have to see now. So when you present your body to the Lord Jesus for Him to live His life in and through you, then you can understand what He is going to do through you is to continue the ministry of witness that he had when He was here.

That living in you He going to use your life to the end of bringing men, women boys and girls out of death into life. That is thus set forth as I see it as the direct result of Christ being given the privilege of living His own life in His own resurrection power in and through your personality. He wants you to present your body to Him. Your brain, that's part of your body. He wants you to present your brains, so that living in you He can use your brain to think His thoughts and get them back into the world again.

He wants you to present your eyes, that's part of your body. So that living in you He can use your eyes to see the multitude as sheep scattered without a shepherd. That's how He saw them and He is the same Jesus and if you give Him your personality in body, then He is going to do through you what He did when He was here. He is going to use your eyes to see men as lost and in need of salvation. Then He asked you to present your ears, so that living in you He can give to you the patience to listen to that which you might not want to listen to.

But you see a good part of witnessing is listening. I suppose if you were to break it down into percentage, probably 90% of an effective witness is in effective listening and the church needs fewer talkers and more listeners. You have to earn the right to plant the seed of the Gospel. Everybody you meet

has a plan of salvation. Oh yah, you ask them, "Do the best you can the good outweighs the bad." Everyone has a plan of salvation and before you can give them His you've got to listen to theirs. So He asked you to present your ears. So that living in you He can use your ears to listen often to an awful lot of nonsense. But you know if you don't listen, their minds are so packed with their own ideas there is no room for His truth. So He says present your ears so that I can use your ears to listen and to let people give their burdens and spill their troubles.

Just let me have your ears. Then He said let me have your heart. You remember when He saw the multitude, He was moved with compassion. Your heart is part of your body. So the Lord Jesus said present your heart to me your emotions so you can feel. "Weep with them that weep. Rejoice with them that rejoice." (Rom. 12:15) Now, if you know you as I know me, you know that's not your character, that's not the way you are by nature. Some more than others perhaps, but we feel so strongly about our own

concerns and our own problems and our own interests.

And it's only the love of God shed abroad on our hearts by Holy Spirit that enable us to see the multitude as sheep scattered without a shepherd. So He says present your hearts to Me. So that living in you I can have a heart to be broken again for the need of the lost. Then He says present your feet to Me, so that living in you I can use your feet to go anyplace I want to go to find those that I would bring to Myself. Present your feet to Me. "Blessed are the feet of them that publish glad tidings, bring the Gospel of peace." (Rom. 10:15) That's part of your body, present your body that means present your feet that you are willing to go any time of the day or night that He may lead or you may have an opportunity.

You've already given your feet to Him and consequently you're prepared to just let Him use them to take you any place that He wants to go. Present your hands to Him, so that living in you He can use your hands to accomplish His purpose. He used His hands for those many years probably 20 or more, 18 at least in carpentry work making things for people and helping provide the things that they need. And if you present your hands to Him you probably are going to find that you have many occasions to use your hands to assist and to aid lift the fallen, feed the hungry, to guide the blind to light.

Present your hands to Him. Then He says present your lips to Him. Your lips to Him. So that is part of your body, isn't it? Your ability to speak so that living in you, He can use your lips to speak His Word of redeeming love to those whom He would. That's what the Apostle said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I." But I presented my brain, my ears, my heart, my feet, my hands, my lips and the life. "but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20) What is the faith in the Son of God?

That if He redeemed us by His blood, we count it our "reasonable service to present our bodies" to Him, so that He could live His life in and through us. And the end that men might be brought out of darkness into light, out of death into life. I went to Africa years ago back in 1945 as a missionary. And to be perfectly honest with you, I really went I suppose I never analyzed it or wrote it out. I didn't think it was fair for people to go to hell without at least one chance to be saved.

And I suppose you could say if you wanted to assign to it a motive, it was really in a sense to complete or to improve on the justice of God. When I got there, to my amazement, I found out that the people I had come to see and to serve were just as wicked as the ones that I had left back home in Indiana, where I had been a pastor while finishing my training. They were stubborn and rebellious and selfish and arrogant and proud and even when they heard the Gospel they didn't bow and bend before Him.

And I can recall on one occasion getting down on my face and saying Father, "I been sold a bill of goods." I somehow thought that when I got out here, they saw me they were going to say you've come to show us the way to heaven. They couldn't care less about the way to heaven. They knew the name of God and they knew that God was holy. They knew they were sinners. They knew that God was going to punish them when they died. And they served evil spirits because evil spirits made them miserable for a little while they were alive.

There was no fear of God before their eyes. And when I had finished pouring out my complaint to the Lord and telling Him what a dirty trick it really seem to be. To get there and then to find that they didn't want to be or have salvation or want the Lord or appreciate my coming to tell them about. It seem to me as though He whispered yes you're right. You're absolutely right. That's true they are just as lost as you are. They deserve hell just as much as you do. And they don't deserve to have Me

die for them and they don't deserve to have you tell them that I die for them. They don't deserve anything but My wrath. But you see I love them. I want them. I love them just like they are. And when you were just like that, I loved you. And I didn't send you here just because they deserve it you. I sent you here, so you could let them know of My love. And you could lift them, as it were, into My waiting arms. You see from that moment on it completely changed my attitude toward evangelism and toward witnessing.

Up until that point I thought I was trying to snatch sinners out the hands of an angry God and rescue them. From that point on, I saw that I was snatching angry sinners and trying to lift them into the arms of a loving, waiting, gracious God, who was longing that they sue for peace and ask for pardon. And that in a since it was that we were laboring together with Him in bring this inheritance for Christ. And to see them not as they were vile, retched, worshipers of evil spirits.

Practicing every kinds of cruelty and immorality, but to see them as they were going to be. With new natures and new hearts and new names and new bodies and new spirits and be to the eternal, praise, and glory of His grace. That's what He wants you to see, "The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Now it is well and good for you to say, "I want Christ to live in me? I want Him to fill me with Himself. I want to walk in the fullness of the Spirit." But they is just one thing you've got to understand.

The fullness of Christ is not to give you a handle on God, so you can do with God what things you would like to do. It is to give Him a handle on you so He can do through you what He wants to do. And what He wants to do is to bring men and women out of death into life so they will be part of the inheritance of the Lord Jesus Christ. So He wants you to have "the eyes of your understanding opened," so that instead of seeing the little mean nasty kids that trump through your flower bed, instead of walking around on the sidewalk, go through your yard and take a stick and rattle on the picket fence and wake you from your afternoon nap and all the others things.

And you call their mothers and say those nasty little children all they are is just lost boys that are saying, oh doesn't somebody here know God and love me. And won't they pray for me and tell me about Christ? How imperative it is for us to understand this. "The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints," because it changes our attitude toward the lost. Instead of seeing them as shameful and wicked and unclean, we see them the way they are going to be to the eternal praise of the glory of His grace.

That's what He wants our eyes opened for, so we can see that the matter for which He works is for Christ to live in us. And the purpose for which He works is to bring men out of death to Himself. Now, the next thing He wants us to understand is the energy that is going to be employed in accomplishing this task. You know when David Livingston's father or grandfather or whoever it might have been was given the freedom from serfdom to take a name he probably had come to know Christ and took as a name "Livingstone."

And I like that name because the Bible speaks of us having stony hearts and hard hearts. And you can be just as successful, if you please, and I put this in quotes, "in saving someone as you can go out here and find a grant boulder and doing something to make it become live, living quivering flesh." Now when you are certain that you can turn a boulder into flesh then you are pretty sure that you know all the answers about seeing men brought out death into life. But the fact of the matter is that for someone to pass from death to life is just as much a miracle as for a stone to come alive.

It's just as much a miracle as it was to raise the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. In fact it took the very same kind of power to save you that it took to raise His Son from the dead. It's a miracle. And when our soloist sing, It Took a Miracle¹, "When He saved my soul cleansed me and made me whole. It took a

miracle of love and grace." It is grace. It is miraculous. It is supernatural. To take someone that has a hard stony heart and make that one a child of God. You don't do it.

I don't do it. I know how to give the plan of salvation and get people to say, "Ah hum." in the right places. And right down on the card that I have a convert, but I have seen so many of my converts still living in sin, still living in darkness. That I have had to come to the conclusion there is a great deal of difference between that and seeing someone pass from death to life. 1 "It Took a Miracle" By John W. Peterson, 1948.

And Paul said, "When it pleased God to reveal His Son in me," (Gal. 1:15,16) salvation is revelation. Salvation is miracle. So what's the power? How are we going to do this sort of thing? How is it going to be accomplished? Well, notice the next thing, He wants "the eyes of our understanding opened that we may know." "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places," (Eph. 1:19,20) Now what is he saying?

He is simply saying this, that when you present your body to Him so that He can live in you. When you present yourself to Him so that living in you, He is free to use you that which is the supreme task of the God head, building this inheritance for Christ that the power that's available to you is the very power that raised up Christ from the dead. That you are to be the channel by which this power is to flow into the affairs of men and into the lives of people. Notice it again, that you might know, "what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe."

What is this mean? That you would present your bodies to Him for the purpose that He said is here the power that is to enable you to accomplish and fulfill your task is not just human enthusiasm, dedicate energy, and consecrated intellect. It's all of that, but more than that it is the very power that raised up Christ from the dead. It is quite interesting that in this verse, in verses 19 and 20, every word in the Greek language used for power or might or energy is employed.

"What is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ." All the words that are used to convey this thought are put together here in seemingly hopeless effort on the part of the apostle though certainly not hopeless. An effort to let you understand that the power that's to flow through you as a mother in the home, as a man in the office, as a young person in school to in able you to live this life for Christ and witness for Christ that is the very resurrection life of Christ.

Now, that ought to bring out a hallelujah, here or there. To think that is what he is telling these people that, that's what is going to happen. Now, we have seen something of His plan to live His life in us. We've seen something of His purpose, which is that through us to bring men to Himself that they might be a part of "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." We've seen something of the power, namely that there is going to be same flow of resurrection power that raised Christ from the dead flowing through your personality to make you effective as a witness for Him.

But there is something else you've got to see is and that's the place from which all of this is done. Go back to the third verse, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings." Where? "In heavenly." (Eph. 1:3) Now he hasn't said anything about it there. He just goes on to talk about it. Now he comes to that to the heavenlies, "which he wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead." Now will you go down to the second chapter and notice the first two words.

If you are using the King James they are, "And you. And you." Well, have you ever stopped to think on a kind of cumbersome chapter break that is? The function of a conjunction is to conjunct, but when you see a chapter beginning with "And you," you have to say somebody kind of slipped up here. It just doesn't make a great deal of contextual sense, but it'll do it if you do this. If you will do it in your Bible, as I have done it in most of mine and you try and draw a little circle around "And you."

And then you take a fine line run it back to verse 20 and it reads like this, "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him 'and you' from the dead, and set him 'and you' at his own right hand in the heavenly." You say, "Now, brother you're just making too fast and loose with one conjunction to do a thing like that. What's your authority? Why can you say, that when Christ was raised from the dead, we were raised and when Christ was seated, we were seated?" Why? Because he repeated it in the 5th and 6th verses of the next chapter, so that I'd have a good defense for putting that circle around "And you" and tuck the point in the line up there.

Because in chapter 2 in verse 5, "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together." Now what did I say? "which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him 'and you' from the dead and set him 'and you' at his own right hand in the heavenly." You see He was your representative. And He was dying your death and He was buried for you and quickened for you and raised for you. But since He was your representative that met that what He was doing for you in the Father's eyes, from heaven at least, you were doing in Him.

So the Father didn't just see Christ die for you, He saw you died with Him. And He didn't just see Christ buried for you, He saw you buried with Him. He didn't just see Christ quicken for you, He saw you quicken with Him. He didn't just see Christ raised for you, He saw you raised with Him. And He didn't just see His Son sit down at the

right hand for you, He saw you sit down at His right with Him. Because that's the place from which we are to pray, that's the place from which we are to speak, that's the place from which we are to live. "He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly." And the tragedy is so few Christians, it seems, understand that that's their natural habitat now that they're in Christ. Most of us are living under the circumstances instead of sharing the glories of His presences.

That's where we belong there in the heavenlies, where "He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings." So who is he writing to? Well, he is writing to a group of people that a few months before were on their faces in the slim of their immorality, groveling before Diane of the Ephesians. And now he is telling them that Christ wants to live in them that's "the hope of His calling." He wants to live in them so that He can bring to Himself "His inheritances in the saints." That He wants to live in them so the power that raised up Christ from the dead can flow through them and that the place they have in God's eyes is raised with Christ and seated with Christ in the heavenlies because there is a foe.

Notice, "which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him 'and you' from the dead and set him 'and you' at his own right hand in the heavenly." Where? Far above all of the forces that are going to bind the lost and interfere with the work of God. "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, in opposition to God." (Eph. 1:21) "And He has put all things under His feet," and what are His feet? (Eph. 1:22) His body. It's that marvelous.

And we're His body, "which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him 'and you' from the dead and set him 'and you' at his own right hand in the heavenly." "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and

dominion, and every name that is named" and made "Him the head of the church." (Eph. 5:23) His body and "put all things under His feet." Well, what's His feet? His body. And He has put all things under His body. So, in your home where you have unsaved loved ones, if you understand what it means for Christ to live in you, then you are going to have an opportunity to present the testimony to your children and their friends.

Because it won't be just you and me and our irritation and our weariness and our fatigue, it is going to be Christ living in us. He is everything we are not. How desperately our children need to see Christ living in us and our neighbors and our friends and our family. How they deserve to see Christ living in us, because from them are going to become these trophies of grace that will be part of His inheritance. And if we understand that we are raised with Him, seated with Him, then the powers that bind our children would hold our neighbors would control the affairs these forces are under His feet.

And we are part of His body. We might even have the honor of being the feet in the body of Christ. Isn't thrilling to think He gives to us the privilege of enforcing His victory in the world. So we see something of the place. Now we need to get a little look at the people. What kind of people is he talking about? Oh, some might say he's talking about Jews that have a heritage in Israel and are first generation Christians. And say they had a lot going for them. But he can't mean me.

He can't mean me. Well, he does mean you, because he says, "you who were dead in trespasses and sins." (Eph. 2:1) Now, that's better than if he put my name there. Because if he put my name there I'd never know if it was my great grandfather, my grandfather, or my father, my son or my grandson. And you wouldn't have a chance at all, and it wouldn't do me any good. But when he says, "You who were dead in trespasses and sins," then I know he's talking about me because I "was dead in trespasses and sins."

And so are you. So he's saying this, "Look, nothing of your past is going to interfere with My plan for your future." Isn't that great? Isn't it wonderful to know that somebody loved you when He knew the worst about you? You know, if most of our friends knew about us what God and we know, we wouldn't have many friends. The only thing is that if we knew about them what they and God know they wouldn't have us as friends, either. Or we would all be friends because we would we ought to be know that we were woven on the same loom.

Maybe the woof was a little different, but boy the warp is the same. I know you, friend. You can't kid me. I know you because I know me. I know that we "were dead in trespasses and sins." You who were, so He's talking about folks just like us. "Who walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince and power of the air, that very same spirit that now works in the children of disobedience." (Eph. 2:2) That's who we were. That's who we were.

Those are the very same people we are going to witness to and minister to, and see brought out of the bondage of Satan into the liberty of the children of God. Now do you see why it's so important for us to understand that the way He wants to work is for us to present our bodies to Him so He can live in us? The reason that He wants to work is that through us He can bring these that are still in Satanic bondage and every lost person is--into that place where they're part of this inheritance for Christ, "His inheritance in the saints."

The power is the very power that raised up Christ from the dead and our position is seated with Christ. You see, once we were dead in our sins. We "walked according to the course of this world." So we know the plight of these that are unsaved. We know the power of darkness. We also know that any

effectiveness is not because we were better than others, not because we live differently than do others. No, not at all. We know that there was nothing good in us, nothing that called forth His love.

That God had to love us when we were utterly unlovely and had nothing to commend us to Him. He had to be willing to accept us when He knew the worst about us. You know, I'm always surprised about what I find out about me. I'm kind of surprised about what I find out about you, too. I shouldn't be, but I am. Because it's a little hard. We get the idea thinking that we've been around so long that maybe somehow the warp is a little different. Then God lets a circumstance come and we get a good glimpse under the cover, you know, and see that the seed of every sin that anyone has ever committed is in our hearts.

There is nothing that anyone has ever done that we weren't capable of doing. We still would be but for His grace. There's no one worse than we are or could have been. The only reason we didn't do what others have done is because we didn't have the incentive. We certainly had capacity. Now, if you understand yourself, if you've ever seen yourself the way God sees you then you're going to identify with these people to whom God is speaking. He's saying, "Now listen, don't kid yourself.

Don't fool yourself. I know you. I know all about you. There's nothing you'll ever find out about yourself that will surprise Me. I've loved you when I knew the worst about you. There's nothing you'll ever find out about yourself that's going to make Me change the fact that I love you. I just don't want any pride around here. I just don't want any confidence in the flesh. I just don't want you to think that you're better than anyone else. I want you to know that if you are it's only because of Me and not because of you."

Is that hard to take? Is it pretty hard for us to say, "Lord, you know those awful heathen our Brother Kenneth Troutman has been working for these last 27 years out in New Guinea. Oh, may they are terrible, Lord. Look at the things they did." Yes, but the only reason you weren't doing them because of an accident made you born here instead of there, but you've got all the capacity that they have. There's nothing they have done that you couldn't have done. It doesn't take any more of God's grace to save one of those people than it does to save you.

That's the astounding thing. That's the amazing thing. What He's saying is this. Let's be done with this idea, you know, "I can't do that. I've never done it. Oh, no one like me could do that. The Lord Jesus, you think He really wants to live in me? Oh, if you knew what kind of a life I lived before I was saved." Well, if it was anything different or worse than the dear people up at Ephesus, I'll be surprised because if they hadn't done it, it just couldn't be done. That's all.

They did it. They went through it A to Z, and they did it backwards as well as forwards. He's saying about them listen, your past is not going to interfere with My plan. There's nothing you've ever done that's going to keep you from fulfilling what I've purposed for you. I want to live in you, dear child. I want you to present yourself to Me so that I can live in you. I want to use you to bring the lost to Myself. I want the very power that raised Me from the dead to flow through your personality so that you can be an instrument in My hands to see people brought out of death into life.

That's what I want from you. I want you to just let Me live My life in you. And if you'll do that then it's going to be possible for you to labor with Me, and share with Me in enforcing My victory over a defeated foe, over all the full forces of darkness that I've defeated. Now, isn't it interesting that what He has put here in germ form in this first chapter and the second chapter He's enlarged on elsewhere? Let's go for instance shall we, I've taken you to verses here the second part, first chapter put us "far above all principality."

Let's go over to chapter six for just a minute and see the implications of it. In chapter six and verse ten, "Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God." (Eph. 6:10,11a) We've

already seen that your position is seated with Him in the heavenlies. Now you're on earth. You're to put on the armor. When you're down here in time and we live in two places at once, you know, seated in the heavenlies in Christ and Christ living in us here. Now he says, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand." (Eph. 6:11) I am always amused and gratified when I realize that word 'stand'. You know Greek. It is amazing how much you know. Have you ever heard of the word antihistamine?

Of course you have. That's the very word from the Greek text is here antihistamine. Exactly, just pick it up right out of the text. And having done all antihistamine come against so as to cause it to stop and having all to stand and therefore, "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;" (Eph. 6:14) "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." (Eph. 6:15,16) Well, we are seated above principalities and powers aren't we?

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:" (Eph. 6:17) So here he is telling us we are engaged in a warfare. Back in verse 12 of chapter 6: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places." So verses 20, 21, and 22 tie in with Ephesians 6:10-18. The germ of the one is fulfilled in the other. Now let's look for a moment at the implications.

Some weeks before coming here Dr. Nathan Bailey wrote a letter to all the assigned speakers in the Alliance Summer Camp meeting such as this. And asked that in the course of our ministry, we would defiantly bear in mind the need for workers, the need for workers. And as I thought of that in preparation for this ministry, my heart went back to that time I told you about the other night when I was at the seminary and took spiritual inventory. I started to study the Word I said, "Lord, from here on it has to be real."

And I was felt lead to take that verse in Matthew 9: "Pray the Lord of the harvest, that he will thrust out labourers into his harvest field." (Mat. 9:38) I started to parse in Greek. I tried to take every word and get the meaning of it and the construction and the form of it. And this is what I found out there in Matthew 9 where it says, "Pray the Lord of the harvest, that he will thrust out laborers." I found out that the construction there in the original is so that you would have to translate it this way: "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, in order that he will be able to thrust out labors."

And I was astounded I couldn't trust my own exegesis, so I went to a seminary professor. A man whose father had worked with my father in West Palm Beach and I said, "Doctor, I have done this study, would you please look at it and tell me whether it is correct?" So a couple of days later I went back to his office and picked it up. And he said, "It is correct, but I wouldn't touch it with a ten foot pole. Because the implications of it are something I don't even want to find out about."

Now listen, "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, in order that he may be able to thrust out labors." I remember going into a village on the Sudan-Ethiopian border. And there was a witch doctor at the edge of the village and he had a woman of about 16, I suppose. And going through part of the adult initiation rites and her back was being cicatrized. In this tribe, they had elaborate diagrams that were put on the back, on the front, on the breast, and so forth on the women at each stage of their development and acceptance into

the tribal life.

And as I came in, here was this girl sitting there with no anesthesia at all just sitting there. And he had a spear blade, just a dirty old spear blade that had been worn down and sharpened. And the witch doctor had taken out the shaft and he held it and he'd sharpen the point there was a stone there. And he would wipe the blood off on his thigh or on the ground. And then he would take this and she would just sit there and he'd carve into the back. And then he would open up the crack or the cut and reach over and take soot off a cooking pot and put it in and close it because that was going to make it heal with a scar, if she didn't die of infection.

And it was just as though that place was charged with evil, charged with evil. The old chief had come out. I had sent a boy on in and the old chief came out to see me. As he came he said, "Why have you been so long? Why, why didn't you come sooner?" I said, "What did you mean?" "Why?" He said, "When I was a little boy like this, my father took me over to the town where the sunsets where the government is Malakal in Upper Nile Province. And there" he said, "I heard a man like you.

I haven't seen one with a face like yours since then. And I heard him talk the sweetest talk and it spoke to my heart just like honey. About God about God who made the world, about God who loved us, about God. He said, 'He would come and tell my people.' My father died and I became chief. And now look at me." And there was a man on each side as he moved with a stick as they held him up as he came out to see me, "Why have you been so long? We've waited for you." He said, "Now you are here." We walked by and he said, "This is one of my people," and there was the witch doctor carving, just evil. As if evil was tangible. You could feel it.

And in my eyes it was almost as though Satan could be seen. Oh, there was the witch doctor, there was the girl, there was I, but it was as though you could see the prince of darkness laughing into the face of Jesus Christ saying, You made her. You made her in Your image. You made her in Your likeness. You told Your church to pray. You told Your church to care. You told them You would live in them. You told them You were seated with them, and they don't care. And I can cut her, mark her, scar her and brand her.

Oh, she knows You, but she doesn't accept You. You can't get you people to care. He's waited. As I was studying this verse "Pray you the Lord of the harvest, in order that he may be able to thrust out labors." All I could see was someone coming and standing as it were at that village saying, Father, I was once one of Satan's servants. I was once bound in darkness. I was once dead in trespasses and sin. I walked according to the course of this world. I was like this and Your grace found me.

And Your grace saved me. And I am washed in the blood of Your Son and I am born into Your family. And now Father, I plead for this my sister. I plead for these my brethren. And I ask You in the Name of Your Son who conquered this defeated foe. To send in the missionaries, send the witness. This is the implication. "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest." How? From what position? We were once dead in trespasses and sin. We once walked according to the course of this world. But now our risen Lord with Whom we have been raised and seated Who is living in us has put us here to enforce His victory over that defeated foe.

To get the laborers in and to get the people released. Do you see it? I was in a little church down in Dalton, Georgia. The pastor had heard me speak in Chattanooga and he asked me to come for a week's missionary conference, which is what we did in those days. And as the week went on with the morning

studies, something like this and then an evening study. One morning I felt lead of the Lord to ask the people saying, "When you come tomorrow, we're going to stay through the noon hour fast and pray for the week that God wants to do here."

And I had been talking about this to some degree and the pastor said with tears in his eyes, "I have been pastor here for seven years. This church has been here for fifty years and there's never been a missionary go from it. There has never been one to carry the Gospel of Christ to the ends of the earth. It is a missionary Baptist church, but not one life has been from this church. The Word has been preached to carry the Gospel." And he said, "Could it be, could it be that Satan has bound the young people in this church and bound the families?"

Should we not pray this way for our people?" That's what I have been yearning for and longing for and teaching that we should stand on the victory of Calvary for the release of the young life around which a web had been woven of selfish ambition and parental plans outside the will of God. That we should stand on the victory of Calvary for the release of these young people. And so we went to prayer and it was astounding the way the truth had captured these hearts. They were fresh and new they hadn't heard everything become callused with truth.

They were eager and open and excited at the implications of it. And there was a blending as we stood on the victory of Calvary. And together we resisted every effort of a defeated foe that continued to hold this young men and women and we release them into the will of God and into the purpose of God. And it was almost as though a black cloud was being lifted up and pushed away. And the light was beginning to come in. That Sunday morning the invitation was given and they were several that came.

Again, that night and subsequently they were many young men and women who went out from that church as missionaries for Jesus Christ. And I believe that if it had not been for an intelligent and deliberate and purposeful use of the Scripture, those young people would have stay there as their fathers and grandfathers had done. Never gone into that which was closest to the heart of God. What we are talking about here is not any little matter. That's why the Scripture says, "We are not ignorant of his devices." (II Cor. 2:11) We are at times.

We behave as though we are. We feel sometimes it's just emotional, an appeal, an excitement, an information, but it is more than that. There is a spiritual battle going on. And "our weapons are not carnal, but mighty to the tearing down of strong holds." (II Cor. 10:4) So imperative therefore that we should understand what the apostle is giving here, no light and no little matter. But it is an emancipation proclamation. And it's an enlistment and it is the high holy privilege of being labors together with God in the most important work in the world.

And if He could use Ephesian believers that have no background, no history, no education, nothing all to commend them except that they were heirs of the grace of God through faith in Christ and then He can use us. Debouched they had been, injured by their years of sin, and yet God was able to heal them of their scars of their sins and release them from their bondage of their iniquity and bring them to the an place for effectual laborers together with Him. "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that they should walk in." (Eph. 2:10)

So I am submitting to you this morning that this text that we have "the eyes of our understanding be opened." Oh, can you see how important it is. To see what His plan is to live in us. What His purpose is to build is that inheritance, that heir, that body, that bride. What the power is the resurrection life of Christ.

What the place is, "seated with Christ in the heavenlies." What the position is to enforce the victory of Calvary over a defeated foe. Who the people are. People just like us, who had been dead in our trespasses and sin, but made alive in Christ.

Everyone here, every home here has a tragedy in it. Close to it. So enormous, so hopeless, that only the power of all mighty God is enough to solve the problem. And here is the answer, and yet you can treat it as another sermon, you can treat as just another lecture, you can treat it as another Bible study, but to your own heart. But if you cry out, "Oh God, Father of Jesus Christ 'open the eyes of my understanding' that this truth is not a just a text I've read in a chapter and studied.

But it becomes part of the equipment that I use in my service for the Lord Jesus Christ." That's the cry of my heart today. Shall we bow together in prayer. With our heads bowed and eyes closed, I not going to ask us to sing in just a moment we're going to pray and then we're going to have the benediction. No singing this morning. But if you are here and God has spoken to your heart and you sense and know a need while we are praying right now, get up from where you are and come and kneel here.

We will join you and pray with you. And if you don't, we are going to assume that you can wait to another time, but if you can't wait, you come. I want you to think for a moment with me and this invitation is open you won't interfere. If you just have a burden to seek the altar of prayer, you come. I want you to think over the grounds we have come. Jesus Christ invites you to present your body to Him. That's "the hope of His calling." He wants to use you to part with Him to bring men from death to life.

The power is the resurrection power. The power that raised up Christ from the dead, the place is seated with Him in the heavenlies, the position is as His feet over principality and power. And the people just you, once dead in sin. You, are you willing to say, "Lord Jesus, I want this desperately. 'Open the eyes of my understanding,' help me to see, help me to understand, to experience, be a laborer together with you in a new dimension of effectiveness for Christ." That's the cry of our hearts.

We are going to take sixty seconds by the clock for discipline silence. During that silence, I want you to go over the ground I just reviewed with you find where you are and ask God to make the truth real operatively, experiential real and we are going to stand for prayer. And we are going to be dismissed. But sixty seconds of discipline silence. (Silence) Let us stand for prayer. Brother Jones would you dismisses us with prayer. * Reference such as: Delivered at Summit Grove, New Freedom, PA on Monday, August 5, 1974 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor. ©PRBTMI 1974

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