

# Consider Our Spiritual Condition

by Stephen Kaung

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*The sermon challenges listeners to consider their spiritual condition and whether Christ is truly the first, last, and life in between for them.*

**Duration:** 58:06

**Scripture:** Hebrews 3:1, Hebrews 12:3, Revelation 1:17

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Christ Centrality"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of considering Christ as the first, last, and living one in our lives, urging believers to reflect on their spiritual condition and relationship with the Lord. It draws parallels from the rebuilding of the temple in Haggai to encourage introspection and surrender to God's will, highlighting the need to prioritize Christ above all else and live by His life within us. The speaker underscores the imminent return of Jesus and the necessity to be prepared by yielding fully to Him.

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## Transcript

Hebrews chapter 3, verse 1. Hebrews chapter 3, verse 1. Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our confession. And also, the same book, chapter 12, verse 3. For consider well him who endures so great contradiction from sinners against himself, that he be not weary, fainting in your minds. Let's have a short word of prayer.

Dear Lord, as we gather here this morning, our hearts bow low before thee. We do praise and thank thee for all thy mercy and patience with us. We thank thee for this time of meeting, that we may hear thy word and be better prepared for thy imminent return.

So dear Lord, may thy spirit take charge of this time. May thy spirit send thy word into the innermost of our heart. Transform us.

Claim us for thyself. We want to give ourselves to thee totally, that our purpose may be fulfilled. And thy return be nearer, we ask in thy name.

Amen. Thank God for gathering us together here this morning. Our theme this time is Christ, our vision.

And this morning I would like, brothers and sisters, to turn the book of Haggai. In Haggai we find that after 70 years of captivity, God in his mercy allowed his people to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. And thank God when Cyrus gave this command, a number of the children of Israel and Zion, stirred by the

spirit of God, they returned to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem at that time was completely destroyed. They went back with one purpose only, and that purpose is to rebuild the temple. That the name of God may have a testimony on this earth.

After they returned to Jerusalem, they gathered together to lay the altar, that they might sacrifice to the Lord. And later on, they came together, trying to lay the foundation of the temple. But we know their enemy was not happy with this.

So he stirred up their neighbours, trying to prevent the building of the temple. Unfortunately, they succeeded in doing that. So the children of Israel who returned, after they could not rebuild the temple, what could they do? They began to build their own houses.

They were thinking that they were waiting for a better time, when they can return to rebuild the temple. But now it was not the time. But they had to do something.

So they began to build their own houses. They built well-costed houses, that is, they built good houses, in order to enjoy themselves. And while they were doing that, God raised up an old man called Haggai.

And he began to speak to the returning remnant. And in his short words, because he had very few words to speak, he asked them one thing. And that is the word, consider.

He wanted the returning remnant to consider. To consider why is it that when they work very hard for their living, and yet they receive very poor reward. So again and again, in his short message, he used the word consider.

Now consider means think about it. Really think of it. Why is it that they work hard and yet they receive very little? There must be a reason for it.

And he asked them to consider, to find out the reason why. God used the word consider to renew the effort of the returning remnant to build the temple. So it is the burden of my heart this morning.

On this matter of consider. Consider means think about it. Do not let things pass casually.

Think about your situation. Think about your spiritual condition. Think about what happened to you.

Why is it that they labor much but brought in little? There must be a reason behind it. So this old man asked them to consider. And after he had asked them to consider, we find in Haggai chapter 1, the end of it.

In the fourth and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king. In other words, in that year, in that month, and in that time, the remnant listened to the word of God through Haggai. And they began to work again on the temple.

As they were working on the temple, they very soon realized that what they were building could never be compared with the temple built by Solomon. Solomon's temple was such a gigantic, wonderful, beautiful, the marvel of the world. But what they were doing, in spite of their effort, all they can do was a small temple.

It could never be compared with the glory of the past temple. And because of this, they became a little bit discouraged. And it was again, during that time, in the seventh month, that Haggai spoke again.

Encouraging them not to look at the outward appearance, because God was with them. And God will raise up his temple to such glory that it will be a marvel to everyone. And in this trying to encourage men, he mentioned, as we find in verse 13, verse 15 of the second chapter, And now I pray you, consider from this day and onward.

From before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of Jehovah. Before those days were, when we came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten. When we came to that, to draw out fifty press measures, but there were but twenty.

Why? Because the Lord said, I smote you with blasting and with milder, and with hail in all the work of your hands, and you returned not to me, say Jehovah. So the Lord said, now consider from this day and onward, from before a twentieth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of Jehovah's temple was laid, consider. Now from that day onward, God will begin to bless his people.

So dear brothers and sisters, what we try to do this morning, is this matter of consider. We want to think about this. We do not want to let things go by without thinking why, without trying to find out the reason.

And we want to know where we really are spiritually. I wonder brothers and sisters, do we ever spend time to consider? Or do we continue to live our life casually? As if everything is alright. Do we really review our life? Think about what has happened to our life.

Whether our spiritual life is in the right relationship with the Lord. Or whether we are just living day by day, without thinking of what the purpose, the reason why we are here. Why the Lord has saved us.

Brothers and sisters, have we ever considered our situations before the Lord? And when we consider, what do we find? Are we in right relationship with the Lord? Do we let the Lord be everything to our life? Are we just living for ourselves? And no wonder we find that our lives are not satisfactory. So dear brothers and sisters, this morning I want all of us to spend some time to consider. Consider your spiritual situation.

Are you satisfied with your spiritual condition? Or do you find that your life is not satisfactory? Why is it? Is it because you concentrate your whole time upon yourself? You forget that you are not yourself. You belong to the Lord. You have believed in the Lord Jesus.

You are His. And you are here not for your own sake. You are here for His sake.

So I think brothers and sisters, it is a very important matter to our lives. As we think of the imminent return of our Lord Jesus, this is especially the time for us to consider. When we look into the life of John the Apostle, we know that of the original twelve apostles of the Lord, he was the only one remaining towards the end of the first century.

And while he was in his old age, he served the Lord in Asia Minor. But because of the word of God and of the testimony of Jesus, he was exiled to the island of Patmos. Now Patmos was a small island off the coast of Asia Minor.

And he was exiled there to do the work in the mine. But thank God, on the Lord's day, he had some time for himself. And we find on that morning, he must be sitting on a rock facing Asia Minor, thinking of the churches that he ministered to before he was exiled.

And while he was doing that, he heard a voice behind him. He turned back to look at the voice and what did he see? He saw seven golden lampstands. And in the midst of the seven golden lampstands, stands one like the Son of Man.

Now brothers and sisters, of all the people at that time, I think probably no one can be compared with George in his intimacy with Christ. He knew Christ on earth so well. But here you'll find he was given a vision of Christ that he had not known before.

Unfortunately, many times, when we look at the so-called Patmos vision, our attention probably will be turned to the seven golden lampstands. We are thinking of the churches. But if you read it carefully, you will find that even though seven letters were written to these seven churches in Asia, yet the one that God wanted to pay special attention to is not any of these churches.

It was one like the Son of Man. Now why is he saying like the Son of Man? John knew Christ so intimately. But here he says he saw a man like the Son of Man.

Why? Because the one he knew while he was on earth, he was so humble. He came into this world to be a sacrifice for the sin of the world. John was the only one of the twelve disciples of Christ who were at the cross.

He saw how the soldier thrust a spear into his side and draw out water and blood. And he testified of it. We can almost say none knew the Lord deeper than John the Apostle.

But here he was given a vision of Christ in heaven. Now brothers and sisters, we all know when Christ ascended from this earth, the disciples saw him going up and then a cloud took him away. They were still looking up even though they could not see him anymore.

And then two men in white appeared. And these two men said, Man of Galilee, why do you look up? Because the one whom you have seen going up, he will return in like manner. In other words, the way he went will be the way he is coming back.

Now today we know that our Lord Jesus has arrived in heaven. He is now seated at the right hand of God. Now how do we know? Where is the proof? The proof is at Pentecost.

Because after Christ was ascended up to high, he was anointed by his father. And on Pentecost, the ointment that he was anointed came down to his beard, even to his whole body, even today. So that's the reason why we know Christ has arrived in heaven.

But y'all did not know Christ in heaven as much. So we find in Revelation chapter 1, verses 17 and 18, When he saw the Lord Jesus walking in the midst of the seven churches, when he saw the glory of the Lord, he fell down as dead. Then the Lord touched him and raised him up, and the Lord began to reveal to him who he really is.

And brothers and sisters, this is what we need to see today. Hear the Lord Jesus in Revelation chapter 1, verse 17. Verse 17 says, Now what is the revelation of our Lord Jesus in heaven? Here we find he said, I

am the first and the last and the living one.

This refers to what Christ was from eternity, before he came into this world. He is the first and he is the last. He is the Alpha and the Omega.

He is the first in everything. Not only in time, but in all things. Before him there was nothing.

And he was the beginning. In the beginning, God. So he is the first.

Now so far as we are concerned, what is our relationship to him as the first? Is he the first in our life? He has saved us. He has given himself so totally to us. I believe brothers and sisters, we are grateful what has happened to us as we believe in the Lord Jesus.

But the point is, is he the first of our life? Is he the beginning of everything? When we are doing something, has he begun it? Or we ourselves have begun it and ask him to bless us? This is something we need to consider. We can never understand why he should love us to such an extent. That even before the foundation of the world he had offered himself as a lamb for our sake.

We can never fathom how he loves us. And yet brothers and sisters, as we consider our own lives, I'm afraid we will find that he is really not the first in our life. Sometimes we wonder why he challenged his disciples.

You who love your father or mother, brother or sister, sons or daughters, your wife or yourself, more than me cannot be my disciple. You know brothers and sisters, if we don't think about it, we may comfort ourselves thinking that we love the Lord. But when really we are challenged, do we really love him more than our father and mother? Now it doesn't mean the Lord does not want us to love our father and mother.

On the contrary, that is his commandment. Honor your father and mother. And yet, he is challenging us with this.

Do we love our father or mother more than loving the Lord Jesus? Now I have to confess, I love my father. And that's the reason after I was saved, even though I was zealous for the Lord, and somehow, I couldn't really come into the center of the Lord's heart. I have given this testimony a number of times.

After I was saved, I was very zealous for the Lord. But there was one thing I couldn't do. And that was on this matter of baptism.

You know, I was a Methodist before. Any Methodist church. My father was a pastor.

And when I was a baby, I was sprinkled with a few drops of water on my head. That I was supposed to be baptized unto Christ. So after I was saved, when people began to tell me I need to be immersed because sprinkling a few drops on your head is not baptism.

It is a human way. And I always argue with them. I say no.

Because when my father sprinkled that water on my head, he sprinkled me in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And I cannot deny that name. So, even though I was very zealous for the Lord, and yet for a number of years, I resisted this matter of baptism by immersion.

Until one day, I was visiting my friend. He lived next door to Watchman Lee. And again he began to talk with me about immersion.

Again I argued with him. And he found that I was just hopeless. He gave me up.

So he went to sleep. And I was in his room sitting there praying. I said, Lord, I have read the Bible.

I knew that immersion was the right form of baptism. But it was not convenient with me. My father was a Methodist pastor.

And what would he think if I got immersed? So I told the Lord, I promise you, after I graduated from college, after I became independent, I will be immersed. But not now. You know, this is the first time I heard the Lord spoke to me distinctly.

As I was praying in this manner, suddenly a word came to me. As if something, someone was speaking to me. He who loves his father and mother more than me cannot be my disciple.

Brothers and sisters, after I was saved, I always wanted to be a disciple of Christ. So when that word came to me, it touched me so deeply. Immediately I told the Lord, Lord, I want to be your disciple.

Now if this is the way you want it to be, I'll obey. So I came down from that room of my friend. Knocked on the next door.

That's Brother Lee's house. He came down, opened the door. Now he knew me.

He said, what do you want? I said, I want to be baptized by immersion. He said, did your father know? Because he knew my father. I said, no.

But I felt the Lord has spoken to me. So thank God, I was baptized by immersion the next day. And dear brothers and sisters, I have to confess, that is the beginning of open eyes.

I began to see more and more of the will of God in his book than ever before. From there on, he began to lead me. So to me, baptism by immersion is the door.

It opens the door of spiritual revelation to me. So dear brothers and sisters, what do we need to consider? Number one, we need to consider if Christ is really the first in our life. Have we begun something and then ask the Lord to bless it? Or do we wait upon the Lord and let him begin anything? He is the first in our life.

But more than that, we say, I'm the last. Sometimes we do take him as the first. But who will be the second? I will be the second.

But here you'll find the Lord said, I'm not only the first of your life, I'm the last of your life. I'm the conclusion of your life. I'm the result of your life.

Because I live in you. You are mine. And you do everything according to my will.

So I'm the last of your life. The end of your life. Dear brothers and sisters, it is something that we need to consider very seriously before the Lord.

We may begin something by him, but gradually we took over. We did not allow him to be the last. We do not give all the glory back to him.

We try to share the glory with him. So I think this is another thing that we need to consider. To consider whether in your life he is the last.

He gets the glory. He gets his way. And we do not deviate from his purpose.

Furthermore, he said, I am the living one. Who lives today? Brothers and sisters, are we living today? Or is it Christ living in us today? How do we live our life? Aside from him, there is no life. So if we live, we live because of him.

For me to live is Christ. That is the testimony of the Apostle Paul. Now is it our testimony? Can we say for me to live is Christ? Why? Because he lives in me.

It is not I who live. It is Christ who lives in me. I have been crucified with Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters, so here you find a challenge. A challenge to each and everyone of us. Whether the Lord Jesus is everything to you.

He must be the first. He must be the last. And he must be the life in between.

Now that refers to his past. And then he said, and I became dead. That tells of his incarnation.

How he came into this world for one purpose, to go to the cross. Not for himself before so far as he himself is concerned. He lived such a perfect life.

That on the mountain of transfiguration he was ready to leave the world. And yet he did not go back. He came back from the mountain, went to Cameroon and crucified for us.

That's his love. I became dead. I hope we will meditate on this word.

Why? Why he became dead? He who is the first and the last and the living one. We will expect he will live on for eternity. Death has nothing to do with him.

And yet he told us I became dead. Not for himself. He became dead for each and every one of us.

Are we grateful for what he had done for us? And then he said and behold I'm living today for the ages of ages and have the keys of death and of angels. Thank God after our Lord Jesus was crucified burying in his body the sins of us all he has atoned us. He has saved us.

And on the third day he was raised from the dead because he couldn't be kept by death. He had overcome death. And all that death means he has overcome.

So he said I'm living to the ages of ages. Thank God he is living he is living today he is living in each and every one of us and that is to eternity. And he has held the keys of death and angels.

Whoever holds the keys has overcome. He has overcome death and Hades. So thank God we who are his will never die.

That is spiritually we live. And we will be raised from the dead because our Lord Jesus today holds the keys of death and Hades. Brothers and sisters this is I believe what the Lord wants to consider.

As we speak of Christ this is something we need to consider. Is this true with each and every one of us? Thank God the Jewish remnant at that time they heard the exhortation given them by Haggai and also God raised a young man Zechariah to testify to them and through their testimony the remnant continued to work on the building of the temple in spite of all the troubles they had gone through. But by the grace of God we know that the second temple was built.

And it was this second temple that when our Lord Jesus came to earth that he visited. So dear brothers and sisters this morning I have only one burden and the burden is consider. If you have already considered thank God for that.

Now what can you consider? If you do not consider you can live on as usual. But once you really give thought to it you will see how absurd it is that we who are saved should live for ourselves. There is only one way we can live and live by the life of Christ with us.

So may the Lord help us that each and every one of us will consider. And if we do what will happen? If we do consider and yield ourselves to the Lord then the rest of our life will be meaningful. We'll fulfill the purpose of God.

Otherwise dear brothers and sisters hear the warning. If we do not consider and live on as usual what will happen to us? The Lord is returning we do not know when. We have been expecting him to return at any moment.

All the prophecies that precede his return have been fulfilled. Today we do not look for any prophecy to be fulfilled before the beginning of his return. Everything has been fulfilled.

Indeed there are still prophecies to be fulfilled but these prophecies are concerned with his return and afterwards not before. So what are we waiting for today? Are we waiting for him every day? Every day can be a day of his return but when he shall return for us he will come as a thief. He will never blow the trumpet.

You know I often when we were singing things concerning the coming of the Lord a number of hymns tell us when the trumpet blows and the angels sound then the Lord shall return. When I sing it I often say to myself it is a little bit too late. If the Lord had mercy upon us we do not need to wait for that time before because before that he will come as a thief.

We will suddenly be stolen away. Here we are but do we need do we know the next moment it is possible in the next moment hopefully none remain here because we have been taken by the grace of God. Let us pray.

Dear Lord, as we gather here this morning we are considered a most serious question. We cannot afford to be careless. Lord may thy spirit search our hearts see if within us there is still ourselves in charge.

Dear Lord, thou hast given thy all for us and we want to give ourselves totally over to you. Lord, take us work in us take away anything that stands in thy way in our lives. We want to be wholly thine.

We want to declare for me to live is Christ. Oh dear Lord have mercy upon us. We ask in thy precious name.

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