

The Lord in Perspective

by Stuart Briscoe

The sermon emphasizes the importance of getting God into perspective, understanding His transcendence, and recognizing His descending nature, which is essential for a deep and meaningful relationship with Him.

Duration: 39:27

Scripture: Psalm 68:5-6, Psalm 68:11, Psalm 68:19, Matthew 6:33, John 14:23, Romans 10:17, Hebrews 4:12

Topics: "Perspective"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the glory of the ascended Lord. The message of the Christian Gospel is that God sent his son to the depths and raised him up to the heights. This means that through Jesus' sacrifice, we can exchange our poverty for his riches. The sermon also highlights the different aspects of the Lord, including his transcendence over all things, his role as a father to the fatherless and a judge to the widows, and his triumphant resurrection.

Transcript

One of the things I used to enjoy doing when I was a kid was going to the fairground and going into the hall of mirrors and I didn't enjoy looking at myself very much in the hall of mirrors but I certainly enjoyed looking at everybody else very much where they had these beautiful warped mirrors and so that somebody would be standing there looked about 12 feet tall with a head the size of a tennis ball and feet the size of the back lawn and they would then pull faces and all kinds of grotesque imagery would come out then you'd move along to the next mirror and it would be just the opposite they'd have a great big head on a tiny little pin of a body and you sort of got into a fantasy world completely removed from that which was real suppose it was a matter of perspective really and perspective is so terribly important if you don't get things in perspective then the problem is this you lose balance and you lose depth and as a result you produce distortion and error.

I believe that one of the problems that many people have in their spiritual lives is simply that they have not got the Lord into perspective they have a warped fantasy picture of him or it may be that they concentrate very much on one aspect of his being so that he finishes up with a great big head but it's balanced on a pin little body or he's got great big feet but he's a little pin head and I believe that one of the most important things that we can do in our spiritual experience is to make certain that as much as in as is we get the Lord into perspective.

As I spent time in psalm 68 this week I began to discover that it was a psalm that helped me tremendously to get my God in perspective the psalm starts off by speaking of his transcendent glory transcendent that is the word that describes the fact that he is totally independent of all things upon which we are so dependent he is completely outside the system of which we are apart he is totally other he is totally different he is totally unique in his own being he transcends everything and everybody that we understand and I think some people have got a beautiful picture of a transcendent God they've got a massive head on him and there he sits in heaven absolutely transcendent absolutely untouchable almost unknowable a vague figure of an eternal universe but one with whom they have little

contact but you see this psalm not only shows us that he is the transcendent God but he also it also shows us that he is the God who in unbelievable humility from his transcendent position descended into this world of ours and I believe that we're only really going to get a picture of God in balance when we not only see him transcending all things but when we see him descending into all things and coming in the form of his son in order that he might deal with man's deepest needs and draw man back to himself but that of course isn't the end of the story and there's some people who concentrate very much on the earthly ministry of our God they believe firmly that God became man and moved around on this earth and the problem with them is that they've got a God who's got great big feet as he

plodded around here ninety and hundred years ago but he's got a tiny little head because they don't see him as a transcendent being but you see the the all-round picture the all-round knowledge of the Lord in perspective not only shows me that he is the one who is transcending all things and the one who is descending into the world but the third part of the psalm goes on to show how he is the one who is ascending into the heavens and from his position of great glory and great strength he is doing many wonderful things and that man must understand that his history his being will find its culmination in the God who is transcending all things who knew what it was to come descending into this world and who having descended ascended in order that all things might be brought into culmination

according to his plan i would suggest to you that to get the Lord in perspective we need to see him in these three aspects as if that's briefly what we're going to talk about this morning i said that's briefly what we're going to talk about i didn't say that's what we're going to talk about briefly there's a bit different but i'll get through it as quickly as i can although when i look at my notes here i don't think i'm going to get through it all right let's think first of all then of the Lord transcending all things in verse four it says this sing unto God sing praises to his name extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name YAH that of course is the abbreviation of Jehovah and we're familiar with JAH because we sometimes in our weak moments use the word hallelujah and everybody

looks at us hallelujah means simply praise to YAH praise to Jehovah sing unto him and exalt him that rideth upon the heavens by his name YAH and rejoice before him now this gives a beautiful picture don't you just love that picture of God riding the heavens can't you see him up there the imagery is magnificent he's got the clouds and and he's absolutely in control now russian astronauts wouldn't like you talking like this because they say we've been up there and we didn't see him therefore he isn't there which was abominable logic but they came down a lot of people believe them we must understand that this is poetry this is a man trying to give his idea of what God is like and he his picture of course is simply this he is a God who transcends the universe now we we find it extremely

difficult even to get a glimpse of an idea of this thing because you see the difficulty about our universe is this that everything is locked into everything earth is locked into sun if we were further away we'd freeze to

death if we were nearer we'd burn to death if we didn't have the right mixture of oxygen and the right kind of atmosphere we would be we'd just suffocate to death we are totally locked in even in our position in relation to the sun we're totally locked in as far as vegetation is concerned if it wasn't for the vegetation there wouldn't be the right kind of atmosphere but if it wasn't for the right kind of atmosphere there wouldn't be the right kind of vegetation we're locked into a system here if it wasn't for the right kind of atmosphere there'd be no way that we could

function if there wasn't the right kind of food there would be no way that we could function if we did not have bodies that die and if animals did not die there would not be the right kind of needs met to fertilize all the growth and the whole thing is a total cycle the only thing wrong with the cycle of the universe of which we're a part is the bit that man has fouled up and we call this ecological disaster but the interesting thing about it is this that this vast universe that is a beautiful system is a system of which God is totally in control and over which he completely transcends he is not dependent upon any of the things upon which everything is totally and inter and constantly dependent now this should help us to get an image of who our God really is and I believe that one of the

things that we lack so often is a vision of the sheer immensity of the transcendent God the God who transcends the universe but then secondly I want you to notice that this psalm suggests that he's a God who transcends the mind as well in in this term here his name is given and there are many things that we can learn from the name of God you remember when Moses was worrying about the job that God gave him to do to go to Pharaoh and he said I don't know your name and God gave him his name he said I am that I am which is a very unusual name and Moses was rather taken aback he was on his heels because he hadn't heard that name before I am that I am it's a magnificent name it's a beautiful name it is a picture of the transcendent God and the thing about his name is this his name gives us

a vision of him that totally transcends our minds we can't understand it we can understand things that were we can understand things that are and to a certain degree we can understand things that will be we can understand the past we can think in terms of the present we have some conception of the future but we have absolutely no conception of a being who simply says I am that I am a being who insists on not saying I was therefore I will be a being who insists on refusing to say I will be therefore I am a being who simply says I live in one continuous present I am the being of eternity I am the being of infinity I totally transcend everything that you understand in terms of limitation of time in terms of limitation of space in terms of limitation of knowledge in terms of limitation of

ability I will simply blow your mind when I tell you my name I am ya I am that I am it doesn't do a human being any harm at all to begin to see that this is the God from whom he came and to whom he goes but not only do we have the picture of him transcending the universe and transcending the mind there's another interesting little verse here that shows that he transcends the grave as well verse 20 of psalm 68 says this he that is our God is the God of salvation and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death now that that looks like a bad translation doesn't it the issues from death it isn't it's very very accurate the idea is this that God is the one who brings things out of death when we talk about an issue we talk about something that develops out of something that is exactly what

he's saying here God is a God who brings something out of death in other words there is something that is so abominably final to man that is called the grave there is something that is so frighteningly irresistible to man that is called death and yet our God is a God who totally transcends the grave he is the one who reaches down into the realms of death and brings right out of death all things that he wants to bring out of

it I believe that one of the greatest things that a human being can ever come to understand is that there is a God who transcends the universe who is totally other that there is a God who totally transcends the mind he is totally beyond anything that we in our finite natures can really grasp and he is a God who totally transcends grave and therefore is a victor of

every single thing that ever triumphed over a human being our God is the God who transcends all things now this of course is an immense picture as I was trying to think about it it seemed to me that for a human being to try and get alongside a God like that would be rather like a little boy who was drifting out to sea with his water wings on and suddenly an aircraft carrier came alongside him and there he is with this little guy in the big waves with his little water wings and this great big aircraft carrier immense thing tremendous structure unbelievable equipment inside it moving with tremendous power yet coming right alongside with such tenderness and gentleness to pluck this little boy in his water wings out of the water you see some people have got the vision of God of being a great

big aircraft carrier full of unbelievable machinery moving with immense power but they have no concept of this immense one coming right alongside them in their water wings and gently plucking them out of the water we need to get him in perspective and that's why this psalm is so beautiful because not only you see does it give us the picture of his transcending power but it also gives us a picture of his descending grace and how this transcendent God was prepared to move down into this earth now funnily enough to understand psalm 68 you've got to understand Ephesians chapter 4 that is strange isn't it you know who would ever have thought that there's any connection between psalm 68 and Ephesians chapter 4 there's a very close connection for in Ephesians chapter 4 the apostle shows us that

this psalm 68 is speaking prophetically of the ministry of our God's son Jesus Christ as he descended into the world and ascended into heaven and in Ephesians chapter 4 we have of course a very definite quotation from verse 18 and an amplification of this and what the apostle says here is this that in exactly the same way that the Lord ascended it was necessary first of all for him to descend into the world one of the biggest mysteries that a man can ever grapple with concerning his God is how the God who is transcending all things can be the God who's willing to descend into this world it's a contradiction but it's a contradiction that the theologians call the contradiction between a God who is transcendent and a God who is imminent a God who is vast like an aircraft carrier but gentle

enough to pick the baby in the water wings out of the water and here we go now to see something of this Lord who descended first of all we see in verses five and six a father of the fatherless and a judge of the widows is God in his holy habitation God sets the solitary and families he brings out those which are bound with chains but the rebellious dwell in a dry land he goes on to say this oh God when you went forth before thy people now you see the the different picture here he's just talked about him being the one who rides in the heavens who rides in the heavens but now he says but he's the one who went forth before his people in the wilderness here you have two aspects of the great big God who is the Christian God here you have incidentally the beautiful picture of the great big God

who is the the Hebrew God as well the God who rides the heavens and the God who led his people gently in the wilderness and you know one thing we've got to understand is this that God has descended into this world of ours first of all to establish his special people whatever people might say about the Jewish race I think they need to be very careful in the light of scripture God has very very definitely set his seal upon the Jewish people and he has very definitely invaded earth in order that he might initially work among these people and establish them as a people for himself the God who rides the heavens is a God who moved

into Egypt and into the wilderness to establish his people why well first of all he wanted a people whom he could love and here you have such a magnificent picture of

our God oh yes he transcends all things he blows your mind he's right greater than the universe he can blow the grave wide open and he can rescue from the depths of death and of hell but he is a God who longs for a people upon whom he can set his special love can you think of anything much more tender than verse 5 a father of the fatherless a judge of the widows who sets the solitary in families who brings out those who are bound with chains can you think of anything more tender than this picture of this transcendent God who descends among his people and longs to bring to himself a people upon whom he can shower his love listen I don't know what your image of God is don't know what your picture of God is but you must get these two aspects very very much in perspective he transcends all

things but descends to bring a people to himself upon whom he can shower his love he specializes in the fatherless he specializes in the widows he specializes in those who are bound with chains he specializes in the lonely what what a word for the church of Jesus Christ today when we begin to understand the specialty of our God we sometimes need to recheck on the specialty of those of us who claim to be his representatives those who are the orphans those who are the widows those who are in the prisons those who are lonely those who have the particular need those are the ones to whom our God descends in order that he might shower his love upon them and draw them to himself but not only did he come to establish a people whom he could love he came down to these to establish a people whom he

could lead as well verse 7 and 8 when thou wentest forth before thy people that it's marched through the wilderness the earth shook the heavens also dropped at the presence of God even Sinai was moved at the presence of God the God of Israel notice the term here the presence of God I thought he was a God who rode the heavens how on earth can you talk about a God being present on a Mount Sinai when you're talking about a God who rides the heavens you can't in your own thinking here you've got the paradox of a God whom you must get into perspective he is a God who transcends all things but descends to establish his people that he might pour his love upon them and that he might lead them in the ways of righteousness and it's a beautiful picture that we have here in verse 8 it's a picture of

that mighty invasion of earth by our transcendent God when on the Mount Sinai he developed and he delivered to man his own rules of operation holy rules just rules righteous rules impossible rules for man but the very basis of the whole of morality today what a glorious thing it is to begin to understand once again that God who transcends all things is one who moves into this world not only to love people to death but to lead them into life by demonstrating to them his concern for them and outlining to them the principles of operation upon which they can be the creatures that he intended them to be some people have decided that God is unknowable he is so transcendent they have decided that God is irrelevant he is so big that there's no way they're the baby in the water with the water

wings looking and all they can see two or three rivets they can't see the immensity of the aircraft carrier there's no way that they can comprehend and therefore they say he is absolutely unknowable but not the biblical God the biblical God transcending all things descends into the universe to lead people in the ways of righteousness and to bring them into a special relationship with himself but thirdly he not only comes to establish a people whom he could love whom he could lead but a people in whom he could live as well verse 16 why leap ye high hills this is the hill which God desires to dwell in is hey I thought he rode the clouds that's right he is the transcending God who rides the clouds and he is the descending God who chooses an insignificant little pimple of a hill in the middle

east and chooses that to be the place of his dwelling this is some beautiful irony in verses 15 and 16 round about there because you see it's almost as if the hills are having an argument among themselves and some of the big hills big old hills of bastion they're stretching themselves out big black solid things that they are and they're saying here we are the biggest hills in the neighborhood nobody can think that anything is bigger than us we've got what it takes we're the biggest hills around here and the psalmist says why leap ye high hills this is the hill that God has chosen to dwell in and he points to mount moriah the tiny little insignificant pimple and the landscape upon which God has chosen right down through history especially to reveal himself and wherein his temple he chose

to dwell amongst men you know the interesting thing about it is this nobody knows where the hill of bastion is but everybody knows where the temple area of Jerusalem is what's the difference one is the big hill and one is the little hill but the sole difference is God chose the little one in which to dwell you see this is our transcending God and he looks at all the high things that leap and all the mighty things that stick out their chest and all the erudite things that flex their intellectual muscles and he said why leap ye high hills this is where God has chosen to dwell and I believe the church of Jesus Christ better start looking to her laurels and saying you can leap and you can brag and you can shout and you can threaten and you can posture oh big world but this is where God has

chosen to dwell we must understand that this God who is transcending all things descends among a special people whom he could love whom he could lead amongst whom he could live and perhaps one of the most remarkable things that a human being can ever begin to understand is that the transcendent God will love him will lead him and will live within him you must get your God in perspective but not only did he descend to establish his people he also secondly descended to deliver his word notice verse 11 the Lord gave the word great was the company of those that published it I didn't have time to get into all the the original language on this thing but all the modern translations say that it was a company of ladies this is a feminine company so we're having interesting service this morning

we've had a male voice choir and we're having a feminine company of those who publish the good news there's some people who don't like ladies who take the word out they're usually men who don't like ladies who take the word out and I say this when the men get all the word out that needs to be got out I think the ladies can stay home and but whilst the men are not getting it out let's say this the Lord gave the word and great was the company of the women who got it out I want to say how thankful I am for many women around the wide world who have unbelievable courage and are totally intrepid in the way in which they will publish the word that God has given to us did you know something that our transcending God descended into the world and he did some believable unbelievable things he

revealed his mind to men he inspired holy prophets of old he guided their tongues and he guided their lips and he worked in their minds and he moved through their personalities and he took their skills and he gave to us would you believe it the word look at it the word of God the word of God that is neglected in many places that profess to be the dwelling place of God today the word of God that is totally abused by many people who claim to be the people of God today the word of God that is unsearchable that is truth that is the basis for all matters of faith and practice the Lord descended and gave us this word and aren't you glad that he's not only descended to establish his people but he descended to reveal to his as his mind as he delivered as his word and not only did he reveal his

mind but he gave us a means of communicating his truth you know many many people have had many many philosophies one of the things I like to do to relax is to read philosophy it puts me to sleep that's why

I find it so relaxing I've spent many many hours you know when I've been studying when I've been counseling the sheer relief of just jumping on an airplane and knowing the phone won't ring they don't know where I am I'm somewhere up there I fasten my seat belt and I open my book on philosophy and I just thoroughly enjoy relaxing and you know the thing that's so intriguing to me is this that philosophies come and philosophers go but philosophizing goes on forever and the tragedy of the whole thing is this most of these philosophies start off with a premise and finish up with it they're

like dogs chasing their tails this is a dog chasing its tail it's the most it's the most furious thing an animal can do it just gets nowhere and much of philosophy is exactly like that but fortunately fortunately if you have a premise outside human thinking if you have a premise that is based on revelation that claims to be truth and you build upon that and begin to go from there do you know what you discover you discover that you stop chasing your tail and you begin to discover an invasion and a revelation of truth that can become the very basis of human existence that's why I am 100 percent convinced that the greatest need in America today is a presentation of the Word of God which is the revelation of divine truth which is the sole basis upon which human beings can begin to be what God

created them to be I'm interested in philosophy I enjoy philosophers I find it stimulating intellectual exercise and I find it stimulating tail chasing most of it aren't you therefore glad that this transcending God took time out to descend to descend not only to establish his people but also to deliver a word that was going to be the revelation of his mind and the communication of truth upon which life could begin to develop we neglect this word at our peril we fail to publish this word at our peril this is the eternal truth but thirdly he not only came to establish his people and to deliver his word but he also came to provide his salvation this of course is inferred in psalm 68 it is not categorically stated if you want to check sometime in verse 19 just try and look into the whole

immensity of this verse blessed be the Lord who daily loads us with benefits even the God of our salvation you get the picture he came not only to establish his people and to deliver his word but he came to provide his salvation and this can be interpreted two ways it can be interpreted in the sense of he daily loads us with the blessings of his salvation or it means that his salvation daily takes the load offers now you can take your pick there because the Hebrew could mean either and both are true which do you prefer do you prefer to be a God a person who knows God who loads you up you got a daily load you say oh boy have I got a daily load well I tell you what to do if you've got a daily load begin to understand the God who will daily take your load but if you're the kind of person who

says God is so good God is so great God is so gracious it's unbelievable what he's done for me he just loads me down with blessings either way you've got a picture of his salvation it's either God taking your load or God giving you his load either way you have unbelievable salvation salvation from your load and salvation as he pours into you the unbelievable load of his blessing in your life now then how did he do it well he did it by descending if you want to check sometime on some excuse me on Philippians chapter 2 if you check on Philippians chapter 2 verses 5 through 8 you'll get the most magnificent picture of the descent of God in Jesus Christ as he came from one stage to another right down into the very jaws of death itself perhaps the greatest miracle perhaps the most remarkable

truth perhaps the greatest paradox that has ever stretched the human mind is this that the transcending God was willing to descend to the depths of death and be made sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him you see if you're going to get your God in perspective you need to have a God who rides the clouds and you need to have a God who hangs on a cross he is the

transcending God he is the descending God now let's pause here a moment would you say that you have any concept at all of a God who transcends the universe who transcends your mind and who transcends the grave if you got that kind of a God okay now have you got the other side of him would you say that you have any concept of all of this God descending into the world calling people to himself

whom he might love whom he might lead whom in whom he might live live would you say that you have any concept at all of this God moving in the hearts and minds and skills of men revealing his eternal truth and giving us a deposit of this unbelievable heritage in the word of God would you say that you have any concept at all of a God who humbled himself even in the person of his son unto death that we might be broken by the consciousness of our sin and abandoned to him out of the immensity of his grace you go to your God in perspective but then there's a third aspect of our God that we need to be constantly aware of and that is our God ascending verse 18 thou hast ascended on high thou has led captivity captive thou has received gifts for men yea for the rebellious also that the Lord God

might dwell among them now there are three basic things here that you need to notice first of all we need to notice the glory of the ascended Lord the message of the Christian gospel is quite simple it is simply this that our God sent his son down to the depths and raised him up to the heights now if you want to put it another way you know the grace of our Lord Jesus that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor that we through his poverty might be rich the glorious message of salvation with which God daily loads us with benefits is this that I can exchange my poverty for Christ's riches for the very simple reason that he exchanged his riches for my poverty or if you want to put it another way the glorious message of salvation is this that God from his height stooped from the

depth that I from my depths might be raised to the heights it's all possible because of something absolutely magnificent in my experience of the living God do you know what that is that my God not only descended into the depths but rose again in unbelievable power and I need to see in this inference here this statement here of his ascending on high I need to see here's something of his glorious victory but when God raised up Christ from the dead he did the greatest thing that this world has ever known some people have debated what was the greatest thing remember when the atom bomb was dropped on Jerusalem excuse me what am I talking about when the atom bomb was dropped on Japan the thing that worried me was that no one seemed to notice for half a minute there anybody listening when the

atom bomb was dropped on Japan the uh then president the late president Truman said this is the greatest event in the world's history now Mr.

Truman's gone so we won't comment on that except to say I don't really think many people believe him what was the greatest event in the world's history some people say the cross of Jesus Christ was the greatest event of the world's history I would understand them saying that but I want to tell you something I don't believe it I believe the greatest event of the world's history was the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead and I'll tell you why if Jesus Christ had gone to the cross and that was the greatest event in the world's history that would have been the end of it but because raised God raised up Jesus Christ from among the dead he invested the cross of Jesus Christ with meaning and he brought him out utterly and totally triumphant never never never forget that if you have

a cross without an empty tomb you have got unmitigated tragedy a resurrection presupposes a crucifixion but a crucifixion does not presuppose a resurrection the glorious thing that a person who has some inciting perspective into his God is this he has some perspective of the glorious victory of our Lord and Savior

Jesus Christ when God took him out of the jaws of death raised him up and showed him openly and took him to his own right hand this is the core this is the exciting thrilling reality of the Christian gospel we're not preaching dogma we're not talking about religion we're not even chasing our tails in philosophy we're talking about factual evidential propositional truth that can be authenticated and believed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead thou hast

ascended on high what we need to do you see is get our gut in perspective the one who transcending all things descends into the depths and ascends in glorious victory but not only do we have a picture of his glorious victory we have a picture of his glorious vitality as well there's nothing deader than a three-day-old corpse in the Middle East and there's nothing more vital than the risen Lord Jesus who bursts out of the jaws of everything and is shown openly one thing that puzzles me is this how the church of Jesus Christ which is the church of their resurrection which is the essence of vitality can be the essence of deadness so often that puzzles me and I believe that perhaps one simple reason for it is this we lack perspective of who our God is he has ascended on high in glorious

victory and in glorious vitality but thirdly in glorious vindication as well if Jesus Christ had not risen from the dead everybody would have been perfectly entitled to say that that strange deluded carpenter of Nazareth got what he asked for when he was crucified on a cross but because God raised him up from the dead no one can say it because God has placed his divine authentication on his claims and on his death and God looks the world in the face as he sits and rides on the clouds and he says world I care not what you think about my son this is what I think about him and he raised him from the dead and took him to his own right hand he ascended on high we need to get our God in perspective because we see in his ascension his glorious victory his glorious vitality and his glorious

vindication but not only the glory of the ascended Lord we see also the greatness of the ascended Lord as well read on in verse 18 thou hast ascended on high thou hast led captivity captive that that's one of my favorite phrases it just summarizes in two words the christian gospel you have led captivity captive you see it talks about the greatness of the ascended Lord who is great enough to release captives for himself he has taken captivity but always understand this the christian gospel is not that Jesus Christ releases captives the christian gospel is simply this that he transfers their captivity he takes captivity captive do you know the christian gospel is it is the greatness of the descending and ascending Lord who moves into an area of a person's captivity and sets him free

and the moment he sets him free he makes him captive to Jesus Christ the christian gospel is not that you can be a captive of Jesus Christ and go on being captive to other things the christian gospel is not that Jesus Christ will set you free from your captivity and let you do what you like the christian gospel is he takes captivity captive a christian is a person who has been set free for total bondage to Jesus Christ he ascended on high and took captivity captive and here we see something at the unbelievable greatness of the ascended Lord for as he moved down into death and as he moved down into earth and as he moved down into hell he got hold of those people captive by the thousand and one different things liberated them all and took them captive to himself and here we see his

greatness he is as he ascends into heaven with a glorious train of those whom he has released for all eternity and bound them captive to himself but not only do we see the greatness of the ascended Lord we then see the gifts of the ascended Lord as well but this ascending Lord is busy doing something it's unbelievable do you know do you know what the ascended Lord is doing or as he transcends all things having descended to the depths and ascended to the heights a demonstration of his glory and a picture of

his greatness we now understand that he is busy dispensing gifts to men verse 18 thou hast ascended on high thou has led captivity captive thou hast received gifts for men you need an amplification of this in Ephesians chapter 4 and it goes into quite a lot of detail there what are the

gifts that the risen ascended triumphant victorious Lord is giving well he's giving general gifts for the blessing of men and he's giving specific gifts for the building of his church and i don't want to labor this point but i think i was talking about this uh just a couple of well last sunday night and the other wednesday night well i think God's trying to tell us something here don't you that the ascended Lord wants us to get a vision of his victory and his vitality and his vindication and he wants us to get an idea of the fact that from this position of indomitable strength he now distributes gifts for the general blessing of mankind and gifts for the specific building up of his church let me ask you this have you received from our ascended Lord the gift of eternal life have you

received from our ascended Lord the gift of forgiveness have you received from our ascended Lord the gift of the precious holy spirit to live within you have you received from our precious ascended Lord gifts that are going to be exercised in the context of the local church because let me tell you something that's what Psalm 68 is telling you about this is getting the whole thing in perspective what a glorious thing it is as i get my Lord in perspective i not only see him as vast as he transcends the universe and blows my mind and bursts open the grave but i see him gentle and loving a father of the fatherless a friend of the widows who sets the solitary and families who comes down to establish a people for himself to reveal his eternal word to me and to draw people to himself and then i

see him ascending in mighty triumph over the grave after his cross right into the immediate presence of the living God and i know what it is to be caught up in the sheer vitality of his resurrection i know what it is to receive from his impregnable position of lordship his gifts and i appropriate to myself the gift of forgiveness and the gift of eternal life and the gift of the holy spirit and i rejoice in my God and in addition to this i then begin to discover that he has given me special gifts straight from himself that must be exercised in order that the word that he gave might be published among the great congregation you see it's a wonderful thing to get your lord in perspective and then to do a very simple thing line yourself up alongside him and say wow my lord transcending my lord

descending my lord ascending is totally totally transforming my life he's my lord and he's my God let's pray gracious lord for the immensity of your being we worship you for the eminence of your presence we give you praise for the immensity of your grace for the vastness of your love for the greatness of your sacrifice and the richness of your gifts we say hallelujah and we bow ourselves and we worship before you we worship you as tiny little creatures bobbing along in the waves of life on our water wings but we worship you for the tenderness with which that immense aircraft carrier comes alongside and enriches us with all the blessings that it can give us in our need and i just pray dear lord that every one of us will go away this morning with a deeper fuller richer perspective on the

living lord that will bring us humbly to repentance and gratefully to faith for we ask it in his name amen

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