

# The Vision of the New Covenant

by Stephen Kaung

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of the New Covenant, which is a covenant of grace, and the role of the indwelling Holy Spirit in revealing Christ and helping us to grow in our knowledge of God.*

**Duration:** 59:39

**Scripture:** Exodus 25:8

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "New Covenant"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the significance of the tabernacle in Exodus and the transition to the church in Ephesians, emphasizing the importance of God's dwelling among His people. It highlights the need for revelation and discipline from the Holy Spirit for spiritual growth and maturity, drawing parallels between Moses' journey and the believer's walk with Christ in the church.

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## Transcript

Will you please turn to Exodus, Exodus chapter 25, just two verses, verses 8 and 9. Exodus 25, 8. And they shall make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shall show thee, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the utensils thereof, even so shall ye make it. And then please turn to Ephesians.

Ephesians chapter 2, we'll read from verse 19 through 22. Ephesians chapter 2, verse 19. So then, ye are no longer strangers and foreigners, but ye are fellow citizens of the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the cornerstone, in whom all the building fitted together increases to a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are built together for a habitation of God in the spirit.

Let's pray. Dear Lord, as we continue in thy presence, we do pray that thou will speak to us, touch our spirit, give us understanding, and draw us into thy thought. Lord, will you not take each and every one of us up, that we may be truly those in whom thou will be glorified? Thy will will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

We commit this time into your hand, and trust thy Holy Spirit to do the work we ask in thy name. Amen. Last time, we share on the vision of the burning bush.

Moses, he was called the servant of God. In other words, in Moses, we will find the principles of true servanthood, we who are saved by the grace of God. We are saved to serve, not to serve ourselves anymore, but to serve the Lord who gave himself for us.

But how do we serve? And we can find in Moses the principles concerning serving the Lord. First of all, you cannot serve God by your natural strength, by yourself. We can only serve with vision.

Moses tried to serve God with all his learnings and eloquence, but he was a total failure. And thank God for the failure. What if he will succeed? Then he will be doing a work of man instead of doing a work of God.

And then God allowed him to unlearn all he has learned in Egypt until he couldn't speak, he has no more eloquence, he had no more strength in himself. According to what he wrote in Psalm 90, he told us that when man came to 80 years ago, that was the end of his life. And Moses at that time was 80 years old.

So he considered himself as nothing, could do nothing anymore. He has no more ambition of any kind. But it was at this very point that we find how God began to use him.

So brothers and sisters, we have to come to the end of ourselves. If we still have hope in ourselves, probably the Lord has to wait some more years until we finally come to the point of our own end in the service of God. Then you'll find God began to work.

So we find when he was 80 years old, without any ambition of any kind, he was willing just to pass as nobody, as nothing, accomplishing nothing. But then God gave him a vision. It was the vision of the burning bush.

Moses himself was like a bush in the wilderness. And the bush easily caught fire in the wilderness because it was too hot. And when a bush is burned, it's burned quickly.

But there he noticed something different. There was a bush burning. He fully expected that bush to be burned and be nothing.

But strangely, that bush was burning. But not burned. Instead, it glows.

So he went forward to look at it. And then God called him out of the burning bush. Brothers and sisters, Moses was like a bush in the wilderness.

He was no longer a prince in the palace of Egypt. He can easily expire. But the reason why he was still alive, it is because God is in that bush.

The burning does not consume him. Rather, it gives him glory. So brothers and sisters, in serving God, the first thing we need to learn is to see that in order to serve God, we cannot serve him with our own ability, with our own strength.

We can only serve him by his strength and according to his will. And he was sent back to Egypt to deliver the children of Israel out of slavery. But brothers and sisters, God save us.

Not just that we may have a good time, that we may escape eternal death. God saves us with a purpose. So here you find God deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt.

And God wants to lead them into the land of Canaan. But on the way, he led them to Mount Sinai. Why? Because there he was to make Israel his people.

And he was to reveal to Israel his purpose concerning them. So here you find when Moses led the people of Israel to Mount Sinai, then God gave revelation again to Moses. And the revelation he received was first the law.

God gave the children of Israel the Ten Commandments. God wrote them himself onto tablets. Now why the law? What did the law say? You know in the two tablets? The first tablet had four commandments.

And these commandments tells us of the holiness of God. And then it was continued by another tablet of six commandments. And the six commandments told us of the righteousness of God.

And by the law, God made the delivered people to be his own people. So this is the function of the law given to the children of Israel. Through the law, God made this people his own people.

And then following the vision of the law, God gave him another revelation. And that is the tabernacle. Now the law is just a process.

It is not the end. The law is for the sake of the tabernacle. That is to say, they are to be made God's people so that God may dwell in their midst.

So this is the purpose of God in saving the children of Israel. So we find in the history of the children of Israel, it is actually a history of the tabernacle. I think it is very edifying to trace the relationship between the children of Israel and the tabernacle.

Even after they made the tabernacle and the glory of God came and dwelled in it. And they were led, as it were, by the tabernacle through the wilderness journey. And yet, when you read the New Testament, you find in Acts 7, when Stephen related the story of the children of Israel in the wilderness, he said, you are not carrying with you the tabernacle of God.

You are actually carrying with you the tabernacle of your gods. Outwardly, it was the tabernacle of God. But inwardly, it was something else.

However, God, in his mercy, still led the children of Israel into the promised land. So after they arrived in the promised land, they put the tabernacle in Shiloh. And then you remember the story, how the ark was captured by the Philistines.

And when the ark returned to Israel, it was no longer in Shiloh. It was in the home of Abinadab. And he was hidden there for years, until the heart of the children of Israel began to turn to God through the ministry of Samuel.

And he was David, whose heart was for the ark of God. And when he became king, he brought the ark back to the city of David. And it was Solomon who built the temple.

But I think we all know the story. Because of the rebelling of the children of Israel, God even allowed his temple to be destroyed by the Babylonians. But after 70 years, God, in his mercy, brought the remnant of the children of Israel back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple.

The same temple service began to continue, even to the time of our Lord Jesus coming to this earth. But as we all know, that during that period, even though the temple was rebuilt, and afterwards, King Herod enlarged this temple to make it a beautiful building, donated by all donations. And yet, there is something missing.

The ark was missing. And we all know the ark is where God dwells. So outwardly, you find everything went on.

You worship the priests, the Levites, the services, the sacrifices. And yet, there was no ark. In other words, there was no presence of God.

And then we find our Lord Jesus came to be a man. And when he began his ministry, he was challenged. And he said, you remember in John chapter 2, the Lord said, destroy the temple.

Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days. He was not talking about a physical temple. He was talking about his body.

Why? Because while he was in earth, he was the true tabernacle of God. Because God was in him. So our Lord was speaking of his body.

You destroy this body. In three days, I will raise it up. And after our Lord Jesus has accomplished everything, then we know on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came and baptized the 120 believers who were praying with one accord for 10 days.

And at that time, Christ began to build his church. You remember towards the end of the life of our Lord Jesus on earth, when he was rejected by his own people, he retreated to the area of Caesarea Philippi, which was a Gentile city. And he asked his disciples, what do men say that I am? And you remember how his disciples told him every good thing that was said of him.

Now, for us Chinese, if somebody were to tell you, you are as good as Confucius. Now, what would be your response? Your response is, oh, no, I am not. I'm not worthy.

So when the disciples told the Lord about all these good things, John the Baptist came to life. Elijah. Elijah.

One of the prophets. He was not satisfied. So he said, you who know me, whom do you say that I am? And you remember the story of how Simon Peter said, you are the Christ, the son of the living God.

So far as your person is concerned, you are the son of the living God. So far as your ministry is concerned, you are the Christ, the sent by God for a specific purpose. After that confession, the Lord began to tell them, he was going to build a church.

But how? He had to suffer even unto death. And brothers and sisters, on the day of Pentecost, we find quite 120 believers. They were together, praying with one accord, waiting.

And the Holy Spirit came down, and they were baptized into one body. Now we often say, how do we know that our Lord Jesus, when he ascended, he reached heaven. He reached the throne.

Because you cannot see him anymore. The disciples saw him, leaving Mount Olympus, going up. And then the cloud took him, and they couldn't see him anymore.

But they were still looking, Bill, because the cloud was going up. And you remember, two men in white appeared, and said, Man of Galilee, why are you looking up? For this one, who has gone up, he will return in like manner, in the same way. So brothers and sisters, we find that after our Lord has ascended up, even though the disciples could not see him anymore, but he reached the throne.

How do we know? Number one, because of Pentecost. If he had not reached the throne, he would not be anointed, and the oil would not fall from his head and downward. So this is how we know that our Lord has reached the throne.

Number two, when you read Revelation 5, you find the vision that the lamb newly slain, standing before the throne, and he received the little book, which is the title deed, of this earth from his father. So we know our Lord has reached the throne, and he will say, he said, I will build my church upon this rock, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. So in the Old Testament time, you find it was the law and the tabernacle.

But when you come to the New Testament time, it was not the law that make the people God's people. It was grace. It was the grace of God in Christ Jesus that we are made the children of God.

It was no longer the Ten Commandments. Thou shalt and I will. In other words, the responsibility is upon the children of Israel.

If they behave, then if they keep the commandments, then God will recognize them as his people. But in the new covenant that God has made with us, it is no longer thou shalt and I will. On the contrary, you find it is not, it is everything.

I will, I will, and I will. And because I will, so there you shall be. So brothers and sisters, the new covenant is the covenant of grace.

And if you want to know what this new covenant really is, you go to Hebrews chapter 8. Because in Hebrews chapter 8, it tells us of the new covenant that God will make with us. In chapter 8 from verse 8 to verse 10. In the new covenant, you find only three articles.

And in these three articles, you find it is all. God said, I will do this. I will do that.

Article number three. He said, I will forgive your sins, cleanse you from all your unrighteousness. Article number two.

It says, you do not need to tell your brother, know the Lord. Because everybody knows me, in him or herself. In other words, it is an inward knowledge of God.

Through the Holy Spirit. Indwelt Holy Spirit. And article number one.

You will have the power to do my will. So brothers and sisters, it is by the new covenant of grace that we are made children of God. And we are made to be the church of God.

Brothers and sisters, when we talk about the church, probably some people think the church is just an outward thing. The reason is because through the so-called church history, we find the church has become an outward thing. It has become a human organization.

But according to the word of God, the church is the church of the living God. In other words, it is not an organization. It is an organism.

The difference between an organization and an organization and organism is great. Because it is life and death. If it is an organization, it is only done outwardly.

It is a dead thing. But if it is an organism, then it is a living thing. There is life within.

So brothers and sisters, the church is not an organization, a religious organization. No. The church is a living organism.

Why? Because the Bible said, I am the head and ye are the body. The very life of the head is the life of the body. And the body is the fullness, the expression of the fullness of the head.

Think of that. Our Lord Jesus is the head. All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily.

Because He and the Father are one. Whatever you can think of the Father, that is what the Lord is. When you think of the love of God, that is what Christ is.

When you think of the righteousness of God, that is what Christ is. When you think of the holiness of God, that is what Christ is. He is the fullness of the Godhead.

And yet this fullness dwells in the body, His church. So dear brothers and sisters, what a privilege we have today. We are here not as a religious organization.

We are here as a body of Christ, as a representation of the body of Christ. We dare not say we are the body. That is to say, everybody else is just an organization and we are the body.

Brothers and sisters, we dare not say that because in Richmond, we believe there are many of God's people scattered in different organizations. If we declare that we are the body of Christ in Richmond, then in a sense we excommunicate all the brothers and sisters in Richmond. We dare not do that.

We are only a few, but we are here not as a religious organization, a Christian organization. We are here as a small representation of the body of Christ in Richmond. Our emphasis is not on organization.

Our emphasis is on life. What we need is life. What we seek for is life.

It is not our life. It is the life of Christ in each and every one of us. Dear brothers and sisters, how is God going to accomplish his purpose to make us his real body? How is he going to develop the life that he has given to us? In the first place, brothers and sisters, what do you mean that you are a believer? What do you mean when you are saved? We often think that to be saved is to have our sins forgiven, that we may not go to hell.

In other words, that is all we are concerned about. We do not want to go to hell. And our Lord Jesus, as we believe in him, his blood cleanses us from all our sins, that we may not be condemned and forever.

But this is only the small part of the salvation of God. The negative thing, there is something positive and more glorious when we are saved. Because when we are saved, our dead spirit, the spirit that God created in man, in order to have fellowship with him, because God is spirit, and you cannot communicate with God with your soul or with your body.

You can only communicate with God, with your spirit. God is spirit. But unfortunately, when our forefather sinned, our spirit became dead to God.

It did not mean that we do not have spirit anymore. We still have the spirit that God has created in the first place. But that spirit was dead.

So far as God is concerned, because he had no contact with God, he had contact with evil spirit, but not with God, the Holy Spirit. But when we are saved, the Bible tells us, he that is born of the Spirit is spirit. He that is born of the Holy Spirit is the new human spirit.

And that's the beginning when we can communicate with God. But more than that, because we find Christ himself in the spirit, come and dwell in our spirit. Christ becomes the life of our spirit.

More than that, the Holy Spirit also comes into our spirit and dwells within us. And what is his commission? His commission is only one, to see that the life of Christ given to us may grow into maturity. That is the only commission of the indwelt Holy Spirit.

He dwells in each one of us to see to it that his new life of Christ in us may grow within us until we can come to maturity. But how does he do that? He does it in two ways. We call it the revelation of the Holy Spirit and the discipline of the Holy Spirit.

By the revelation of the Holy Spirit, if we are reading Ephesians, and you find this is what Paul prays, that God will give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation to the full knowledge of God. In other words, if we want to know God in a real way, it has to come by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. The indwelt Holy Spirit will reveal Christ to us.

As a matter of fact, in our whole Christian life, the revelation of the Holy Spirit that comes to us in life-changing experience, probably, it is not more than two or three in your whole life. But the revelation of the Holy Spirit in gradually changing your life actually comes all the time. He is there in us to reveal Christ to us.

So in our lifetime, whether you are reading the Bible or whether you are going through some experience, whether in your contact with people, the Holy Spirit will use the opportunity of your environment to speak to you and to lead you into a fuller knowledge of Christ. So such revelation comes all the time. If you are in your daily life in touch with Christ, now if you live far away from Christ, you won't have such revelation.

Big revelations, yes, maybe once, twice or thrice, such as Paul on the way to Damascus, that was a big revelation because it transformed his whole life. But later on, you find he has further revelations. He has revelations that in him, that is in his flesh, there is no good.

That's another big revelation. And he has revelations of the eternal purpose of God. That's another big revelation.

But so far as the discipline of the Holy Spirit is concerned, I think if we live close to the Lord, we will experience it daily. In our daily life, the indwelling Holy Spirit will speak to us. We call it the discipline of the Holy Spirit.

That is to say, He will so arrange everything in our life that we may learn Christ. Usually, He will begin with something small and something outward. You know, I sometimes heard from the young people, the young

people say, you always talk about God speak to you, but God has never spoken to me.

How is it so? No, God has spoken to you, but you haven't heard. Why? Because you are so busy hearing all the noises in the world. If you are quiet before God, you will hear Him because He is speaking in still, small voice.

Do you remember the story of Elijah? When he fled from Mount Jezebel, he fled to the Mount of Moses, and God appeared to him, not in the earthquake, not in the storm, big wind, but in a still, small voice. In our Christian life, we are always hearing the still, small voice within us because the Holy Spirit is so faithful. He usually begins with you as a Christian in small things.

Suppose you are a person who likes to talk big. You always exaggerate, and the more you exaggerate, the prouder you are. But after you are saved, you will be talking as usual and begin to exaggerate.

And when you exaggerate, you know what? You find there is within you a small, small, soft voice saying that that's enough. That's not the truth. Now, have you had such experience? I believe you did.

But you usually neglect it, and you will continue to exaggerate. Now, if you do that, what will happen? You cannot pray. In the evening, when you begin to pray, you find there was a hindrance there.

And unless you confess your sin and have your sin cleansed, your communion with God was affected. Brothers and sisters, in those small things, before you believe in the Lord, you usually go to different places as you please. But after you believe in God, you go do the same thing.

You try to go to the same place you often frequented. What happens? A still small voice within you as a Christian, do you think it's proper for you to do that? But you don't listen. You still go.

And what's the result? You'll find your fellowship with Christ was interrupted. You had to confess your sin, get rid of it by the grace of God, and then your fellowship was renewed. So usually it begins with small things.

Now I would like to tell you my own experience. Now even though I was the son of a pastor, I like movies. When I look at a newspaper, the first page is the Newman movie page.

I dare not go to see a movie on Sunday. In my whole life I believe I did it once. But Saturday I was usually in the cinema.

At that time I could go to the cinema without paying anything. My friend owed a theater. But after I was saved, I still do that.

But then inwardly I heard a voice. Are you going to support, by your money, those people? Well, I tried to argue myself and said, Lord, I promise you, I will only go to see religious movies. I dare not tell anybody because I'm not sure of myself.

So I kept myself away from the cinema for a few months. And lo and behold, a religious movie came to Shanghai. It was Noah's Ark.

And I was given a ticket to it. So I struggled. I said, it's a religious movie.

What's wrong with that? I don't need to pay anything. I have the ticket. So I went.

And brothers and sisters, that two hours in that theater, I was looking at the movie. It was a very bad movie. But I did not come out.

So on the one hand, I sat down there for the two hours, struggling with it, still looking at the movie. But when I came out, that's the end of it. God delivered me.

So in the beginning, probably, the Holy Spirit would deal with you in small things. But gradually you'll find He will get deeper and deeper. Not only your physical things, even your mental things.

The Holy Spirit is to see that you are delivered from the world and be filled and occupied with Christ himself. That's the way that the life of Christ began to grow within us, if we'd learn to cooperate with the Holy Spirit. So dear brothers and sisters, why is it some believers, within a very short period, they seem to grow spiritually, and while others, who may believe the Lord for a long time, and they still remain the same.

Very simple. It is because how much is your cooperation with the indwelling Holy Spirit. Do not think that after you believe in the Lord Jesus, He will leave you alone and allow you to develop whatever you want to be.

You cannot be. If you do, that's a serious matter. So dear brothers and sisters, as Moses was given the vision of the law and the tabernacle, so we are given the vision of grace in the church.

It is by the grace of God that the church is to be built, to be the household of God. What we need is this revelation. I think when I was, many years ago, my first trip to England, I remember I visited Brother Sparks, and one day we were talking together.

I was surprised at what he told me. He was a pastor of the Baptist church, but the Lord began to reveal to him concerning the eternal purpose of God. So he began to speak in the Baptist church about the eternal purpose of God.

But he told me, he said, after a whole year, he got only one brother. Only one brother really heard it. That was Brother Patterson.

In other words, no matter what he said, it seems as if this revelation is very difficult to really touch our heart and enable us to see it and to respond to it. So brothers and sisters, sometimes I wonder, we have been meeting here for 40 years. We have been talking about this for 40 years.

And how many brothers and sisters who have really heard it. It is not a small thing. It is the eternal purpose of God.

The biggest thing. But how much have we heard? So once again, I want to lay this matter before you, dear brothers and sisters. That is the reason for our being here.

And that is the testimony we are supposed. Dear Lord, we do confess that we are slow learners. And yet Lord, thou art the one who reveals himself.

So we just come to thee this morning. Once again, we want to put ourselves under your light. That in your light, we may see light.

Lord, we want to be those who not only heard about the eternal purpose of God. By thy grace and mercy, we want to be those who are in it. May thy spirit speak and touch each and every one of us.

And it is all for your glory. In thy precious name. Amen.

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