

The Life of Christ, the Bond Servant, on Earth

by Stephen Kaung

Stephen Kaung's sermon explores the life of Christ as the bond servant who fulfills God's eternal purpose through obedience and incarnation.

Duration: 1:09:33

Scripture: Psalm 40:6-8, Isaiah 9:6-7, John 1:14, Philippians 2:6-8

Topics: "Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of obedience to the heavenly vision, which is revealed through Jesus Christ. Jesus is not only the heavenly vision, but also the author and foundation of this vision. He serves as the perfect example of obedience to the heavenly vision, as he lived his life according to the Father's will. Despite being the Son of God, Jesus chose to live as a bound slave, surrendering his own desires and following the Father's will. The sermon also mentions the temptation of Jesus by Satan, where Satan tried to draw Jesus away from his obedience to the Father's will.

Transcript

Will you please turn to Isaiah, the book of Isaiah, chapter 9. We'll begin with verse 6, 6 and 7. Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name is called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even forever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this.

The gospel according to John chapter 1, John chapter 1, verse 14. And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have contemplated his glory, a glory as of an only begotten with a father, full of grace and truth. Psalm, the book of Psalm, Psalm 40, verse 6, verse 7 and verse 8. Sacrifice and oblation thou didst not desire, years hast thou prepared me, burn offering and sing offering hast thou not demanded, then I said, behold I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy good pleasure my God is my delight, and thy law is written is within my heart.

And finally, Philippians, the letter to the Philippians. Philippians chapter 2, verse 6 through 8. Who, that is Christ Jesus, subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of repine, 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, humble himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and death, the death

of the cross. Let us pray.

Dear Lord, we want to thank thee again for the privilege of gathering together unto thy name. How we praise and thank thee it is because of thy precious blood shed for us, and the new and living way that thou hast opened for us. Dedicated for us, and having thee as our great high priest interceding unceasingly for us, that we are privileged to come to thy very presence and to hear thy word.

O Lord, do create within us a deep longing for thy word. Take away any hindrance within us. Open our understanding.

We want to know thee. We want to know thee. We want to wear thee.

Lord, thou art the only one that we desire. There is no one in heaven beside thee, and earth, no one we desire aside from thee. Lord, do fill us with thyself that thou may be glorified.

We commit this time into thy loving hands, trusting thy Holy Spirit to do this impossible work. We ask in thy precious name. Amen.

Every time we are privileged to gather together in his name, it really brings forth from our hearts a deep gratitude. In this world, how many today are privileged such as we are, that we may gather together quietly and spend our time as it were with him. It is such a privilege.

The theme this year is the testimony of the Apostle Paul. He said, King Agrippa, I am not disobedient to the heavenly vision. That's what I am.

That's where I am. And hopefully, by the grace of God, that each and every one of us who are privileged to come to this conference will be able, by the grace of God, to say the same thing. We are not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

But as we mentioned at the very beginning, if we do not know what the heavenly vision is, how can we be obedient? Dear brothers and sisters, what is the heavenly vision? To put it in the simplest way, the heavenly vision that we find in the Word of God is concerned with the eternal purpose of God. God has an eternal purpose, which is purpose in himself, even before the foundation of the world. And that is the purpose that governs all his working throughout the ages.

That purpose is very simple, because his heart is centered upon only one person, his only beloved son, our Lord Jesus Christ. So what is the heavenly vision? It is not that mysterious, abstract, almost untouchable. It is very simple, very clear, very definite.

The eternal purpose is none other but Christ Jesus in the eternal purpose of God. What does God think about his beloved son? What does God want his son to be? Who is this son in the eyes of the Father? He is the one in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells. He is the one who is the creator of all things.

He is the one who is the heir of all things. He is the Lord, the master over all. God has given all things to him, especially human beings, men and women such as we are.

We are God's gift to his son, God's greatest gift to his son. And we are supposed to take up his character and be transformed and conformed to his image, that we may be his helpmate, his life companion, that he may be satisfied. Now that is the heavenly vision.

And thank God that heavenly vision includes us. So the emphasis this year is more on this matter of how can that heavenly vision become our portion, our possession, that the heavenly vision may be in us. And we are in the heavenly vision.

And the secret is to be obedient to what God has revealed to his son to us. My responsibility this time is to illustrate obedience to the heavenly vision with the life of Christ himself. Because we know that our Lord Jesus Christ is not only the heavenly vision, but he is also the author of this vision.

He is the one who brings this vision into reality. He is the one who lays the foundation for this vision. And not only that, but he is the one who completed, who works in us, who brings us into that vision.

And in the process of it, we find that he is the perfect example of being obedient to the heavenly vision. So that is what we will share during the first three mornings. Yesterday morning we mentioned that the story of our Lord Jesus begins from eternity past.

We will never be able to understand him if we only know him. During that 33 and a half years, when he was on earth. That's why many people, they misunderstand him.

They said he is a great man. He's a great prophet. He's a saint.

He's a wonderful person. But brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus is more than that. We have to know him even before time was, in eternity past.

In the beginning was the word, the locus, the speech, the utterance, the image of God. And the word was with God. And the word was God.

In other words, brothers and sisters, in the beginning there is God. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Three in one is a mystery.

We do not understand it, but we know it is a fact. And in eternity past, the Father and the Son maintain a sweet, harmonious, wonderful, glorious fellowship with each other in the Spirit. And in their conversation, as it were, in their fellowshiping, the Father told the Son, how much I love you.

I want to express my love to you. I want to give all things to you. I want to create the heavens and earth and all the things therein.

I want to create man that he may be your life companion. But God being omniscient, he knows the end from the beginning, so he knows that there will be problems, impossible problems, standing in the way. And that is, he can foresee there will be rebellion in the universe.

So what should I do, said the Father and the Son, in full agreement with the Father, offer himself voluntarily. He said, Father, if this is your will, just go ahead. I'm willing to offer myself as the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world.

I will be the one to solve that impossible problem, so that your purpose may be done. So, dear brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus, he was the Lamb, even before the foundation of the world. He was the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world.

And being, and having offered himself in such a way, it is in obedience to the Father. So, brothers and sisters, the obedience of Christ to the heavenly vision began in eternity past. This is very important to us,

because this is the basis for our being chosen in Christ before the world's foundation.

Thank God we are chosen. But remember, our being chosen trace way back to eternity past, and it is based totally upon the obedience of Christ to his Father, in offering himself as the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world. So, brothers and sisters, whenever we think of that, we bow our knees, we worship.

It is something too marvelous, but he has done it. Now, this morning, we would like to continue on with the life of Christ in the days of his flesh. How he was obedient to the heavenly vision, and how he came to lay the foundation to the heavenly vision.

You know, brothers and sisters, after man sinned, they hid themselves among the trees. They were afraid of facing God, but God came to them. Isn't that true? We try to escape from God, but God, in his great love, come to find us.

And God came into the garden, and he said, Adam, where are you? Why do you hide yourself among the trees? Adam confessed that he was naked, because sin took away the glory that was Adam's clothing. So, God began to pronounce his judgment. He pronounced his judgment on Adam, and then on Eve, and then on the serpent that tempted Eve.

And while he was pronouncing his judgments, in Genesis 3 15, he gave man and the world a great promise. God said, I will put an enmity between you, the serpent, and the woman, and an enmity between your seed and the seed of the woman. And the seed of the woman will crush your head, but you will crush his heel.

In other words, brothers and sisters, God always reacts positively, in spite of the sin of man, in spite of the judgments proclaimed, and yet God always reacts far above we could think of. His thought is always higher than our thoughts. His way is always higher than our way.

And thank God that under that kind of situation, God gave us a great promise. One day, the seed of the woman will come, and when she shall come, he will crush the serpent's head. In other words, he will put Satan to death, put him away, but he always also will suffer.

God, in many ways, throughout the years, reiterated his promise until we come to Isaiah. Now, Isaiah lived about 800 years before Christ, so over three thousands of years have passed. God never forgot.

And through the prophet Isaiah, he prophesied unto us a child is born. One day, a child will be born unto us. This child is born unto us, to all of us, not just to one family.

When the child is born in one family, there was rejoicing in the family, but it was this child is born unto us, into this world for us. And who is this child? A son is given. This very child, little baby, is the son of God.

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. And government shall be upon his shoulder. His name is called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace.

And he shall sit upon the throne of David, and his government shall know no end. And the zeal of the Lord will perform it. Oh, brothers and sisters, here you find this promise of the seed of woman is clearly reinforced in this prophecy of Isaiah.

And then, in the fullness of time, as we find in Galatians, Christ was born of a woman, a virgin, under the law that we might be redeemed from the curse of the law, and we might receive sonship. So, there you'll find in the Gospel of John, chapter 1, verse 14, the Word became flesh. In the beginning was the Word, but now the Word became flesh.

The Word took upon himself the flesh of a man, and he dwelt among us. He tabernacled, as it were, among us, full of grace and truth. And John put in parenthesis, and we beheld his glory, even the glory as an only begotten with the Father.

Now, brothers and sisters, in eternity past, our Lord Jesus Christ, he offered himself as a lamb slain from the foundation of the world. That's an offering. And now you'll find this offering was made a fact.

The Word became flesh. The seed of a woman had come, and that is incarnation. Now, of course, we find in the Book of Psalms, here in Psalm 40, 6 to 8, it is a prophecy.

It is referring to Christ. And here it says, sacrifice and oblation thou does not desire. God is not looking for sacrifice or oblation.

These are just types. Sing offering and burn offering. Thou does not want, but thou has prepared me a body.

Now, in Psalm 40, it said, thou has prepared me an ear, a pierced ear. But when you read Hebrews, it is a body. So, in other words, you'll find here, the Word offered himself to come in the flesh, to take upon himself the flesh of a man.

And this is according to the Word. And your law is written upon my heart. I come to do thy will.

So, dear brothers and sisters, here you'll find at the beginning of the life of our Lord Jesus on earth, he came in the flesh and full of grace and truth. In other words, we never know what grace, what truth are, not until Christ came into this world. And he brought in grace and truth, because grace and truth subsist in him.

This matter of incarnation is so marvelous in our eyes. If we want to know the mystery of incarnation, we have to go to Philippians chapter 2. And there he said, Christ Jesus subsists in the form of God. Now, what does that mean? The word form there, in Greek is morphine.

And that means primarily nature or essence. It is not an abstract thing. It speaks of the very nature, essence, character of that individual.

What makes up that individual, spiritually, morally, and as long as that individual lives, that form remains with him. So, here you'll find when the word in the beginning was the word, what is the form of that word? It is the form of God. In other words, whatever God is, God's nature, God's character, all of this are in the word, because he is God.

And he says, subsist in the form of God. Being in the form of God. It is not a becoming.

It is a being. This is what he actually is. So, in eternity past, the word subsists in the form of God.

Everything that God is, that is what he is. Because he is one with God. And there he says, that did not estimate an object of the pine to be on equality with God.

He is equal with God. And it is not something that he has to grasp at, to seek after. Now, you know there is a background there.

We remember that in the first world, God's creation, the highest were the angels. And there was one angel called Lucifer. He was gifted.

He was put in the highest position that an angel could ever have. And yet, he wanted to grasp for something that wasn't his. He was not created for that.

But then you find he became so self-ambitious. He was to be above everything. To be equal with God.

He wanted to grasp that position. But so far as our Lord Jesus was concerned, that was his right from the very beginning. He did not need to grasp it.

Try to get it. Because it is his forever. Now, that is where he was before he came into this world.

And then, when the word became flesh, it is not a simple thing. How can the word having the form of God, and God is eternal. God is spirit.

God is almighty. How can this God to come to become a man? There is only one way to do it. And the way is to empty himself.

Now, brothers and sisters, this matter of emptying himself, or making himself of nothing, doesn't mean that he emptied himself of his deity. Because we have already mentioned that the form of God is not subsisting in him, and that is eternal. He cannot empty himself of his deity.

Because as long as he lives, this is what he is. He is forever God. But this emptying himself is laying aside temporarily, setting aside as if taking off a cloth, setting aside, emptied himself of all the glory and honor, position, right, he lay all these aside.

In order that he may take up the form of a God's slave. Now, again, you find this word form does not refer to his outward appearance. This word form refers to his inward, inner character.

He subsists in the form of God. And now, after he emptied himself, he take upon himself another form. And that form is the form of a born slave.

Again, it does not refer to outward figure. It refers to when he came to become flesh. What is his inner feeling? What is his mind? He has the mind of a born slave.

What a contrast that is. You think of that God, who is almighty, the sovereign. He can do anything he wants.

And here you find a born slave. A born slave is worse than a servant. A born slave is one that has given up all his right.

He has no right whatsoever. He has no possession, no position, no right even to his life. And that is what our Lord Jesus, when he came to be in the flesh, that is his inward feeling.

What an emptiness that is. And that form, that inward feeling, is always with him throughout his life on the earth, taking his place in the likeness of man, and having been found in figure as a man. Now the word figure here, Bishma, it refers to outward appearance now.

It is something that he appears to man. So when you look at him, when he was in the flesh, he looked exactly a man like you and me. That is his figure.

That is his outward appearance. But inside that figure, that outward appearance of a man, there is an inward form in him. And that inward form is the form of a born slave.

Now I hope you understand this. Because brothers and sisters, you remember, when God created man, he created man in his own image after his likeness. And God gave dominion to man, to rule.

But the man that God created is a man who has the form, the figure of a man, and is to do God's will. So his inside feeling should be the feeling of a born slave. Man is not created for himself.

Man is created to do God's will. Man is created to be a born slave to God. And that is what you find when our Lord Jesus says, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the good.

Now, you know, there's a background to it. Saul, he thought he was his own master. Being a man, he was his own master.

He was doing what he thought should be done. And he thought the only way to serve God is to persecute the followers of Jesus Christ. But then God, the Lord said, Saul, Saul, it is hard for you to kick against God.

In other words, you are not free. You are not born free. When you are created, you are created to be a born slave to God.

You have a master. You are to do his will. You are like an ox under yoke, my yoke, the will of God.

But you rebel against it. Just like a stubborn ox. You think that you are free.

And you want to go your own way, do your own thing. But remember, you have a master. And he will use the gourd.

That is a sharp instrument in the hand of the farmer. And whenever the ox goes astray, while he is tilling the ground, then the farmer will use that gourd, a sharp instrument, just to touch his leg to remind him. But the ox is so stubborn, it kicks back.

And when he kicks back, it hurts. And after a number of hurts, he, that ox began to be obedient. So, brothers and sisters, God is telling Saul, you are created a man with an inward mind of a born slave to serve God's purpose.

That's why you are created in the first place. But you kick against the gourd. I have reminded you again and again.

And now, remember, if you continue on, it's to your own hurt. Now, I believe that when Stephen was done, Saul, the young man, was watching the clothes of those who threw the stones. And Stephen, his face looked like the face of an angel.

And he said, the heaven opened. I saw the Son of Man standing there, welcoming me. And when he died, he said, Lord, do not put that sin up, just like his Lord.

I believe Saul, his conscience was touched. That was the good. God is trying to remind him.

And when Saul was taking the men and women from their homes or from the synagogues and beat them and put them into prison. Now, being a gentleman, will not his heart be touched? Again and again, God reminded him. But he rebelled even more.

And the Bible said he persecuted even more fiercely in order to silence his conscience. But finally, God turned him around. So, brothers and sisters, remember, we as human beings, we have the form, we have the figure, appearance of a man.

But inside our mind should be the mind of a bond slave. That's what man is created to be. But unfortunately, man rebelled.

And here you'll find God has found his man in Christ Jesus. Because in Christ Jesus, he is a perfect man. He looks like a man and he is a man.

And yet he is the man of God's heart. Within him, there is a mind. There is a form of a bond slave.

He has given up all his right to the Father. So, brothers and sisters, when our Lord Jesus was on earth, there's one thing that mocked him throughout his life. And that is the governing principle of his life is the Father's will.

Lord, I come to do your will. When you read the gospel according to John, especially from chapter five through chapter eight, you find there is a number of places where our Lord Jesus said, I cannot do anything by myself. I do it because I saw my Father doing it.

I cannot say anything of myself. I say it because I hear my Father say it. My time is not my own.

My judgment is not my own. He has nothing in himself except the Father's will. So, throughout his life, you'll find he lived a life of a bond slave, obedient to the Heavenly Father.

Again, again, you'll find the enemy, Satan. Try to draw him out from his standing on the ground of man, on the ground of a bond slave, and try to remind him again and again, you are the son of God. You remember the temptation in the wilderness? After 40 days and 40 nights of fasting, our Lord Jesus being human, he felt hungry.

And Satan came in and said, now, if you are the son of God, you can easily solve this problem. You can turn the stone into bread, and then you need not be hungry anymore. He is the son of God, as well as the son of man, but during his days on earth, he lived as the son of man, not as the son of God.

So, the Lord said, man shall not live by bread alone, but every word that comes from the mouth of God. This is the attitude of a bond slave. Throughout his life, Satan tried to draw him away from that ground of a bond slave, but our Lord Jesus never for one instant, one second, departed from that position.

So, he was obedient, and being found in figure as a man, humbled himself. He humbled himself. It is not something upon him.

He willingly took a lower place before his father. And brothers and sisters, for what reason? For the sake of the heavenly nation. Because unless he takes that position of a bond slave, unless he came as a lamb to be slain, he will not be able to bring in the heavenly vision.

He humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross. So, in his life, we find how obedient he was. Do not think that it is easy for him, because he is also God, but remember that our Lord Jesus is a perfect man.

We are imperfect men and women. We have been contaminated by sin, but our Lord Jesus was a perfect man, as if just come out of the hand of the Creator. So, you find that he has his own soul, just like we are.

He has his own feeling, his own mind, his own will. And his feeling is, I do not know how many times sharper than our feeling, because he's perfect. And his mind is how many times clearer than our mind.

And even his will is how much higher than our will, so perfect. And yet, you find throughout his life, he denied himself. Even if he should act out of himself, he did not sin.

So, that's why he can pray, Father, remove this cup from me, if it is possible, but not my will, your will be done. Even if the cup is removed from him, he hasn't sinned. He is still the perfect man, because that was not his due to drink that cup.

We ought to drink that cup. But our Lord Jesus, being the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, how he denied himself. And he was obedient to the Father, even unto death.

Brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus' death is totally different from our death. You remember in John chapter 10, the Lord Jesus said, my Father loves me because I give up my life and I can take it back. Nobody takes my life away.

I voluntarily, I laid down my life and I can take it back. Our Lord Jesus volunteered to die. And it is the death of the cross.

We cannot fully understand the meaning of his death, the death of the cross. It is not the death of a sinner, like the two robbers crucified with him. It is not the death of a good man, nor it is the death of a martyr.

Because you'll find during his dying, he cried out, my God, my God, why has thou forsaken me? Now that was not a cry of a martyr. It is the death of a Redeemer, of a Savior. He died that we might live.

And the suffering of the cross is far beyond that we can understand. Not only when he was in the garden of Gethsemane, the Bible said he was so oppressed in his spirit, all the power of darkness was crowded upon him. He was sorrowful, even unto death.

But there you'll find he prayed, Father, if it is possible, remove it. But not my will, thy will be done. And the Bible said, he sweat blood drops.

What struggle. He always sympathized with people. But when he entered into the garden, he told his three chosen ones, stand with me.

Sympathize with me. But they fell into sleep. He was alone.

Brothers and sisters, why? Why should he die? Because that is what he came for. If he should come down from the cross, which he could, if he wanted to, then the heavenly vision would be bursted. It is on the cross that he laid the foundation of the heavenly vision.

He made that heavenly vision possible and he's able to offer that family vision. So dear brothers and sisters, this is where the glory of the cross is. If you look at the cross externally, there is no glory, only shame.

Because the cross is a shame. Only the vilest criminal was crucified on the cross by the Romans. It was a curse in the sight of God.

Therefore, all those who were crucified had to be removed before the Sabbath, because it was a curse. And yet brothers and sisters, it is glory. Where is the glory? You remember even before our Lord came to Calvary, when some Greeks want to see him.

That was, humanly speaking, his glorious time, because he entered into Jerusalem in a glorious way and they welcomed him as the king, the Messiah to come. And now even some Greeks wanted to see him. To the disciples, it was the glorious time, the time that our Lord Jesus should be enthroned.

And no wonder that the two sons of Zebedee wanted to sit on his right and left. And when our Lord Jesus heard of that, he said, the time of my glorifying has come. Unless a grain of wheat fall into the ground and died in the vise alone, but if he should die, he bears and he speaks of his death.

So in other words, to our Lord Jesus, his death is his glory. His death is the time of his being glorified. The Father is glorifying him.

Why? Because he was obedient even unto death and the death of the cross for the fulfillment of the heavenly vision. Brothers and sisters, if this is the way that our Lord Jesus went through, he said, come, follow me. Where I am, there shall you be.

Then you will be my disciples and my Father will be glorified. So may the Lord draw our hearts towards our Lord Jesus. Joke with me, as he said, for I am meek and lonely in heart.

Learn of me and you shall find rest in your soul. May the Lord have mercy on them. Dear Lord, pray that thou will, by thy Spirit, reveal thy glory in the cross.

Draw our hearts that we may despise. O Father, glorify thee among thy people, we ask in thy name. Amen.

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