

Spiritual Ascendancy - Our Position #2

by Stephen Kaung

Spiritual ascendancy is the position we have in Christ Jesus, where we are seated with Him in the heavenlies and experience His life and power in our lives.

Duration: 1:11:43

Topics: "Victory In Christ", "Gods Mercy"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a strong foundation in Christ Jesus. He encourages believers to stand firm in their faith and experience the victory that comes from their position in Christ. The sermon then focuses on Romans chapter 8, which is described as a victory song and a conclusion to the preceding eight chapters. The preacher highlights the mercies of God and the work of Christ in justifying and interceding for believers. He reassures the audience that nothing can separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Transcript

Will you please turn to the book of Romans, Romans chapter 8. We read from verse 31 to the end. Romans chapter 8, verse 31. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who against us? He, who yea, has not spared his own son, has delivered him up for us all.

How shall he not also with him grant us all things? Who shall bring an accusation against God elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ who has died, but rather has been also raised up, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercede for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? According as it is written, for thy sake we are put to death all the day long.

We have been reckoned as sheep for slaughter, but in all these things we more than conquer through him that has loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let's have a word of prayer.

Dear Lord, we are a grateful people. We thank thee for reminding us that thou hast covenanted with us, with thy blood. We are thy covenant people.

We belong to thee and we are to glorify thy name. So dear Lord, we are here presenting ourselves before thee. Do pray that by thy Spirit thou will speak to us and bring us to the place where we truly shall glorify thee.

Thou knowest our condition. Thou knowest where we are. Bring us to where you want us to be.

We commit this time into thy hands and trust thee to do thy work. We ask in thy precious name. Amen.

Yesterday morning we shared on our position in spiritual ascendancy. We find that our spiritual ascendancy is not in us. It is in Christ Jesus.

And it is he who has attained for us that spiritual ascendancy. Because of what he has done, because of his obedience to his Father, even unto death and the death of the cross, therefore the Father has highly exalted him. And has given him a name that is above every name.

And to that name every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. He is in that ascended position. God has made him head over all things.

To the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all and in all. He has quickened us together with him. He has raised us up together with him.

He has seated us together with him in the heavenlies. So brothers and sisters, spiritual ascendancy is given to us through Christ Jesus. He has not only given us that position, but with that position, life.

In order that it will not be just a position to us, but it will be a reality to us. Now brothers and sisters, it is very important for us to see our position. To know where God has put us in Christ Jesus.

So far as position is concerned, this is an objective truth. By objective truth it means this is something that God has accomplished for us in Christ Jesus. It is not something that is accomplished by us.

It is something that God has done in Christ Jesus for our sake. It is objective. In other words, it is something that has been done.

It is a fact accomplished in Christ Jesus. And it is something that is always true. It cannot be affected by circumstances or conditions.

Forever true in Christ Jesus. Now that is objective truth. Now objective truth is important because it is the basis for our subjective experience.

Our experience is based upon objective truth. In other words, we have to see what God has done for us in Christ Jesus. Before we can ever experience what he has done for us in our lives.

Subjective experience is something that the Holy Spirit today is working into our life. In other words, the Holy Spirit takes what Christ has accomplished for us and bringing it to us and make it real, living, experiential in our life. Now that is subjective experience.

Now these two things cannot be separated. First of all we must see the objective truth. And then the Holy Spirit will apply what Christ has done 2,000 years ago for us to our lives even today.

Brothers and sisters, we all see our Lord Jesus dying on the cross, shedding his blood for our sins. This is something that was done 2,000 years ago. It is done in Christ Jesus.

We are not there. But Christ on the cross, he bore in his body all the sins of the world. And he atoned our sins.

An objective truth is being established. Now if you do not see this, you will never experience the forgiveness of your sins. Why do we experience the forgiveness of our sins today? It is based upon what Christ has done for us on the cross 2,000 years ago.

The Holy Spirit just applies what God has done in Christ Jesus and brings it into our lives. So we experience what Christ has done for us. Brothers and sisters, we need to first believe the objective truth.

Somehow the Holy Spirit just opens our eyes, gives us faith to believe what God has done in Christ Jesus for us. And as we believe, it immediately becomes subjective experience in our life. Now I think we have all experienced this and we all understand it.

Now in the very same way, we need to have a revelation, a vision of the objective truth of the ascendancy of Christ. We have seen Christ on the cross, but have we seen Christ on the throne? We need to have a vision that John saw in the book of Revelation. In the life experience of John the Apostle, he was one of the first who followed the Lord Jesus.

And among the twelve disciples, he was the last living one that followed the Lord Jesus. He was the one who laid upon the bosom of our Lord Jesus. He was the one whom Jesus loved.

In other words, he knew the Lord Jesus on earth so well. When our Lord was crucified on the cross, he was the only disciple of the twelve who was at the foot of the cross. He was the one who testified that when the soldier thrust his spear into the side of our Lord, it draws out blood and water.

He had an intimate relationship with the Lord. But brothers and sisters, he needed a further vision of the Lord. Not only the Lord on earth, but the Lord in heaven.

The Ascendant Lord. Alive in the midst of the throne. And because he had that vision, therefore he experienced the Christ in heaven.

Brothers and sisters, we need to ask the Lord to open our spiritual eyes and give us a vision of the Ascendant. We need to see that he is seated at the right hand of God. We need to see that all authority and power has been given to him in heaven and on earth.

We need to see that God has put everything under his feet and he has been made head over all things. We need to have such a vision of our Lord Jesus. The reason why we do not experience spiritual ascendancy in our daily life is because we lack that vision.

And that's the reason why the Apostle Paul prayed for the saints in Ephesus. That God our Father will give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation to the full knowledge of God. So first of all, brothers and sisters, we need to pray.

Asking the Lord to give us such a vision. Now maybe you say, you have heard it, you know it. I grant that you do.

That we have heard it. And mentally we know that our Lord Jesus is highly lifted up. But that's not enough.

In spiritual things we need revelation, vision. We need to humble ourselves before the Lord and ask him to open our eyes, spiritual eyes. That somehow it is not just in our mind, but somehow we can say, Once I heard, but now I see.

This is extremely important. This is something that cannot be done by reading. Nor can it be done by hearing.

This is something that we have to humble ourselves before the Lord and ask for a revelation. But then God, it pleases him to reveal his Son in us. God is most willing to do that.

What's needed is that we really have a desire, a heart for knowing the Lord in ascendancy. So that is the very basis of everything. Now having seen our position in Christ Jesus, that we have been given that position.

It is not something that we attain. It is something that Christ has attained for us. Something that we just obtain it, receive it by faith from our Lord Jesus.

And now we will move this morning into this matter of our possession. How can we really experience that spiritual ascendancy in our daily life? As believers, I believe it is our greatest problem. How can I live in that ascendant position? God has made Christ head over all things to the church.

In other words, he is head over all things. All things are under his feet. And this is to the church.

Why? Because the church is his body. That ascendant position of the head is to the body. That in the body the same ascendancy will be experienced.

Now how? How do we get into that subjective experience? Before we go into it, I would like to share with you a chapter from Huston Taylor's life. I believe most of us probably know who Huston Taylor is. Huston Taylor was one who was greatly used by God to open up England, China to the gospel.

In the 19th century, when missionaries came to China, most of them were in the treaty ports. I wonder whether you know what treaty ports are. In other words, China made a treaty with some western nations to open up certain ports, seaports, certain cities for westerners to come to trade.

And not only to trade, but in these treaty ports, the westerners who live in these ports are not subject to Chinese law. They are under their own country's law. So in the early days, when missionaries came to China, they stayed in these treaty ports.

Not only that they may be protected by their governments, but at the same time they were not welcomed by the Chinese if they tried to go inland. They were in danger. But Huston Taylor, he felt in order to preach the gospel to the Chinese, he had to live with the Chinese.

He had to go into interior China to preach the gospel. So with China Inland Mission that he founded, all the missionaries dressed as Chinese. And he moved into, outside of these concessions, to live among the Chinese.

And he penetrated into inland China. If you read the story of these early missionaries, it makes you weep. But for the love of God, they did it.

And he was in China already for a number of years. He had his fellow workers with him. He was used by the Lord.

But this dear brother, he was not satisfied. He felt he worked among the Chinese. But he didn't live up to the Christian life that he knew he should live.

He was bothered by it. How could I preach to the Chinese and myself do not live as Christ lived on earth? So at one time he was so exercised by this problem. He devoted himself to pray earnestly and fast.

He read the word of God more diligently. And he tried to work up his faith in the Lord Jesus. But it didn't work.

Then something happened. You know, in that two-volume set of his biography, written by his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Howard Taylor. In that first volume it's called *The Growth of a Soul*.

And there is a chapter. The title of that chapter is *The Exchanged Life*. He had a wonderful experience that released him into spiritual ascendancy.

He wrote a letter to his sister in England. And this is the gist of it. It was in September 4th, 1869.

One of his fellow workers, Mr. McCarthy, wrote him a letter. Mr. McCarthy, just like Hussain Taylor, they were searching and seeking for that life that is ascendant. And Hussain Taylor received a letter from Mr. McCarthy.

And this part of the letter touched him deeply. The letter says, How then shall we have our faith increased? By looking at all that Jesus is and what he is to me. His death, his life, his work.

He himself as revealed to us in the word. He is to be the subject of our constant thought. Not by striving to have faith or to increase faith.

But by looking off unto the faithful one. That is all we need. And these words touched Hussain Taylor deeply.

He said, Now I see the secret. You know, in the past he was trying very hard. If only by faith I can draw that power from the Lord Jesus to myself.

Then I will live a life transcendent. But somehow it didn't work. So he said now in that letter, Not by trying to draw the sap of the vine into myself.

But by realizing that he is the vine, the root, the stem, the branch, the twigs, the leaves, the fruits. He is all that and much more. He is the soil, the sunshine, the rain.

He is everything. I am in him. One with him.

And with all his fullness. Not trying to have more faith to bring in holiness. But to realize that he is holiness.

One with him. Whatever he is, that's why. He said later in the same letter, I am not better than before.

But I was dead and buried more. Risen and ascended. He said, God said, Faith is the substance of the things hopeful.

Faith rests on substance, not on shadow. Sight only shows the outward form of things. But faith rests in substance.

Brothers and sisters, on that day he saw one thing. He saw that he is in Christ. And because he is in Christ, therefore all that Christ is, is his.

It is not by striving. By resting. Resting in what Christ has done.

Now, brothers and sisters, this illustrates how are we going to transfer, as it were, from position to possession. In other words, the position is already there. What is needed is to maintain that position.

You know, our problem is, and this is also the strategy of the enemy. You know what temptation is? He is trying to lead us away from the position that we have in Christ Jesus. As long as he is able to draw our eyes away from Christ and into situations, he is successful.

So, brothers and sisters, the important thing is, we really need to have a very firm foundation. A real seeing of our position. What an ascendant position we have in Christ Jesus.

And when we are tempted, all we need to do is to stand by faith in that position. And we will experience that ascendancy. Now, let's go to Romans chapter 8. We know Romans chapter 8 from verse 31 to 39.

This is as a conclusion to the preceding eight chapters. It is a victory song. A triumphant cry.

He said, what shall we then say to these things? Now, what are these things? These things are being described to us in the preceding eight chapters. And we know these things show us the mercies of God. Show us what God has done for us in Christ Jesus.

The book of Romans told us that we were sinners. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. None is exceptional.

We were all under judgment. The wrath of God was upon all of us. No matter how we try to do good, to keep the law, we fail.

No one could be justified by the work of the law. Whether it is written law or unwritten law that is written upon our conscience. No one could be justified.

But God has made his Son the mercy seat. There is blood on the mercy seat. And because the blood is on the mercy seat, our sins are forgiven.

Not only that, we are not only delivered from the penalty of sin, which is eternal death. But here we find our Lord Jesus as he was crucified on the cross. He not only bore our sin in his body.

He bore every one of us and was crucified on the cross. In other words, by his death, we were dead. When he was crucified, we were crucified.

Because he took us in him. His death is our death. And because we were dead to sins in Christ Jesus.

So when he was raised from the dead, we were alive unto God. In Christ Jesus. And we live in newness of life.

He has not only justified us as if we have never sinned. But he has also sanctified us. Set us apart.

Give us a new life. That we may live for God. And he also glorifies us.

Transforms us. Conforms us to the image of his beloved Son. Now all these things have God done for us in Christ Jesus.

Not only justification. Also sanctification, holiness. Also glorification.

Change into his likeness. Now all these God has already done in Christ Jesus for us. These are objective truth.

These are what God has done for you and for me in Christ Jesus. These are eternal fact. It cannot be affected by any condition.

By any experience. It is forever true. Forever firm.

Forever certain. Now having seen these things, what shall we say? So here he said, if God be for us, who against us? There is absolutely no doubt that God is for us. Can you doubt God is for you anymore? Having done so much for us in Christ Jesus.

God is for us. Who can be against us? It is a challenge to the whole world. It is a challenge to every situation.

It is a challenge not only to man, but to angels. To principalities and authorities. Not only of this age, but even to the age to come.

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who has not spared his only son. Will he not give us all things in Christ Jesus? Who shall bring that accusation against God's elect? Brothers and sisters, you are elected by God. Even before the foundation of the world.

God has chosen you in Christ Jesus. How do you know? Because today you are his. It proves that you are elected.

And if you are elected, who can accuse us? Because it is God who justifies us. The enemy's mouth is shut. The accuser cannot accuse us anymore.

Because it is God who justifies us. Now, who can condemn us? The only one who can condemn us is our Lord Jesus. You remember in John chapter 8? The Pharisees and the scribes.

The self-righteous ones. The hypocrites. They took a woman who was caught in adultery.

They brought her to our Lord Jesus. Tried to put her to shame before the public. And they asked the Lord Jesus, What shall we do with this sinful woman? And the Lord said, What did Moses say? Oh, they said, Moses said, If one is caught in adultery, she should be stoned to death.

And the Lord said, He who has no sin, who has not sinned, cast the first stone. Then our Lord bowed down and wrote on the sand. Nobody knows what he wrote.

Many guesses. Then from the oldest to the youngest, one after another, slipped away. Their conscience was pricked.

Only the Lord was there. So the Lord said to the woman, Is there nobody to condemn you? She said, No. But there was one who had the right to condemn her.

Yet the Lord said, I do not condemn you. And sin no more. Because the one, only one, who can condemn, he was willing to take that sin upon himself and be condemned.

Our Lord Jesus, He has died for us, but He has also been raised up. He raised up for our justification. The work is done.

And He is also at the right hand of God, ascended and interceded for us without ceasing. Now, brothers and sisters, who can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus? Any imaginable agent, whether man or thing or angel or devil, or whatever, you can imagine tribulation, distress, persecution, nakedness, wanderings, swords, death, because we are more than all these things in Christ Jesus. Brothers and sisters, this is spiritual ascendancy.

God has done it in Christ Jesus for us. And it is absolutely nothing that can put us down. In other words, the spiritual ascendancy that Christ has attained for us cannot be defeated.

But why is it that we find ourselves more defeated than victorious? Why? You remember in Luke chapter 21, verse 28, the Lord said, when you see all these things are going to happen. Now we see all these things are happening today. We are at the end of days.

All these things are happening. He said, when you see all these things are happening, look up. Lift up your head, for your redemption draws nigh.

Why do we look up? Because we have hope. We look up. But you know, in spiritual warfare, it is not look up, it is look down.

I believe some of you have already heard. One day, our dear brother T. Austin Sparks, he went to see his friend F.B. Meyer. And when he arrived in his study, before his friend F.B. Meyer came, he just looked around, like everybody did.

And while he was looking around, he saw there was a plate, writing, look down. And he wondered, what does that mean? So, when F.B. Meyer came in, he was still looking at that. So, of course, F.B. Meyer asked him, now, what are you thinking? Brother Sparks said, this is wrong.

It should be look up, and not look down. But F.B. Meyer said, it is right. If you are in a high position, you look down.

You know, as you read the Song of Solomon, in chapter four, you get the same impression. Here you find the Beloved. He is calling his loved ones to look down from Lebanon.

In other words, you are in that ascended position with Christ Jesus. When you are in that ascended position in Christ Jesus, you look down. And this is the secret of victory.

Now, think for a moment the life of our Lord Jesus. When He came to be a man, He was tempted in all things without sin. As God, He cannot be tempted.

But because He was the Son of Man, so He was tempted in all things. Whatever you can think of. And the temptation is to move Him away.

From the position, the place He took. He took the position of a man. And man should be subject to God in all things.

That's the position of man. And when our Lord was on earth, He took that position. When He was twelve, He knew He must be occupied with His Father's business.

He was not to live for Himself, but to do His Father's business. After He was baptized, He was led by the Spirit to the wilderness to be tempted. And the temptation is, Satan tries to tempt Him away from that low position He took as man.

To return to that exalted position of God as the Son of God. But our Lord refused. And if you look into the life of our Lord Jesus, you'll find because He took that low position before God, in all things, My Father's will.

Not My will, but My Father's will. Therefore, in His life, He is in control over all things. You'll never see Him under.

He is always above. Even when He challenged His own people, countrymen, the natives of Nazareth, He challenged their faith. And they want to push Him down from the cliff.

You remember, He walked away safely. Even when He was on a boat and there was a storm, His disciples were fishermen, but they were fearful of their life. He got up and spoke a word and the storm was stilled.

He gave His own life voluntarily. And because of this, He attained to that exalted position as the Son of Man. Now, look at Paul.

You know, when you study the life of Paul, it may give you a wrong concept that Paul has attained to spiritual ascendancy. It is true that Paul does experience spiritual ascendancy in his life. But look at the way he got into it.

You remember Romans chapter 7. He used the word, I. It is his personal experience. It is the experience of a person who has a new mind, who knows the will of God and has a heart to do the will of God. Now, isn't that true with all of us? We are born again.

We have a new mind, a new heart. We know what God's will is to a certain degree. And we do want to do the will of God.

But Paul, like us, he said, I know what is good. I want to do it. But I do not do it.

I know what is wrong. I don't want to do it. But I still do it.

And because he failed the first time, so the second time, he made a stronger determination not to do it or to do it. But again he failed. He tried to attain to the spiritual ascendancy over the power of sin.

Can he do it? He cannot. It is only after many failures he discovered that in him, that is in his flesh, there is no good. You know, he has such confidence in himself.

He has such a strong determined will. If anyone could achieve to that ascendancy over the power of sin, he would be poor. But he testified, he failed.

You cannot attain to spiritual ascendancy on yourself. Not until, he said, oh wretched man that I am, who can deliver me from this body of death. I am wretched.

I cannot do it. I try. But now, trying is no use.

I am not going to try anymore. Now, who can deliver me? Thank God, through Christ Jesus. Brothers and sisters, that is the secret.

We have all been trying too hard. We say, well if we don't try, then what will happen to us? Well, try. But try to the point that you begin to realize it is not by the power of your flesh.

That ascendancy is already given in Christ Jesus. Only you let go your trying and by faith, taking that position in Christ Jesus, you were dead to sin in Christ Jesus. And alive to God in Christ Jesus.

You overcame. Now look at 2 Corinthians. At the beginning of 2 Corinthians, the first chapter, he said, when we were in Asia, we were even despaired of our life.

The sentence of death is upon us. Now, we do not know exactly what happened. But anyway, you find Paul and his fellow workers.

They were so attacked on every side that they gave up even the hope of living. The sentence of death is upon them. But then he said that it is not from us.

It is from God who raises the dead. In other words, he was brought into death in order to learn one lesson that the only way to overcome death is in Christ Jesus. Not in himself.

Our position is not real until it is tested. And that is the reason why when we believe in the Lord Jesus as our personal Savior and God saved, it is once and for all. Why? Because this is entering the door very quick.

Even though sometimes it takes longer. It took me a year to get through the door. But after you get through the door, when you go the way, the narrow way, to life, it is a daily matter.

That is the reason why you wonder. Why is it? Is it a different faith that you have to have? Not at all. The same faith.

Believing in the faithful one. That's it. But the thing is, you are being daily challenged.

Challenged from all directions. You will even be challenged by Satan himself. Because if you read 2 Corinthians 12, you find Satan thrust a stake into the life of Paul.

It is a stake. Now if a stake is thrust into your body, how terrible that is. And for this, Paul prayed three times, asking the Lord to remove it, that he may be strong.

How can you preach the gospel if you are so weak? He wants to be strong. But the Lord said, I'll keep you weak, that my strength may be perfected in your weakness. My grace is sufficient for you.

In other words, brothers and sisters, we are daily being tested by many things. Sometimes by people. Sometimes by things.

Sometimes by events, by environments. Sometimes by our own temperament. We are being tested in all things.

And Satan is trying very hard to contest the supremacy, the ascendancy of Christ in our life. That's the reason why you find to be a Christian is not a smooth sailing. But thank God, he is trying to bring out the spiritual ascendancy in Christ in us.

It is there. But it needs to be brought out. So it is being brought out through testing and through challenging from the enemy.

Is there anything in your life that you are still under and not above? If there is, just remember, with you, it is impossible. But with God, all things are possible. So now, look off unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

So dear brothers and sisters, actually it is very simple. Just by faith, denying yourself, stand in the position that Christ has gained for you. The Holy Spirit is working in that way.

He is the one who arranges our circumstances. Nothing happens to us by chance. Even our very hair has been numbered.

The reason is, on the side of God, He is arranging everything to test what He has already put in us to bring it out. And from the side of the enemy, He is trying to draw out our flesh. So if we are willing to deny ourselves and just stand in the ascendant position that Christ has given to us, you will find there is victory.

It is something we can experience every day. So, don't be discouraged. Just continue to abide in Christ.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Shall we pray? Dear Lord, we want to thank Thee for that eternal, spiritual ascendancy that Thou has attained for us. We thank Thee that Thou has even put that in the life Thou has given to us, in us.

Oh, teach us how to deny ourselves and just look off unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Lord, may Thou be glorified in the life of every brother and sister. In Thy precious name we pray.

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