

# Spiritual Ascendancy - Our Position #1

by Stephen Kaung

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*We have been given a position of spiritual ascendancy in Christ Jesus, but we must learn to live by the life in us to possess it.*

**Duration:** 49:35

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:18, Ephesians 1:19, 2 Peter 1:3-5, Revelation 5:4-6, Revelation 5:9, Revelation 5:13

**Topics:** "Christ Exaltation", "Spiritual Authority"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the vision that John had in the book of Revelation. John wept because he realized that there was no one in heaven, on earth, or under the earth who was worthy to execute God's will. However, John was comforted by one of the elders who told him that the lion of Judah, Jesus, had overcome and was worthy to take the book and open the seals. Jesus, represented as a lamb, took the book and began to open the seals, leading to worship and praise from heaven and the entire universe. The preacher emphasizes that spiritual ascendancy is found in Christ Jesus, who emptied Himself and took on the form of a humble servant, obedient to God even unto death. Through His work of redemption, Jesus was raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly realms. The sermon encourages believers to realize that through Christ, they have been given divine power and the potential for godliness.

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## Transcript

Will you please turn to the letter to the Ephesians. Ephesians chapter one. We begin with verse nineteen.

Ephesians chapter one, verse nineteen. And what the surpassing greatness of his power towards us who believe according to the working of the might of his strength, in which he wrought in the Christ, in raising him from among the dead. And he set him down at his right hand in the heavenlies, above every principality and authority and power and dominion and every name named, not only in this age, but also in that to come.

And has set all things under his feet. And give him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. And you, being dead in your offenses and sins, in which you once walked according to the age of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit who now works in the sense of disobedience.

Among whom we also all once had our conversation in the lust of our flesh, doing what the flesh and the false will to do, and were children by nature of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy because of his great love, wherewith he loved us, we too, being dead in offenses, has quickened us with the Christ. He is saved by grace and has raised us up together and has made us sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, that he might display in the coming ages the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

Let's have a word of prayer. Dear Lord, our hearts are most grateful to thee in gathering us together this time in thy presence. Lord, as we think of this time, as we think of thy imminent return, we do thank thee for thy mercy and grace that has enabled us to be gathered in this way.

Dear Lord, we do want to open our hearts to thee and allow thee to speak to us. We pray that thou would grant us the spirit of wisdom and revelation to the full knowledge of God. We confess that without thy spirit we are completely shut out of anything spiritual, but how we praise and thank thee that thou hast sent the Holy Spirit to do this very work, to lead us into thy truth.

So Lord, our hearts do look to thee, trusting thee, believing that thou are going to do all that thou hast foreordained for this time and to be to thee all the glory. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus. Thank God for gathering us together again at this time.

If you were here last time, a year ago, you knew that last time we shared together on this matter of spiritual warfare. All of us, in certain degree, we are all involved in that spiritual warfare. It is not the warfare of this world.

It is a spiritual warfare. It is an age-long war between God and his adversary, Satan. In a way, it is over the destiny of man, whether man will worship God or whether man will worship Satan.

And we are exhorted to stand in the Lord, in the might of his strength, to be closed with the power of God, that is, our Lord Jesus, in order to withstand and to stand for the will of God to be done on this earth in spite of all oppositions. Now this time, we would like to share together on this matter of spiritual ascendancy. Now this is really a related theme.

In one sense, spiritual ascendancy is the secret in spiritual warfare. In another sense, it is also the result of spiritual warfare. Now we would like to approach this theme, first, from the point of our position.

What is our position in this spiritual ascendancy? And then, secondly, we would like to share on this matter of our possession of this spiritual ascendancy. Now dear brothers and sisters, whenever we come to anything spiritual, we have to begin with Christ, because he is the beginning and he is the end. He is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.

We cannot talk of spiritual ascendancy outside of our Lord Jesus. Now in the passage that we have just read, here you'll find our God demonstrated His power, exceeding greatness of His power, in raising our Lord Jesus from among the dead, and set Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, above every principalities and authorities, and power and dominion, and every name named, not only of this age, but also of the age to come, that He might be the head over all things. So brothers and sisters, here you'll find our Lord Jesus.

He has attained to that place of spiritual ascendancy. He, who was equal with God. He was God Himself, the Son of God, eternally equal with God, and yet He emptied Himself.

Of course He cannot empty Himself of His deity, because that's what He is. Forever He is. But He did empty Himself of all the glory and honour, position, worship, that are His due, as God, as the Son of God.

He emptied Himself. What an emptiness it was. He emptied Himself, and He took upon Himself the form of a born slave.

In other words, when He came into this world to be a man, in His heart, in His very nature, in His very character, it is the form of a born slave. He had no right of His own. He gave all His right to the Heavenly Father, and being in the fashion of a man, He was obedient, even unto death, and death, the death of the cross.

And because of what He did, He accomplished the work of redemption. So God raised Him up from the dead. And not only that, but has set Him at His right hand in the heavenlies.

And there we find He was head over all things. Remember, after His resurrection, before His ascension, in Matthew chapter 28, He told His disciples, all authority, all power, in heaven and on earth, has been given to Him. And if you read the book of Revelation, chapter 5, which I believe is a replay of His ascension, and there you find the Lamb, newly slain, was standing.

In other words, He was once dead, but is now risen from the dead. A Lamb, standing in the midst of the throne. Nobody in heaven or on earth, or even under the earth, is worthy to take that book, the title deed of the universe, from the hand of God, the owner, the possessor of the universe.

No one was able to take that book from the hand of God, to open the seals, to execute God's will, to bring all things back to the feet of God the Father. No one was able, because none was worthy. And you remember John in the spirit, when he saw this vision, and he realized that there was no one in heaven, on earth, or underneath the earth, who is worthy to do this work, he wept.

Why did he weep? Because he felt there was no hope. If nobody was able to execute God's will, to regain the earth and all things back to God, then it was a hopeless situation. And thank God he was comforted, by one of the elders saying, don't weep.

Behold, the Lion of Judah, he has overcome, and is worthy to take the book and open the seal. And when John looked around, he saw a Lamb, newly slain, standing. He is worthy.

He took that book, and he began to open that seal. And you remember, the heavens broke out in worship. Not only heaven, but the whole universe was exalted to join in that triumphant song.

So brothers and sisters, here you will find spiritual ascendancy is in Christ Jesus. He has overcome, and he is in that exalted position, head over all things. Everything is under his feet, and will be brought into subjection to him.

Now that is spiritual. But we would like to ask a question. Why does our Lord Jesus come to that spiritual ascendancy? Why is it that he has to pay such a price? He has to win such a victory, in order to gain that position of spiritual ascendancy.

Why? Is it for himself? So far as he himself is concerned, there is no need. Why? Because he is God. He is the Son of God.

He is always in ascendancy. Always in control. That is his position.

His right. You remember, in Colossians chapter 1, when the Apostle Paul tried to share with us of the glory of the Son of God. He said, Christ Jesus, our Redeemer, the one who has redeemed us, the one who has delivered us out of the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of the Son of God's love.

Now, who is the Son of God's love? He is the exact image of the invisible God. God is spirit. He is invisible.

But then God, he has an exact image. That is to say, he has someone who will manifest all that God is. In other words, the invisible God is made visible, and that is the Son.

He is not only the exact image of God. Whatever you can think of God, whatever you know of God, whatever God is, is all being manifested, declared, revealed, shown forth in his Son, because he is one with God. He is the creator of all things.

All things were created in him. That is to say, he is the architect, the designer of all things. All things are created by him.

He is the builder, the contractor, and all things are created for him. He is the heir of all things. Now, think of his glory.

As God, he is above all things. He is always in ascendancy. Always at the top.

Everything is always under him. So, so far as our Lord Jesus, as the Son of God is concerned, there is no need for him to come to this earth, to win the battle, and to gain the spiritual ascendancy. He doesn't need it.

It is his, our right, forever. Then why is it that our Lord Jesus has to attain into that position? I think the answer is very clear. It is for our sake.

You know, when God created man, in Genesis, God created man in his own image, according to his likeness. And brothers and sisters, when you read this, what is the impression you get? Why is it when God created the whole universe, all the things, visible and invisible, he just created by his word. He said it, and it is done.

Even the angels were not created according to his image and his likeness. But only man. God created man in his own image, according to his likeness.

He created man in such a way, that man is able to receive his own uncreated, divine. He created man with a very special purpose. You remember, before he created man, there was a rebelling in the universe.

An archangel, Lucifer, because of the way he was created, he was given wisdom, talents, position, and gradually a pride began to rise in his heart. He was not contented to be under God. He wanted to lift himself up to be equal with God.

And because of this, he was driven out from heaven. And with him, a third of the angelic hosts followed in the rebellion. Most likely, our planet earth, our universe, at that time, was given to this angel to rule.

So, with his fall, our universe fell with him. The earth became void and empty. It has lost its purpose.

It was corrupted. And when God restored this ruined earth to make it habitable, at the very last, on the sixth day, he created man. Now, what is behind the thought of God? Why did he create man? And created him in his own image.

Why? And not only that, but when man was created, God gave man dominion. Dominion over the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, the fishes of the sea. God gave man the government, the management of this earth.

He said, subdue it, bring it back to the feet of God. So, man has a tremendous mission to fulfill. And in order to fulfill that mission, God put man in the garden of Eden.

In the midst of the garden was the tree of life. And by the side of it, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now, what is it behind all this? God said, of every tree in the garden, you can freely eat.

Many fruit trees. All kinds of food for the body of man. Yet, in the midst of the garden, God put the tree of life.

And by it, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In other words, God was trying to say to man, in order to accomplish the mission that I have entrusted to you, to subdue, to have dominion, to bring everything to my feet, you need to eat the tree of life. You are created with that capacity.

There is a potentiality there. But without God's own life, you will not be able to accomplish your mission. But you have to choose by your free will.

So, that's the reason why. By the side of that tree of life, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now, some people think that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is an evil tree.

It's a bad tree. But personally, I cannot take it. Because God planted, prepared that garden.

It was a garden of Eden. A garden of pleasure. And I do not, I cannot believe that God will put something evil in that garden.

Everything there must be good. All the fruitful trees are the food of our body. God gave us a body and he provided the nutrition, the food to nourish that body.

Then what is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? It is a tree of knowledge. Knowledge is good. We want knowledge.

Knowledge of good and evil is the highest knowledge of all knowledges. You cannot think of any knowledge higher than the knowledge of good and evil. That's ethical knowledge.

Knowing what is good, knowing what is evil. Scientific knowledge. Only explain to you the phenomena of the universe, physical things, philosophy, may give you some training in rational mind.

But knowledge of good and evil, moral knowledge, that's the highest knowledge of all. The higher it is compared with the tree of life, you'll find, the better is the enemy of the best. In other words, if man should reject the life of God and try to develop his soul with this knowledge of good and evil, man will make himself God.

Man thinks that he is now God, but he discovers he has the knowledge, but he doesn't have the power to resist evil and to do good. So brothers and sisters, in the garden of Eden, God let man choose what his own destiny should be. Unfortunately, our forefathers choose to be independent of God.

They rejected the life of God, and the result is death. Brothers and sisters, man was created to be in spiritual ascendancy. That is the will of God.

But unfortunately we find man has fallen. We have lost that position. We have lost that ascendancy.

We are undone. When you read Ephesians chapter two, you find that we were dead in sins and transgressions. Our spirit, the only organ that can communicate with God, the only organ that can receive God, receive God's life because of sin and transgressions, it was dead.

That's why our Lord Jesus said, let the dead bury the dead. Let the spiritually dead bury the physically dead. Man was under the authority of the power of wickedness in the air.

Man thinks that they are free, but they are not. They are under evil power of the air. Man's life was moved by lust of the flesh.

We are children of wrath. That's what we were. But thank God.

Brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus came, and there you'll find God in His mercy, the richness of His grace. He has quickened us with Christ Jesus. We are saved by grace.

Our Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, He bore in His own body our sins on that tree. And because of His shed blood, our sins are remitted. So we are quickened with Christ.

But that is not all. He has also raised us up from the dead. When our Lord Jesus was raised from the dead, we are raised with Him from the dead.

And not only that, but He has seated us in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. So brothers and sisters, where is our position of spiritual ascendancy? How does it come about? It is very clear. It is in Christ Jesus.

Our Lord Jesus, as the Son of Man, He attained to the spiritual ascendancy because of His obedience to the Father. In other words, with our Lord Jesus today, He has double honor, double glory. You remember in John chapter 17, in His prayer, how He reminds His Father that He is going back to the Father to resume that glory which He has with the Father from eternity.

In other words, when our Lord Jesus returned to the Father, the glory, the honor, the ascendancy that He laid down when He came to this earth, He retook them, resumed them and enjoyed with the Father together for eternity. That is the glory of the Son of God. But when He went to heaven, He got another glory.

It is a glory that the Father gives as the Son of Man because of what He has done on this earth, of the victory He has won for man. So as man, the Father gave Him a glory. And that is the glory that our Lord Jesus in His prayer said that we may see that glory.

Because we are to share His glory with Him. We can never share His glory as the Son of God. No, never.

But we will share with His glory as the Son of Man. We will never share with His spiritual ascendancy as the Son of God. No.

He is always God, we are always man. We may have His life, we may partake of His nature, divine nature, we may be one with Him in life, in love, even in glory, but that is only limited to the glory of the Son of Man. Brothers and sisters, so far as our Lord Jesus is concerned, as the Son of Man, He attained, He achieved to that spiritual ascendancy.

But what about us? We do not achieve or attain to that position of spiritual ascendancy. We obtain it by the grace of God. We have not done anything to be quickened from the dead.

He did it. We haven't done anything in being raised from the dead. He did it.

We haven't done anything to be set in the heavenlies. He did it. It is in Him and with Him.

So dear brothers and sisters, how can we talk of spiritual ascendancy if we do not talk of Christ? Because there is none. He has attained it and we, by grace, obtained it. So we are today, brothers and sisters, by His grace, we are given a position of spiritual ascendancy.

Oftentimes we only know that we are saved by grace. But we do not know that we have this position of spiritual ascendancy. And because of this, we find that even after we are saved, we find our Christian life afterwards is often a defeated life.

A life of striving, of struggling. Instead of seeing that we are in a high position, you fight for the high position. If you get a high position, you get a victory.

Now our Lord Jesus has already attained that position for us. And we are here, by His grace, in this spiritual ascendancy. And from there, we are to fight the fight of faith.

But dear brothers and sisters, it is more than just a position given. Thank God we have been given that position. But what will that position be if there is not a corresponding life within? In other words, you may be given a position, but if you do not have the life to fulfill that position, instead of glory, it will turn to shame.

So brothers and sisters, it is not just a technical position we are given. It is more than a position. Because when He gave us that position, He gave us His life.

You know, His life is in us. And that life is a life of ascendancy. It was demonstrated in the life of our Lord Jesus when He was on earth.

And this very same life is in you and in me. And if we allow Him, He will demonstrate the very same thing. So dear brothers and sisters, let us at the very beginning of our time together, to realize this.

You know, when you come to 2 Peter 1, verse 3 to 5, it says, As His divine power has given to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that has called us by glory and virtue, through which He has given to us the greatest and precious promises, that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. God has given us His divine life. And in that divine life, there is all the potentials, the power for godliness.

That is to say, to be made partakers of His divine nature. To be as He is. And with this life in us, if we only know this life and learn to live by this life, then our position will turn into possession.

So I do hope, brothers and sisters, that we will begin by realizing what a position we have in Christ Jesus. And also, remember, the life in us is for that position. Dear Lord, we want to thank Thee for what Thou hast done for us.

We thank Thee that Thou hast attained to the spiritual ascendancy for our sake. Dear Lord, we want to thank Thee because it is all of Thy grace. We thank Thee for giving us not only a position, but also giving us Thy life, that we may be able to fulfill that high position that Thou hast given to us.

So Lord, we just pray that Thou will give us a vision of what Thou hast done for us. What great things Thou hast done for us. Oh, that we may really enter Thee to glorify Thee, we ask in the name of our Lord Jesus.

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