

The Heavenly Vision: Part 2

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the heavenly vision received by Saul on the road to Damascus and its implications for all believers in their spiritual journey and community life.

Duration: 49:43

Scripture: Acts 9:6-8, Acts 9:10-12, Acts 9:17-18, Acts 22:6-10, Acts 22:16

Topics: "Spiritual Renewal", "Christian Unity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of the heavenly vision that the Apostle Paul saw on the road to Damascus. This vision is not just meant for Paul, but for all believers. Without vision, we perish spiritually and lose direction in our lives. Surrendering to the Lord and accepting Jesus as our Lord brings about a new life in Christ. The speaker also highlights the significance of unity among believers, stating that we need one another as members of the body of Christ. Without each other, we are incomplete.

Transcript

Will you please turn to the book of Acts, chapter 9, we'll begin with verse 6. Chapter 9, verse 6. But rise up and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou shalt do, thou must do. But the man who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no one. And Saul rose up from the earth, and his eyes being opened, he saw no one.

But leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without seeing, and neither ate nor drank. And there was a certain disciple in Damascus by name Ananias.

And the Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, here am I Lord. And the Lord said to him, Rise up and go into the street, which is called straight, and seek in the house of Judas one by name Saul.

He is of Tarsus. For behold, he is praying, and has seen in a vision a man by name Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he should see. And Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many concerning this man how much evil he has done to thy saints at Jerusalem.

And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon thy name. And the Lord said to him, Go, for this man is an elect vessel to me, to bear my name before both nations and kings and the

sons of Israel. For I will show to him how much he must suffer for my name.

And Ananias went and entered into the house, and laying his hands upon him, he said, Saul, brother, the Lord has sent me, Jesus, that appeared to thee in the way in which thou cometh, that thou mightest see and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And straightway there fell from his eyes, as it were, scales. And he saw, and rising up was baptized, and having received food, get strength.

And he was with the disciples who were in Damascus certain days. And straightway in the synagogues he preached Jesus, that he is the Son of God. And all who heard were satonished, and said, Is not this he who destroy in Jerusalem those who call on this name? And here was come for this purpose, that he might bring them bound to the chief priests.

Let's have a word of prayer. Dear Lord, we want to thank Thee for Thy presence with us this morning. We thank Thee for the cup, the new covenant sealed by Thy blood.

We thank You for the bread, Thy very life poured out for us, and given to us. How we praise and thank Thee for Thy love, Thy everlasting love that Thou hast shown towards us. And Lord, we do want to thank Thee again for Thy precious word.

Thy word is truth, Thy word is life, Thy word is spirit, and we believe it. Lord, we want to open ourselves to Thee, and ask Thee that Thy spirit will breathe upon Thy written word, and make Thy word living and operative in each of our lives. Lord, our heart's desire is that Thy spirit will lead us into Thy truth.

Thy truth will become reality in our lives. Lord, we look to Thee, and we believe that Thy word will not return to the void, but it will accomplish its purpose for Thy own glory. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus.

Amen. Now Lord, last last day, we began to share on the heavenly vision that the Apostle Paul saw on the road to Damascus. We mentioned last time that this testimony is given three times in the book of Acts.

And whenever you find something that is repeated and emphasized, it shows that it is something that God wants us to pay special attention to. Or to put it in another way, the heavenly vision that the Apostle Paul saw on the road to Damascus is not just meant for him. That vision is meant for all who are the Lord's.

It is the will of God that we all receive that heavenly vision. For without vision, we perish spiritually. Without vision, we cast off all restraints.

Without vision, we disintegrate. We were scattered all over the world. So you find that how important it is that the vision that God gave to the Apostle Paul, that each one of us, by the grace of God, will see it.

Now this heavenly vision is such a glorious vision, because on the road to Damascus, Saul, in that heavenly light, he saw the full revelation of God. In other words, you'll find that he saw the mystery of God. He saw the mystery of the Christ.

And these are the two greatest revelations in the Bible. As a matter of fact, the whole Bible, from the Old Testament to the New Testament, is to reveal this heavenly vision. So on the road there, the Apostle Paul, at that time his name was Saul, and he saw Jesus is Lord.

Because before that, in his mind, according to the tradition that he had received, he considered Jesus the Nazarene, the low carpenter. Not only that, but he considered Jesus as an imposter of Judaism, and is

one that needs to be completely wiped out. And that's what he did.

But now on the road to Damascus, in that heavenly vision, to his surprise, he discovered that this humble Jesus, this one whom he persecuted, is actually the Son of God. He said, it pleased God to reveal his Son in me. And as the Son of God, He is the Lord of all.

He is in heaven, He is in glory, He is in power, He is in majesty. All authority in heaven and earth has been given to Him. Jesus is Lord.

And to that revelation, He yielded Himself. And not only that, in the same vision, he saw the Church, the Body of Christ. Because our Lord Jesus said, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goods.

And Saul said, Lord, who are you? I don't even know you. And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. Now, brothers and sisters, we mentioned last time that Saul was trained as a Pharisee.

And the training of the Pharisee is, they know how to argue. And yet here, there was no argument. Even though Saul had not put his hand upon Jesus Himself, but by putting his hand upon the followers of Jesus, he persecuted Jesus Himself.

In other words, in that light, he realized that Jesus, the Lord, the Head, is complaining. Why? Because members of His Body are being touched. So, in that instant, Saul, he began to see the mystery of the Christ, which is the Church, the Body of Christ.

So, dear brothers and sisters, this heavenly vision is the greatest vision that one can ever see in his lifetime. And it is the will of God that all of us should see it. But as we mentioned last time, this vision is not ended on the road to Damascus.

Why? Because after Saul asked the first question and got the answer, he began to ask the second question, as it recorded in Acts chapter 22. And there, when Saul, Paul, gave his testimony, he said he asked the second question. And the second question is, Lord, what do you want me to do? Now, in this very question, it shows that Saul has completely surrendered himself to the Lord Jesus.

He saw that vision, and he fully yielded to that vision. He accepted Jesus as the Lord of his life. And in doing that, he gave up his own right.

He used to be a person who is the master of his own. And now you'll find he surrendered his mastership. He surrendered his right and gave it all to Jesus as Lord.

So, brothers and sisters, you know that this is not something just theoretical. To this man, that vision begins to become real in his life. So he said, Lord, what should I do? I know what to do before, but now I'm finished.

I do not know what to do. I have no right of my own. I cannot direct my life anymore.

You, my master, my Lord, have to tell me what should I do. It is an absolute surrender. Brothers and sisters, when heavenly vision comes, it brings our natural man to the end.

And it begins a new life, the life in Christ. So this is what is happening to this man. What should I do? Tell me, and I'll do it.

But strangely, you'll find our Lord Jesus did not tell him right away what the Lord wants him to do. The Lord called him. And yet, in that moment, when this man so yielded, we would think that the Lord will immediately tell him, well, I call you because I have chosen you as a chosen vessel.

You are to be my servant. You are to be my witness. What you have seen and what you are going to see, you will bear testimony before the Jews, before the Gentiles, before the people, even before kings.

That's what I want you to do. And you are to suffer a great deal for me. But strange to say, the Lord didn't say that.

Instead, the Lord said, you rise up. Go to Damascus and wait there until you are told what I want you to do. Now, dear brothers and sisters, if you understand the character of this man's soul, he was a master of himself.

And here you'll find he completely yielded to another master. And in his mind, he fully believed that Jesus will tell him what he should do. And then he will rise up and do it immediately.

That is soul's character, his temperament. But instead of that, the Lord told him to go to Damascus and wait. Now, waiting is the most difficult thing to the flesh.

Our flesh cannot wait. So you'll find the Lord began to show him who is really Lord. If you call me Lord and I'm your Lord, then I have to tell you and you have to do what I told you.

The Lord said, go to Damascus and wait. Immediately you'll find Saul was put to the test. It is not just say, Lord, Lord, and do your own will.

When you say Lord, you mean it and the Lord means it too. So the Lord said, go to Damascus. And not only that, the Lord said, you will be told by someone what I want you to do.

Now, dear brothers and sisters, Saul was just converted. He just surrendered himself to Jesus as Lord. To him, it is the Lord and I. Nobody else.

The Lord is my Lord. I am his servant. The Lord and I, that's all.

Nothing matters. But at that moment, the Lord began to teach him a lesson. It is true, there is a relationship between him and the Lord.

Direct, intimate. But at the same time, the Lord wanted to show him that there is not only that vertical relationship, there is also a horizontal relationship. He needs the Lord, but he needs the members of the body of Christ.

Now, if the Lord should tell him right away what he should do, you know what will happen? He will get up and just do as the Lord says, but in his life, there will be no need of brothers and sisters. It is just himself and the Lord. That is all that matters.

And there will be directly cutting against the heavenly vision that God has given him. So here from the right, right beginning, you'll find the Lord is teaching him that the vision is not a theory. That the vision is a reality.

It is a glorious vision, a heavenly vision, but that vision has to be practiced upon the earth. Otherwise, it will be a mirage. He will just be a visionary, not real.

So, dear brothers and sisters, immediately the Lord is teaching him some lesson. Not only he has to humble himself before Jesus, the Lord, he has to humble himself before other members of the body of Christ. He will be a big member, but the Lord wants him to humble himself before a small member.

That is a lesson he has to learn, and because he began to learn it at the very beginning, you'll find how he lived the life of the body throughout his days. So, brothers and sisters, in one sense, it is very humbling to this man's soul. He will say, now I yield myself to you.

Isn't that enough? The Lord says, no, that's not enough. You have to also learn how to submit to one another. You know, once our dear brother Watchman Lee visited George Cutting.

Now, I don't know if you know that name, but George Cutting is the one who wrote Safety, Certainty and Enjoyment. That is a gospel tract which is well known in the early days. I don't know about now.

Now, in my young days, that is well known because, aside from the Bible, this tract has the largest publication, Safety, Certainty and Enjoyment. And, our dear brother Watchman Lee, when he was in England, he visited this man. He was in his almost hundred at that time.

Very old. And, sometimes he was conscious, other times he was unconscious. So, our brother sat by his bed and waited for him to wake up.

And, when he woke up, he turned to our brother and said, I cannot do without him and he cannot do without me. And then, he drifted into sleep again. Now, what he means is, I cannot do without my Lord.

But, he knows the Lord so much, he said, he cannot do without me. Now, brothers and sisters, this is deep, right? And so, our brother Watchman Lee tried to add something more to it. He said, we need to not only say, I cannot do without the Lord and the Lord cannot do without me.

But, we have to learn to say, I cannot do without my brother and sister and my brother and sister cannot do without me. Why? Because, we are members of the body. We need one another.

Without one another, we are incomplete. Because, we are only a member. No matter how big a member you are, you need the help of the smallest member of the body of Christ.

So, dear brothers and sisters, now, if we only see the heavenly vision on the road to Damascus and it ends there, it is just a vision. It will be a mirage very soon. It is not real.

So, you find the heavenly vision has to continue on into the city of Damascus. All the spiritual principles, all the heavenly glorious truth revealed on the road to Damascus has to be put into practice on earth. Now, that is what the Lord shows us.

On the road to Damascus, we mentioned last time that Saul met a universal man. He met a man whose head is in heaven and whose body fills the earth. A universal man.

And, before that universal man, he capitulated. But, now he is going to see another man. So, he went to Damascus.

You know, he opened his eyes, but his eyes were blinded by the heavenly light. But, thank God, his inner eyes were opened. So, he was led into Damascus, helpless.

And, there he was, three days, without eating, without drinking, blind. What was he doing there? He was praying. Brothers and sisters, he needed that three days.

You know, the revelation was so great. And, it was so transforming, as it were, demanding a complete turnover in his life. So, he needed that time to really be before the Lord, praying, reviewing the past, and trying to begin to understand what is happening in his life.

As he was fasting and praying, he saw in a vision a man by the name of Ananias came to him, put his hands upon him, and opened his eyes. And, at the same time, a man little known, not known in Jerusalem, even though he was known in Damascus, because he was a pious Jew, according to the law. And, he was a believer, a follower of the Lord Jesus.

His name was Ananias. And, at the same time, Ananias, in a vision, God appeared to him and said, Ananias, Ananias said, Lord, here am I. You know, Ananias' reaction is different from Saul's reaction. You know, when our Lord appeared to Saul, Saul said, now, who are you, Lord? He didn't know him.

But, Ananias was a person who knew the Lord. So, when the Lord said, Ananias, Ananias said, Lord, here am I. I'm here. And, the Lord said, you go to the street called Strait, and find in the house of Judas a man by the name of Saul of Tarsus.

You go there, put your hands on him, and open his eyes. Now, Ananias said to the Lord, Lord, I heard from many that what evil this man had done in Jerusalem, and now he has the document to come to Damascus to seize the followers of you. Was Ananias disobedient? No.

Was he trying to argue with the Lord? No. You'll find here was a person who knew the Lord so much, so well, so intimate. He is not trying to oppose what the Lord said to him.

But, he has every right to understand. He has the freedom to tell the Lord, Lord, I have heard about this man. He is well known, and he is coming as an enemy.

What should I do? Brothers and sisters, in his saying to the Lord, he is not being disobedient, not being rebellious, not being arguing. He just wants to know if that is what the Lord wants him to do. And, the Lord said, fear not.

You go, because this man is my chosen vessel. Now, Ananias didn't know what happened to this man. All he knew was about his past, and that was not a good news.

But, the Lord said, he is my chosen vessel. The Lord did not even explain to him, but said, he is my chosen vessel. You just go.

And, Ananias obeyed. Now, brothers and sisters, here you'll find in this city of Damascus, the vision continues. On the road to Damascus, only one vision, one person saw that vision.

But, in the city of Damascus, you have two visions. One to Ananias, and one to Saul. Now, why is it Saul? Because, when you come to the body of Christ, you need confirmation.

That is the way the body acts. You just cannot go all by yourself, independent. So, here you'll find the vision that is given to Ananias is reinforced by the vision given to Saul.

And, the vision given to Saul is being strengthened by the vision given to Ananias. That is the way the body works. That is the way the Lord will work in the body.

This is fellowship. Humanly speaking, Ananias could not see Saul. Why? Because, Saul came to Damascus just to seize people like Ananias.

Now, if he should go, he would just surrender himself to be arrested. They were enemies. They could not see each other.

If Ananias sees Saul, Ananias will be finished. How could you do that? Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But, God has done the impossible.

Here you'll find two enemies who could not see each other. Not to say to meet each other. God has brought them together as brothers, members of the body of Christ.

This is the wonder of the gospel. This is the wonder of God. Ananias was a little man.

So far as the natural man is concerned, Saul is a much bigger man than Ananias. Because, Saul was well known. Well known in a sense.

Even people who have never seen him have heard him. But, Ananias was unknown. And, strangely, you'll find this man Ananias only appeared once and he disappeared.

An unknown person. A little man. But, this little man is essential in the life of the Apostle Paul.

Without this little man, Saul's eyes will not be opened. Without this little man, Saul will never know what the Lord wants him to do. His all future, in a sense, not only depends upon the Lord, but also depends upon this little man.

So, brothers and sisters, this is what the body is. Ananias, in obedience to the Lord, he went. He entered into the house.

He put his hands upon Saul. Now, the laying of hands in the scripture, whether it is the Old Testament or the New Testament, the principle is the same. Whatever the application may be, the principle is the same.

The laying of hands is a sign of fellowship, of union. In other words, when you lay your hands on, it means that you are united with the one whom your hands laid on. In the Old Testament time, when you take an ox or you take a sheep as a sacrifice, you lay your hands on the animal to show that you are one with that animal.

So, when that animal was sacrificed, you were sacrificed. And, the same thing is true with the laying on of hands. So, here you'll find Ananias came and laid hands on him.

Now, thank God, it is not Saul who laid hands on Ananias. You know, if Saul laid hands on Ananias, Ananias was finished. But, it was Ananias that laid hands on Saul.

And, that's the beginning of the Apostle. In other words, here you'll find a person who is so obedient to the head, that in spite of all that he had heard, he obeyed. And, he willingly laid his hands upon his former

enemy, saying, we are one.

We are in the one body. He not only laid hands on him, but he said, brother Saul, the Lord Jesus whom you see on the road, he sent me to open your eyes, that you may be filled with the Holy Spirit. Brothers and sisters, for Ananias to call Saul, brother, isn't that wonderful? For Saul to hear that very word, brother, I don't know how he felt.

Me, your brother, I who was your enemy, I came to put you to death, and yet you call me brother. I believe his heart was melted. Brothers and sisters, there is no sweeter sound than the word brother or sister.

You know, because of my age, some people call me uncle, some people call me grand-uncle, some people call me great-grand-uncle. It's an honor. But, the sweetest voice to my ears is when people call me brother Kong.

When I was in Hong Kong in the early days, all the children called me brother Kong. I love it. You know, there is no sweeter sound than the sound of a brother or a sister, Saul, brother.

And when he laid his hands upon him, his eyesight was restored. And he was filled with the Holy Spirit. Why? Because he is in the body.

And when you are in the body, the oil that fell upon Aaron's head came down and filled, you received the Holy Spirit. And then Saul was told what he should do. The Lord said, you are to be my witness.

You are to be my servant. You are to suffer much for me. In other words, through another member of the body, the head revealed his mind.

And that is the way that the great apostle received his commission. So, brothers and sisters, all these things show that the heavenly vision is not just a vision. It is real.

It can be practiced and it must be practiced upon this earth. Otherwise, it is nothing. Or sometimes it is worth nothing because it makes you proud of what you see.

And actually, if you really see the heavenly vision, it humbles you. Every time in the scripture, when a person receives light from heaven, receives revelation, vision from heaven, invariably you will find a prostrate on the ground. Even Daniel, he says, my beauty changed into corruption because of the glory of the Lord.

So, dear brothers and sisters, vision should humble us, not to exhort us. We should, through the vision, humble ourselves, not only before the Lord, but before our brothers and sisters. And thank God, Saul, after he took food, he was strengthened.

And what happened to him? He was with the disciples in Damascus. He went in and went out with the disciples of Damascus. In other words, he was not a lone wolf.

He was not an independent person. You will find he is beginning to live the life of the body, the life of the church. He began to witness for the Lord.

He began to testify in the synagogue that Jesus is the Son of God. And people wondered. And then later on you will find actually in between the verse 21 and 22, actually in between these are the years he spent in Arabia.

He not only had to rethink his own life, he had to rethink his training, the Word of God, the Old Testament that he had learned from the rabbis. He had to reread the Bible in the light of Jesus. And after that he came back to Damascus.

And again you will find his testimony is strengthened because he proved that Jesus is the Christ. So in other words, he has reread the Old Testament in the light of Christ. So brothers and sisters, you will find he began to live what he had seen.

Not only completely surrender to the Lord and do what the Lord wanted him to do, but you will find he began to live in the body as a member of the body of Christ. So later on you will find even when he fled from Damascus, he went to Jerusalem. He sought to fellowship with the disciples.

Though the disciples were afraid of him, but thank God there was Barnabas who believed in him and led him to Peter. So throughout his life you will find he not only lived under Jesus, his Lord, his head, but he also lived as a member of the body of Christ. And I think probably this is one reason why.

In many of his letters, even though we knew that he was the one who really wrote these letters, but he always tried to have someone to be with him. He didn't want to be alone, to be independent. He always tried to show that there is the body of Christ.

He not only preached it, but he lived it. So brothers and sisters, the heavenly vision must be continued on with the visions in the city of Damascus. And then it is complete.

So may the Lord help us. Brothers and sisters, we need to ask the Lord to open our inner ears to see this glorious heavenly vision. Because this is the eternal purpose of God.

We must see it, but at the same time we must also meet what Saul met in the city of Damascus. So that our vision may be real, may be our life. May the Lord help us, shall we pray.

Dear Lord, we want to thank Thee for the glorious heavenly vision. We thank Thee that Thou art truly the Son of God, the Lord of all. Thou art the head of the church.

Thou hast a body upon this earth that includes all who are Thine. Lord, Thou dost show us how we need Thee, how we need to obey Thee, absolutely, not conditionally, in all things, big and small. And Lord, Thou dost show us how we need to learn to live in the body, how we need to see we need one another.

Not only to see it, but to live it. Enable us to submit, not only to Thee, but to one another, in the fear of Christ. We pray that Thou would be merciful to us, that we may not be a people with high-minded thoughts, and yet without a corresponding life.

Have mercy upon us. We ask Thee Thy precious name.

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