

Sustaining Faith by Vision

by Stephen Kaung

We are called to live a life of obedience to God's will, giving ourselves totally to the Lord and being willing to die to ourselves and live for God.

Duration: 56:03

Scripture: Proverbs 29:18, Philippians 2:5

Topics: "Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a vision in our lives. He quotes Proverbs 29:18, which states that without vision, people cast off restraint. The preacher then turns to Philippians 2:5-11, where he highlights the example of Christ who humbled himself and became obedient even unto death. He explains that having Christ as our vision gives us direction and strength to press on towards our goals. The preacher concludes by reminding the audience that as believers, we are overcomers through our faith in Jesus.

Transcript

Proverbs, chapter 29, verse 18, the first part. Proverbs 29, 18. Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint.

I'll read it again. Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint. And will you please turn to Philippians.

Philippians, chapter 2. We'll let his mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who subsisting in the form of God did not esteem it an object of reply to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking a bondman's form, taking his place in the likeness of man, and having been found in figure as a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him and granted him a name, that which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of heavenly and earthly and infernal beings, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to God the Father's glory. Let's have a word of prayer.

Dear Lord, we want to thank thee for being so faithful, kind, and gracious to us in keeping us through these days. We thank thee for gathering again today, this morning, to remember thee at thy table. Oh dear Lord, what love that thou hast bestowed upon us.

What can we say? Thou hast bought us with such a love that we cannot live for ourselves anymore. We are not ourselves, we are thine Lord. We pray Lord that thou will fill us with thyself.

Open our understanding that we may know thee more and more. Lord, as we gather this morning, we commit this time into your hand. Speak to us, draw us, that we may all run after thee.

We ask in thy precious name. Amen. Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint.

This shows us the importance of vision, because if there is no vision, there is no direction. There is no constraint. We will go each according to our own ideas, and we will be lost.

Vision alone give us motive, direction, and show us the way that we can arrive at the goal. So dear brothers and sisters, it is of tremendous importance that we be people with vision, because this alone will give us direction and the strength to press on towards the goal, the calling that God has called us. Thank God he has saved us.

We who are here this morning, I believe we are all bought with the tremendous price of our Lord Jesus. We are his, and as we gather here, our one purpose is that we receive the vision of Christ. He is the only vision that we need, the only vision that is all important.

With him as our vision, dear brothers and sisters, we know where we are going, and we will experience his presence and blessing with us. Thank God for saving us. As we find in 1 John 5, he who believes in the Son of God overcomes the enemy.

We are overcomers. Why? Because we have faith in our Lord Jesus. Now what is faith? You know in the Bible, you have different terms, but strangely, the Bible never gives us a clear, definite definition of any of these important things.

The closest that we can find to divine faith is found in Hebrews chapter 11. Now faith is the substantiating of things hopeful, the conviction of things not seen. Now I'm reading from J. N. Darby's translation.

He says, faith is the substantiating of things hopeful. What is faith? Faith is a substantiating power. What does it mean? Now suppose when we come into this building, we can see at the back there is a picture.

Now what enables us to see the picture? The picture has been hanging there all the time, but those with eyes, when we come in, we can substantiate that picture into us. It was on the wall, but with the substantiating power, we can bring the substance within us so that we can enjoy that picture. Now suppose a blind person comes into this place, and you say, do you see that beautiful picture on the wall? He says, where is it? I couldn't see anything, because he does not have the power of substantiating that substance into him to be his experience.

So dear brothers and sisters, why is it that we need faith? Because that is the only power that we're bringing that which we have hoped for to come within us to be something that we can experience. Now that is faith. So when we come together, dear brothers and sisters, we need to exercise our faith.

Where does our faith rest? We find in Philippians chapter 2, our faith is centred upon Christ, nothing else. Now who is Christ? Why is it that we should put our faith in Christ for life and forever? We are told in Philippians chapter 2, he said in verse 6, chapter 2 verse 6, who subsisting in the form of God did not esteem it as an object of replying to be on equality with God. Now our Lord Jesus, he subsists in the form

of God.

Now the form here is not the outward form, because the form here is image, that is, he has the image of God in him. Image speaks of something inward, the character, the nature, that's image. And our Lord Jesus, he subsists in the form of God's image, because he is God.

And this is not something he tried to grasp at. Now in this verse you can see there is a story behind it, because if you have read the Bible or you have heard it before, you know when God first created this universe, the highest of his creation were angels. There was no man yet in the first world, and among the angels there was one archangel called Lucifer, the brilliant star.

He was a masterpiece of God's creation. He was given all kinds of gifts. He was a cherubim that covered the seat of God.

He was one who led the angels in worshipping God. But unfortunately, somehow pride began to enter into his mind. He was not satisfied with the position, the high position that God has given him, leading the angels in worshipping God.

Because of his much traffic, because of his talents and beauty, he began to think of himself. He didn't want to be where God had put him. He wanted to be like God.

So if you read Isaiah chapter 14, Isaiah chapter 14 was speaking of the king of Babylon. But suddenly you find he began to say, Lucifer, that is to say, the brilliant star. How is it that you begin to think of yourself? Five times we find in these few verses he thought of himself.

I wanted to be equal with God. As a matter of fact, most likely what he was thinking of is to replace the place of the only begotten Son of God, our Lord Jesus. He wanted that place for himself.

And if you read Ezekiel chapter 28, you will find again some description that will not fit any person except Lucifer. And somehow he wanted to rise himself, take the place of the only begotten Son of God. And because of this ambition, God dismissed him from heaven.

And most likely, at that time, the earth that we know today was under his control. And that is probably the reason why when God punished Lucifer, drew him out of heaven, earth at that time most likely was under his control. And therefore, the earth had entered into destruction.

Water filled the earth. You know, brothers and sisters, as we read Genesis chapter 1, verse 1, In the beginning, now that is not the beginning of God, that is the beginning of creation. It says, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Do you think that when God created, that he would leave things undone, that he would take God's time to complete his creation? No. When God said it, it is done. So in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Actually, the heavens and the earth were created in perfect order. That is the first world. But as we have already said, in the first world God had not created man.

The highest creation were angels. But unfortunately, as we find in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, we find that this angel, archangel, began to think of himself. He began to be ambitious.

He wanted something more. He wanted to take a place of the Son of God. And that is the reason he was dismissed from heaven.

And the earth that was under his control went into destruction. It was surrounded with waters. We do not know how long that period lasted.

But we know it was the ice age. The earth had suffered ice age for a long, long time. It was covered with water.

Then in Genesis chapter 1 verse 2, God's spirit began to move upon the depths of water. And we find in Genesis chapter 1, in six days our God restored the earth to be habitable. And it was not until the sixth day that God created man.

Now why is it God created man? God created man with a very definite purpose. Because for God to deal with Satan, Lucifer, the archangel, the fallen angel, he was nothing. God could breathe upon him and kill him.

But if God should do it, he wouldn't get the glory. Suppose a grown-up man beat a little child. Is there any glory in it? No.

So God, instead of dealing with Satan himself, he raised up man. Now what is man? The Bible tells us man is made a little lower than angels. So far as creation is concerned, angels are spirits.

They are higher. But man has a spirit, a soul and a body. Dear brothers and sisters, have you ever thought, why is it God created you? What is the purpose of creating you? Is it because of you? Or is it because of something higher and nobler? Now according to the revelation of the Word of God, we are told that we men were created with a definite purpose.

Do you know what that purpose is? Unfortunately today, we know what we are here for. Somehow we are cheated by the enemy, thinking that we are here just for ourselves. That idea came from the enemy of God.

Because when God created man, he created man with a definite purpose. He created man for the reason that he will use man a little lower than angels to defeat Lucifer, the archangel. And that will be glory to God.

So dear brothers and sisters, unfortunately today, we men forget why we are here. We men being cheated by God's enemy, thinking that we are here for ourselves. We try to glorify ourselves, just like the archangel did in the beginning.

But dear brothers and sisters, God has a very definite purpose for us men. He wanted to use man to defeat his enemy. His enemy should be our enemy.

And we should be in the hand of God, using him to defeat the enemy. How? If you read Ephesians chapter 2, in the beginning you will find, who were we? We were men on earth. We thought that we were doing things according to what we think, according to what we like.

But if you read Ephesians chapter 2, in the beginning, you will find this is not the case. Because while we were deceived into thinking that we are doing our own will, we are living for ourselves. No, we are actually under the influence, the power of that archangel, Lucifer.

He is at the back, controlling our thoughts, controlling our ways, controlling our life. At that time we had no God. We had no hope of any kind.

But thank God, because of his tremendous love for us, he has saved us through sending his only begotten son into this world. Why is it that the only begotten son of God, he being equal with God, that is his right. He is not something he grasps at.

That was what he was from eternity. But why is it that our Lord Jesus should come into this world? We are explained in Philippians chapter 2. He said, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. What was the mind of Christ when he came into this world? He who was equal with God, received all the worship, praise, honour, seated at the right hand of God.

It is something which was his right, not something he grasped at. And why is it that our Lord Jesus should come into this world? For him to come into this world, he had to empty himself. Brothers and sisters, sometimes we think we are emptying ourselves for the Lord.

But how much can we empty? There is nothing in us to be emptied except sins. But the Lord Jesus, he was equal with God. He received all the worship in heaven.

So when the Lord Jesus came into this world, one thing he had to do, he had to empty himself. But of course, he cannot empty himself of his Godhead, because that is what he is forever. But he emptied himself of all the position, the honour and the glory that surrounded his place as the Son of God.

What an emptying it must be. When we think of what he had emptied, we are ashamed of ourselves. What have we to empty? We have nothing but sin.

But our Lord Jesus, being God, the Son of God, he has so much to be emptied. He gave them all up, his glory, his position, his power. Dear brothers and sisters, this morning I want all of us to think of the emptying that our Lord Jesus, as the Son of God, had emptied for our sake.

There is such love behind it. Even before the foundation of the world, as the Bible says, he offered himself to his Father as a lamb, to be slain from the foundation of the world. Even though this happened later in time, and yet the idea, the thought, the willingness, the giving himself to the Father's will was before the foundation of the world.

Love is so deep, we cannot comprehend. So here we find, he who was subsisting in the form of God, that is the image of God. Not only the outward form, but the inward image.

He may speak of the inward situation, that's what he was from the beginning, and yet he emptied himself of that form. And after he had emptied himself of that form, the Bible tells us, he took upon himself a born man's form. That is again, form, image, that is the thought, the idea, the willingness, he came in a born man's, that is a slave's form.

Think of the emptying that he must have done. From the form of God, he emptied himself to take up the form of a slave. Brothers and sisters, when God created us man, so far as our relationship with God is concerned, we were slaves.

We did not live for ourselves, we should live for God, we should not do our own things, we should do his bidding, that is the reason why God created man. But here you find one man, when he came into this

world, he really took up the form of a born slave. That is to say, inward, inside him, there is the spirit of serving God.

He did not come to live for himself, he came to live for God, and that is what we should be. And it says that inwardly, he took a born man's form, image, and outwardly, he took the likeness of a man. The likeness is the figure, it is the outside.

So outwardly, he looks like a man, he is a perfect man, just as we are. So dear brothers and sisters, as we read the Gospels, we find that the Son of God, when he was incarnated, he became a man, just like we are. You look at him, he was no different than any other person, even though within him, he is God.

And being, having humbled himself to take up the form of a man, then how did he live his life? We find through the Gospels, even though he lived on earth only for 33 and a half years, and yet he lived such an obedient life. He repeatedly told us, I couldn't do anything by myself, I did it because I had seen my father had done it. He said, I cannot say anything by myself, I say it because I have heard my father has said it.

Your time is always convenient, but my time has not yet come. In other words, throughout his life, he waited for the Father. If the Father said, go, he would go.

If the Father said, say it, he would say it. Do it, and he would do it. Throughout his life, he was obedient to the ninth degree.

You know, brothers and sisters, one day, he took three disciples with him to a high mountain. And the Bible says, there he was transformed. In other words, his glory began to come out from him.

And Moses and Elijah came and talked with him about his exit. In other words, he had his entrance into this world. Now, how about his exit from this world? You know, this is a very important time to us.

It is life and death to us. And as Moses and Elijah talked with him about his exit, how will he leave this world? To put it another way, so far as he himself is concerned, he could leave this world from that mountain of transfiguration. He was ready for it, but he didn't go.

He would rather come down from the mountain, set his faith towards Jerusalem. And there, he would go to Calvary to die on the cross. Why? Not because of him.

He doesn't need that. He should leave on that mountain of transfiguration. If he did, what would happen to us? Dear brothers and sisters, there will be only one man in heaven, and that's all.

But thank God, he didn't go. For our sake, he came down from the mountain, set his faith towards Jerusalem. And there, he was crucified on the cross, on our behalf.

So dear brothers and sisters, in doing that, he was obedient to his father. For it is his father's will that he should die. He should bear all the sins of the world in his own body.

And there, he will suffer death from the hand of his father. We cannot, for a moment, understand his experience in the Garden of Gethsemane. There you will find our Lord Jesus, the perfect man.

Why he struggled, he said, I'm sorrowful even unto death. Why did he do that? Because that was the time that he had to decide whether he will take the sins of the world and put upon himself and die for us. If you are a very clean person, if you go to your, if people go to your place, everything is in order.

But then another person came to live with you, and he was such a careless person. He threw things all over the rooms. What is your feeling? And we can multiply it to a thousand, ten thousand times.

To see what will happen to our Lord, who was perfect. And yet he was, to bear the sins of the world. No wonder you find he was sorrowful, even unto death.

But how he prayed, Father, if it is possible, take away from me, but not my will, but thy will be done. And after he had prayed three times, he was sure that's the Father's will. So he set his face towards Jerusalem and died for us.

So dear brothers and sisters, as we meditate on the life of our Lord Jesus, do you see that the way he lives is the way that he wants every one of us, who are his, to live likewise. We have no right to live for ourselves. Are we living for him? Or are we living for ourselves? That is a question that we should answer individually.

No one can answer this for you. You have to decide whether you want to give yourself totally over to the Lord, because he has bought you. With such a price.

Or if you still want to live your own life, you can do it. But brothers and sisters, what will happen? If the Lord should return today, while we are meeting here this morning, do you think the Lord can return at this time? I sincerely believe he can, because all the prophecies that prophesied before his return had been fulfilled. They are still prophecies, but these prophecies are concerned with the time of his coming and afterwards.

Not before his coming. The time is here. He can return any moment.

And why is it that he has not returned? It is because he is waiting for you and for me. He loves us so much. He does not want to leave us behind.

When he shall come, the Bible says, two men were sleeping. Two men were working in the field. Two women were grinding the meal.

Why? You do not have six here. You have two, two and two. Why? Because the earth is round.

In some place, it is midday. In other place, it is midnight. In other place, it is morning.

And the Bible said, suddenly, without any warning, one is taken, one is left. Why? Because the Lord will return as a thief. A thief will never blow a trumpet and say, I am coming.

You know, whenever we sing these songs on the coming of the Lord, a number of songs tells us when the trumpet blows and the angel sounds, then the Lord is coming and we shall be raised from the dead and those that are still living shall be changed and taken up to the air. That is the song we usually sing. But when you sing it, how do you feel? When I sing, my heart tells me, sorry, it is too late.

We shall be taken long before. We shall be taken before the great tribulation if, by the grace of God, we are ready. Dear brothers and sisters, my burden is, should the Lord come today, I hope this building is emptied.

No one will be left behind. We cannot imagine what will happen during the great tribulation. But if we are not ready for him, that will happen.

So dear brothers and sisters, this is why we are here this time. We wanted to see every brother and sister who came to this conference. By the grace of God, we all will be prepared and ready for the imminent return of our Lord Jesus.

May this be his blessing to us. And if that is the case, this conference is worthwhile. Shall we pray? Dear Lord, again and again, we want to thank thee for thy tremendous love for us.

Who but thee, thou the Son of God, the eternal Son of God, should come into this world to become a man like us and to die in our stead. We thank thee, Lord, that this is not the end because thou has risen from the dead. Thou has ascended up to heaven, seated at the right hand of God, waiting, working towards each and every one of us to prepare us to be taken by thee.

Here we are, Lord, every one of us here, none excepted. Lord, have mercy upon us. If there is anything within us that will keep us on earth, instead of being raptured to the throne, Lord, show us and remove it.

We want to give ourselves to thee as totally as thou has given thyself to us. Oh, dear Lord, have mercy upon us. Glorify your name.

We ask in thy precious name. Amen.

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