

# In Christ in the Heavens

by Zac Poonen

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*God wants to boast about us to Satan, and we must live a blameless life to honor Him and give Him something to boast about.*

**Duration:** 1:03:36

**Scripture:** Ephesians 1:4, Ephesians 2:5

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Holiness"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of Christians living a life that honors God's name, focusing on the need for believers to prioritize holiness and blamelessness before God. It highlights the sovereignty of God, the battle against spiritual forces in the heavenly realms, and the transformation that comes from viewing life from God's perspective. The speaker encourages believers to stop fighting with human beings and instead engage in spiritual warfare against the devil, trusting in God's power and promises.

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## Transcript

For the more than 30 years, 35 years, my burden has been primarily for Christians. When I left the Navy 46 years ago to serve the Lord, I spent nine years, first nine years, traveling all across India, north to south, east to west, to see what the state of Christianity was in our country. I wanted to assess the situation before I sought the Lord as to what he wanted me to do.

You know, in our country, we have only a little over 1% of the population is Protestant Christian. So a lot of people are burdened that, you know, how sad it is that after so many years with a lot of evangelism and there's no counting the number of Christian organizations that are supposed to be doing evangelism, the percentage of Christians is pretty much the same in the last 50, 60 years. So when I looked around and I saw the quality of the Christians, I said, well, thank God there's only 1% because it's such a pathetically low standard that the name of the Lord was being dishonored by the way people lived.

That's not just true in India, it's true everywhere. The name of Jesus is dishonored not by non-Christians, but by Christians and the way they live. And I saw that Jesus taught us to pray, Our Father God in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

That's supposed to be the number one request in the heart and prayer should come from the heart of any wholehearted disciple of Jesus. All the time, my primary burden in prayer must be, hallowed be thy name. Let your name be honored, respected and hallowed.

And everything else really should be secondary. And if that is really the first request in your heart, you'd be concerned to know whether the name of Jesus is being honored by the way Christians live in your own town or locality. And if it isn't, you'll have a burden that it should be hallowed.

And that's how I felt. I felt my primary burden was for India and still is. And I felt that the name of Jesus should be hallowed.

So I said, well, I can't do a great deal for the whole country. We got a population of 1,200 million people. And that grows at the rate of one child every second.

So before this meeting is over, there'd be 7,200 more children in India. So it's a massive need. And I don't know when we'll ever be able to reach everybody with the gospel.

But I said, Lord, there's something else I can do. Maybe in a very, very small way, in one little corner, wherever I live. I can try to be a pure testimony for you, myself and the way I live.

And when I say pure testimony, I don't mean just in the way that other people see me, though that's very important. Because a lot of people have a good testimony on the outside. There are a lot of Hindus, non-Christians in India who are very upright people on the outside, very honest, decent.

They don't divorce at all their wives. So what can Christians who divorce their wives in Western countries teach the Hindus in our country? I'll tell you, nothing. So it's, it was not just an external testimony that I was thinking of.

But I wonder whether we realize there's a testimony in the heavenlies. The very first book of the Bible that was written was the book of Joel, written at least 500 years before Genesis was written by Moses. It's the first book of the Bible.

It's the only book out of the 66 books which has no connection with Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. And in the very first book that God decided to write for mankind, the first thing he speaks about is that in the heavenlies, God and Satan are discussing about people on earth. And God wants somebody he can boast about on the earth.

Not ten thousand people. He doesn't say, Satan, look at those ten thousand people over there meeting in that group there. No, he's talking about one man.

In that time, God could boast about only one man to Satan. And Satan tried to tear down that one man's testimony. He didn't succeed.

And that's the subject of the first book of the Bible. And that taught me something. That was what God decided to be the subject of the first book of the Bible.

That must be very important for us. What? The testimony of one man. In the midst of 1,200 million people in India, the testimony of one man is important to him up in the heavenlies.

I don't know how many millions there were on earth in Job's time, but it was one man that mattered. And Satan was disturbed that in the midst of all the people who served him on earth, there was one man who wouldn't serve him. One man who was honoring God.

And that disturbed Satan even. In the midst of corrupt, hypocritical Christians who fight with each other at home, who watch pornography on the internet, whom the devil's happy with, who call themselves believers and sing songs and all that, but whose private lives are so corrupt or unrighteous with money matters, who love money, who are gloomy, depressed, and discouraged. If the devil finds one Christian who's going to live according to New Testament standards, that disturbs him.

I don't know whether you realize that. It's so important for God to have here and there one or two really upright people. One person, one family.

And you know how God speaks to Satan in that place. He says to Satan in Job chapter 1, verse 8, have you considered my servant Job? And by the way, Satan told the Lord that he'd been, verse 7, roaming about on the earth, walking around on it. He's doing that even today.

He goes around the earth. Satan is not in hell, by the way. People who haven't read the Bible think that Satan is in hell.

Do you know that Satan has never been in hell? And do you know that Satan will never go to hell? And these are surprising things. The Bible knows better about heaven and hell and the Holy Spirit tells us, this may surprise you, but that is the truth. Satan's never been in hell and he'll never go to hell.

The Bible says that he was cast down from the third heaven, which is the immediate dwelling place of God. And he was cast down to what I believe is the second heaven. The first heaven is this universe that we see.

And that's where he is. In Ephesians, that area is called the heavenlies. And he was cast down from there.

And one day in the future, when the antichrist reigns on earth, Revelation 12 says he'd be cast down from the heavenlies to earth. And then he'd be on earth for three and a half years. And then when Jesus establishes his kingdom for a thousand years on this earth, he will bind Satan in a bottomless pit.

It's still not hell. In a bottomless pit for a thousand years. And then at the end of that, he'll be released.

And then it says in Revelation 20, he'll be cast into that final lake of fire, into which hell will also be cast. So that's what I, so Satan's journey has been the third heaven, to the second heaven, to earth, to the bottomless pit, to the lake of fire. And that's what I meant by saying he's not in hell and he's never will be in hell.

But he has got freedom to roam around the earth. He knows the condition of all people and especially of anybody like Job on the earth today. And you know, Job, it says, was a man who was, it's very first verse, blameless, upright, fearing God, turning away from evil.

When you realize that this is the very first sentence of inspired scripture, the very first sentence of inspired scripture speaks about a man who was blameless, upright, feared God and turned away from evil. When I read that and see that that's the first sentence of inspired scripture, I know what God wants for me. I know what he's looking for on earth.

Not huge crowds of people who claim to say, I've accepted Jesus as my savior. There are millions like that who are not blameless in their life, who are not upright, who do not fear God, who do not turn away their eyes or their tongue from evil. They dishonor the Lord's name and I know the Lord's name is dishonored

by such people and he's terribly disappointed because he cannot point out such people to Satan.

He cannot say, Satan, have you considered so-and-so? And Satan says, I know all about that person. I know all about his private life. I know all about how he lives at home.

Look at his children, how wayward they are. I know all about how he deals with money in his office. I know how he deals with other people in his place of work.

I know how he treats his wife, how she treats her husband. And you know, God is a righteous God. He's not going to defend people who are dishonoring his name.

But here and there, God is so thrilled and delighted when he can point out one person, one here, one there, maybe only one in a city sometimes. I suppose in some countries, maybe only one in the whole country. And he can turn to the devil and said, what about that person? I know there are a lot of hypocrites among my people who claim themselves, claim to be my children.

But what about that person? Have you, and Satan knows all about it. He knows all about how we do our work, how we run our business, how we live at home, how we handle our money, how we speak, what we watch on the computer. He knows everything about every single person.

He's got millions of demons keeping a check on every single person who calls himself a believer. And he's got an answer for anyone, you know, because it says in Revelation 12, 10, he's called the accuser of the brethren. In Revelation 12, he's called the deceiver of the whole world, but the accuser specifically of the brethren.

He doesn't accuse the whole world because more than 95% of them are in his, in his hands. He doesn't worry about them, but he's concerned about those who claim to be born again. Those are the ones he's watching all the time.

A lot of those who claim to be born again are not really born again. He doesn't worry about them. In fact, he's happy about them because they're living in a self-deception that they're children of God when they're not.

I've met numerous people on earth who imagine that they're born again just because sometime in the ancient past they said these magic words, Lord Jesus come into my heart, that life, their lives are not any different from the lives of any other unbeliever in the world. So God, Satan doesn't bother about such people. In fact, he's very happy about such people because these people are not converted, but they think they are.

But he's concerned about the wholehearted disciples of Jesus who love Jesus supremely and who fear God, who are blameless and upright in their life, who don't live at the low standard that other Christians live, and who are turning away from evil all the time. That really bothers him. And those are the ones he's seeking to accuse, to find some little fault in them, so that he can point out to God and he's the accuser of the brethren.

And it says in Revelation 12, 10, that he accuses them day and night. This is the reality of what's going on in the heavenlies. I wonder whether any of you even think about it.

We can be so occupied with what's going on on earth and how we need to evangelize people and bring people to Christ, that we don't realize that our testimony before Satan is important for God. That's the message in Job chapter 1, that God wants to boast about us to the devil. And he's not a liar.

He cannot cover up our sins and say, no, no, that's okay. He wants to speak the truth. And so, it's not just that he was upright.

There was something else about Job. He had seven sons and verse two and three daughters. And he was a very good father.

That's the other thing about him. It was not just that his own personal life was so good. But you know, whenever his sons had a feast, at the end of the feast, it says in verse five, that when the days of feasting were over, Job would call his, you know, it says here, each was living in their own house.

Verse four, which means they were all grown up. I don't know, Job may have been 60, 70 or 80, I don't know, 100 years old. I don't know how old he was.

But his children were all grown up. All 10 of them were living in their own homes. And whenever somebody's birthday came along, they would all feast together for a number of days, have a feast for the celebration of the birthday.

And then when it was all over, Job would call all these married children who were living in their own homes, he would send for them and consecrate them. Now, it's very rare these days to see even Christian fathers calling their married children and say, come here, my brothers, my boys and girls, I want to pray for you. I mean, it's difficult enough for a lot of parents to get their teenage children together to pray for them.

Imagine calling married children who are living in some other home saying, come, I want to pray for you guys. There's so little respect. Job was a man who was respected by his married children.

And that means he brought them up well, unlike most Christian parents today. And he says he would get up early in the morning and get his sons to get up early in the morning. A lot of sons would rebel if their fathers called them to get up early in the morning for a time of prayer.

And he would offer burnt offerings for them, verse 5, for each one of them. And the reason was, he says, perhaps, I'm not sure. Look at his sensitivity to sin.

Perhaps during these days of fasting, my sons may have sinned and they may have committed sin in their hearts. Boy, how many fathers are concerned that their sons may have sinned in their hearts. This man was an amazing man.

No wonder God boasted about him. I wonder if we're challenged by that. I find a lot of people read scriptures like this and they don't even notice these things.

And I believe they don't notice these things because they're not serious Christians. One of the great tragedies I have seen through the years is that so many millions of people say, the Bible is the word of God. But they watch television more than they read the Bible.

What does that prove? They think television is the word of God, not this. They say this. With their mouth they say that, you know, the Lord said, with your mouth you draw nearer to me, but your heart goes out to something else.

That's what he told the Pharisees. And God knows whether we are mean what he's saying. It says here, he did this continually.

That's why the devil was so much after him. This guy had not only lived an upright life, but he brought up his family well. He brought up his children in a godly way.

And these, you know, I read this many, many years ago when my children were all small. And a desire came in my heart even then. I said, Lord, I hope you can boast about me to the devil.

I'm not concerned what people think about me because most human beings know only 1% of my life. How much do you guys know about my life? I'll tell you 1% at the most. You don't know anything about my private life.

You don't know anything about my thoughts. I don't know anything about your thoughts and your private life either. We assess each other knowing 1%.

That's the stupidity of judging other people. That's why the Bible says don't judge people. Because you know only 1% of their life.

Have you ever heard of a teacher who marks an examination paper after just seeing whether the first out of 100 questions was right? What about all the other 99 questions? You don't want to mark them? That's why it says don't judge. The most foolish people on earth are those who judge others when they know only 1% of their life. We'd be terribly shocked if a teacher marked only 1% of the paper and gave marks.

But we're doing it all the time. Man is basically a hypocrite. We judge others for what we are doing all the time ourselves.

And we don't even realize it. So, when I say this, I say, Lord, I want to know what Satan thinks about my life. The most important person's opinion is God's.

What does God think about my life? That is number 1 because he sees areas of my life which even the devil cannot see, which is my thoughts. The devil can't read my thoughts. But then, the second person whose opinion is very important to me is the devil's.

Not my fellow believers' opinion. Because they don't know much of my life. The devil sees so many areas of my life which other people don't know.

He knows exactly how I handle money. He knows exactly how I speak to my wife 365 days of the year. He knows whether I'm gloomy and depressed, whether I rejoice in the Lord always or I don't.

He knows whether I obey the command which says, be anxious for nothing. He knows whether I obey the command that I must not lust with my eyes. He knows whether I love my enemies, how I treat them.

So, next to God, what Satan thinks about me is very, very important to me. I hope it's important to you. Because that determines whether God can boast about me to save me.

Have you considered my servant, Zach, who lives in Bangalore? Put your name there. And the devil says, I know all about you. And I said, what is the area of my life which the devil can accuse me to God about? To dishonor God's name? I wonder whether you realize this.

I thought about this verse in 2 Samuel chapter 12. In 2 Samuel chapter 12, when David had sinned against Bathsheba and he didn't confess it for at least 9 months, almost till the baby was born. And then God sends a prophet to him.

Nathan, the prophet, comes to point out to David that you are a guilty man. And one of the things Nathan tells David is this, 2 Samuel chapter 12 verse 14. By your action, you have given an occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme his name.

And the way, even though Nathan didn't mean it like that, I apply it to myself, that something I do in private which nobody knows about, maybe even my wife doesn't know about what I am doing. You know that a lot of things husbands do with their wives, they don't have a clue what they are doing. A lot of secrets, sinful things.

But the devil sees it. And I said, Lord, is there anything in my life which is causing the enemies of the Lord, that is Satan, to blaspheme the Lord's name and say in the heavenlies, God, look at that guy. He's a preacher.

He claims to be a holy man, unlike other nominal Christians. He claims to be born again. He claims to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Look at him. Look at what he's doing. Or look at the way he's speaking to his wife.

I said, Lord, is there anything in my life which is causing the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme you because of me? I don't want it. I don't want it. I want to do everything in my power to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

So that I give no occasion to Satan to blaspheme God because of me. It's so important for God to have at least one man whom he can boast about. He'd like to have one man in every town.

We think of big mega churches. Oh boy, what a lot of glory to God must be coming with that huge mega church, singing and praising God. You don't know much about the heavenlies.

On an earthly realm, you get all excited with that. When God gives you a vision of the heavenlies, you see things in an altogether different perspective. I was born again 54 years ago, when I was 19 years old.

But it's only when God baptized me in the Holy Spirit and fire that I was transported into another realm, into the heavenlies. And I began to see things from God's perspective. You can't do that yourself.

You can educate yourself and study the Bible, but it's only the baptism in the Holy Spirit that will lift you up and show you things the way God sees things. I'll tell you that, for example. I never knew how to cast out a demon.

I was baptized in the Holy Spirit. I was scared to meet demon-possessed people. I wouldn't know what to do.

I'd be like that preacher who had a demon-possessed person walk into his meeting and he said, I don't know how to cast out a demon, but if I cast you out of the hall, the demon will go, so get him thrown out of the hall. But Jesus never did that. He cast out the demon.

A lot of Christians are living in an earthly plane and they're happy with it. It's those who hunger and thirst for God's best who experience a lifting up in their spirits to see things in the heavenlies. In Colossians chapter 1, there's a verse, Colossians 1 verse 9 reads like this, For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

The language of scripture is sometimes so heavy that sometimes I like to read these scriptures in a paraphrase by people who know Greek better than me. I don't know Greek at all. But I like to read these paraphrases and I was reading this verse, that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

It's too complicated for me to understand such an expression. Filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. So, I was reading this in a paraphrase and the paraphrase read like this, We are praying that you will see things as it were from God's viewpoint.

Wow! That really opened up that verse to me. So, the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding meant that I got to see everything from God's viewpoint. That made sense to me.

Hey, I'm supposed to not see things from an earthly viewpoint. I'm supposed to see everything from God's viewpoint. And if I allow the Holy Spirit to make me see things from God's viewpoint, I may find victory over sin much easier.

Victory over sin is such a battle when I'm seeing everything from this low level of earthly standpoint. So many things that look so attractive to me and pull me so much, won't pull me so much if I were to see them from God's viewpoint. For example, massive buildings look pretty small even when you go up in an airplane.

There's not much difference between the little hut and the palace when you're up in an airplane. And there's not much difference between the BMW and the ordinary cheap whatever car you have when you're up in the heavenlies. They mean a lot on earth when you look at it.

Wow, I wish I'd like to have a car like that. When you're up in the plane, they all look the same. And imagine if you get up in the heavenlies, there are little specks over there.

Tremendous differences happen in our life. The pool of temptation becomes much less. A lot of those pretty women who tempt you don't look so pretty when you're up in the heavenlies.

When you look at them from God's viewpoint, you see them as people for whom Jesus died, who need to be saved. Not pretty women to be lusty after. Everything changes.

Temptation, to overcome temptation becomes so much easier if the Holy Spirit can make you see everything and where it becomes a way of life, not just the occasional view, but where it becomes a way of life with you where everything you see from God's viewpoint, you don't begin to fight for earthly things so much. You don't hold grudges for somebody who cheated you or robbed you. A lot of things change when you see things from God's viewpoint.

And that's what I'm saying in the book of Job. Job himself did not know what's written in the book of Job. Job himself did not know what was going on over there.

We know it. The Bible speaks about the heavenlies in the book of Ephesians. There's a lot written about the heavenlies in Ephesians.

I want you to turn there for a moment. In Ephesians, I would say the main phrase in Paul's letter to the Ephesians is the phrase, In Christ. And that's what makes the difference.

The Holy Spirit brings me into Christ. Now, most of us as Christians think more of Christ in us. That's in Colossians.

Colossians theme is Christ in you, the hope of glory. But in Ephesians, the theme is you in Christ. And if you were to ask yourself, which do you think of more? Christ in you or you in Christ? I think the answer would be you think more of Christ in you.

I've asked Jesus to come into my heart. He's living in me. You know, He lives, He lives.

You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart. Well, that's true. But when you begin to think of what's emphasized in Ephesians that I am in Christ, there are certain other truths that open up to us in an amazing way.

For example, right in the very first verse, it says in the last part of the verse first, those who are faithful in Christ Jesus. Or in chapter one verse three, God has blessed us with every blessing of the Holy Spirit in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. So, you know, to understand being in the heavenly, seeing things from God's viewpoint, I need to see how God placed me in Christ.

It says in verse four that long before the foundation of the world, that means before Genesis 1 verse 1. Ephesians 1 verse 4 comes before Genesis 1 verse 1. Genesis 1 verse 1 is the foundation of the world being laid. But before that, when there was only Father, Son and Holy Spirit like John 1 verse 1, in the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God and the Word was God.

That's speaking about the deity of Christ. But there's something else was in the beginning too. That's Ephesians 1 verse 4. Let's make it personal.

Put your name there. He chose me, again that phrase, in Christ. It's not about Christ in me, it's me in Christ.

And when did He choose me? Before Genesis 1 verse 1. And He chose me not to go to heaven when I die. Most Christians think, I'm going to go to heaven when I die. But that's not what He chose me for.

He did not choose me to be a preacher. He did not choose me to go around doing evangelism. He did not choose me to plant churches.

He did not choose me to go to heaven. He chose me to be holy and blameless. It's written there.

And holy and blameless, not before men, but before Him. Ah, now I know why God chose me. You know, a lot of Christians don't know why God chose them.

They think God chose them to be a preacher or an evangelist or a witness or this and the other. No, sir. God chose you to be holy and blameless before Him.

And if you really surrender your life to Christ, if you don't want to know when He chose you, He chose you before Genesis 1 verse 1. That means when? Was it 100 years before Genesis 1 verse 1? When do you think He chose you? Was it 100 years before Genesis 1 verse 1? Or was it 3,000 years before Genesis 1 verse 1? Can you think? God's given us a mind to think. I like to tell people, sometimes I like to tell people something that will shock them, to wake them up to reality. I say in the beginning, way back in the beginning, there was the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and me in God's mind.

Do you believe that? I believe that. Do you think God discovered me after having existed for about 10,000 years, He suddenly realized, hey, there's somebody going to be like Zac Mullen who's going to come onto the earth. When did He discover that? Is there something God discovers somewhere later on in time which He did not know in the beginning? That's not the God of the Bible.

The God of the Bible knew the end from the beginning it says. So when did He know you and your name? I mean you may have accepted Christ in the 20th century. When did God know about it? God knew about it right in the beginning.

That blows away our mind to think about it. But I think what it brought into my mind, when I realized that I existed in God's mind from the beginning, it brought such tremendous security into my life. It really made me secure.

Most Christians that I've met are insecure. It's insecure Christians who are jealous of others, who are competing with others, who are trying to show that I can preach better than others or sing better than others or do something better than others. It's insecure Christians who are always boasting about their accomplishments.

It's insecure Christians who are always trying to show, you know, to try and get some credit for something they've done. People who are secure in God don't want any of these things. It's insecure Christians who fight with others.

It's insecure Christians who are always running after money thinking they'll never have enough to live on this earth. Do you know the number of problems, the more I've thought about it through the years, I once preached a sermon on this, insecurity is the cause of almost all sins. Insecure in God.

And that security comes when I know that He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that I might be holy and blameless before Him. And if God chose me to be holy and blameless before Him, I want to do everything in my power to be holy and blameless before Him. And I believe that anything I do for God will come out of being holy and blameless before Him.

Otherwise it's got no value. I've often thought that I don't have to produce the rivers of water. That flows from the throne of God.

I've got to just make sure that the channel through me is pure. That's all. I don't have to produce anything.

One of the great truths that I learned from the miracles of Jesus was that I never had to produce anything in my ministry. You remember the feeding of the 5,000? Did the disciples produce the bread or distribute the bread? What do you think? And I've said that to the Lord. I said, Lord, I'm not in the production business.

I don't produce bread, I don't produce sermons. Other preachers may do that, but not me. I'm in the distribution business.

I pass on what you give me. Whatever you give me, I'll pass on. And I believe that'll be the best wine at the feast and it'll be the best bread they've ever eaten.

If I say, Lord, I cannot produce it, but if you give it to me, I'll distribute it. And so, God's called us to keep the channel pure. The waters will come from Him.

The bread will come from Him. I've only got to pass it on. But in order to pass it on, I have to be in constant touch with Him.

It's much easier to be out of touch with Him and sit down on a Saturday and read a lot of books and listen to a lot of tapes and produce a sermon. There won't be any anointing on it. He chose me before the foundation of the world and you, if you will be gripped by it, to be holy and blameless before Him.

And so, then we understand what it means to be crucified with Christ and to be raised with Christ and to be seated in the heavenlies with Christ. Many people don't understand this. What does it mean that my old man was crucified with Him? I don't feel dead.

They know, I mean, they seem to understand that their sins are all placed on Christ. But they say, how did I get crucified with Christ? I'm here, how did I get crucified with Christ? Well, how many of your sins were placed on Christ on the cross 2000 years ago long before you committed a single sin? All those sins which were in the future 2000 years ago were placed on Christ. That means God already knew all the sins you were going to commit.

And even the ones you passed, present, future and your whole life were all placed on Christ 2000 years ago because God knows the end from the beginning. He knows every single sin I'm ever going to commit and He's placed it all on Christ. The sins of the whole world, by the way.

It says in 1 John 2, Christ is the propitiation or Christ is the sacrifice. 1 John chapter 2 and verse 2. Propitiation means the sacrifice that satisfied the heart of God. Justice was satisfying.

That's propitiation. The justice of God is satisfying. Propitiation for our sins and, this is what all Calvinists must read very carefully, not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world.

Christ died for the sins of the whole world. But the sins of the whole world are not forgiven unless they accept it. Your sins and my sins are not forgiven unless they accept it.

If I confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us. That's three verses earlier. So, if I don't confess it, then of course, my sins are not forgiven even though He paid for it.

So, but people understand that. But what does it mean to be crucified with Christ? Now, I understood it when I realized that God had placed me in Christ, not when I accepted Christ 54 years ago, but before the foundation of the world, before I was even born. Before Genesis 1.1. God who knew the end from the beginning knew me by name.

I'm applying it to myself, but if you're born again, that applies to you as well. So, here's what God did. Let me use an illustration.

If that's me and this is Christ, God placed me in Christ. When? Before Genesis 1.1. I was there in God's mind. And what is in God's mind is reality.

And when Christ died on the cross, I was there in Christ. I died with Him. When He was buried, I was there, buried with Him.

When He was raised from the dead, I was still there, raised from the dead, which is what I testified to in baptism. And when He ascended up to heaven, I ascended with Him in the heavenlies. That is how I can view things from God's viewpoint.

And that's what Ephesians tells us. It says in Ephesians 2 and verse 5. Now, a lot of people know Ephesians 2.8. By grace you are saved through faith, not of yourself. It is the gift of God, verse 9, not as a result of works that anyone should boast.

A lot of Christians know that verse. But a lot of Christians don't seem to read a whole paragraph. They seem to have favourite verses and that's why they miss out on such a lot.

I want to read the whole paragraph before you get to that verse. That is, whenever you read a verse like Ephesians 2.8 which begins with the word, because. You don't read a sentence that begins with because without reading why it is so.

For, the word for means because. Ephesians 2.8 begins with the word for or because. Then you go back and see what it says in chapter 2 verse 5. When we were dead in our sins, transgressions, He made us alive together with Christ.

And again it says there, by grace you have been saved. You see, alive together with Christ by grace. Not because we deserve it.

Because I was in Christ, He made, raised me up and what did He do? And raised us up with Him and verse 6, seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ. Again it's the word in Christ. So, in Christ I ascended with Him in the heavenlies.

Do you know that God has put every true disciple of Jesus in Christ in the heavenly places? And when I realize my position, I'm not imagining. What God says about me is more right than what I feel. What I feel about myself may not be right.

A lot of people in the world say, I don't feel I'm a sinner. Well, it doesn't make a difference what you feel. God says you are a sinner, so you are a sinner.

Haven't you met lots of people who feel that I'm not such a bad sinner? Well, it doesn't make a difference brother. God says you are, that's it. And in the same way, when God says I've seated you in the heavenly places in Christ, it doesn't make a difference whether I feel it or not.

I just accept what God says and that becomes reality. When I take what God says, it becomes reality. To confess means to say what God says.

It's always the truth. What I feel could be wrong. What I think I see could be wrong.

Have you heard of the two little children standing in the garden and the ten-year-old says to the five-year-old, I saw the sun move. The morning it was over there in the east, now it's here in the west. And

the little five-year-old boy says, no.

Remember what daddy told us? That the sun does not move. The earth is rotating under our feet and we think the sun is moving. And the older boy, smart ten-year-old says, I believe what I see.

I saw the sun move and I didn't feel the earth move under my feet at all. And the five-year-old says, fine. I believe daddy.

That's what I say too. I believe daddy. I believe my heavenly father.

Not what I feel. Not what I think I see. You know right now the earth's been rotating under our feet at one thousand miles an hour.

Doesn't feel like it, right? Whether you know it or not, it's true. Right now we're sitting on an earth that's rotating under our feet at one thousand miles an hour. Faster than any airplane.

God has allowed these things to teach us. Don't trust what you see. Don't trust what you feel.

You can be fooled. What God says is true. I believe that God has raised me up in Christ.

He's brought such security into my life. I'll tell you it's changed my life. When I realized that I was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that God loved me with such an intense love, and He chose me to be holy means He's determined to make me holy.

And if God's determined to make me holy, who in the world can stop it? So many people say, oh I'm struggling brother. I'm struggling to fight this sin. I'm struggling to battle some sin.

Just knock me down. You know what you guys need to know. You guys need to know what God chose you for.

Start with that. Not with your battles against sin. If the Israelites had only believed, God chose us to enter the land of Canaan and to defeat the giants, they would have killed those giants.

They thought, oh we have to struggle against them. We have to fight against them. They're those so big for us we feel like grasshoppers.

That's exactly how a lot of Christians are. They don't know what God's purpose for them is. Do you think there's anyone on earth who can hinder God's purpose for you? What sort of God do you have? I sometimes feel that a lot of believers have got a huge mighty devil and a teeny weeny Jesus who is somehow trying to help them.

It's not like that to me. It was like that once upon a time when I was scared of the devil, but no longer. It's a teeny weeny devil now and a mighty Jesus who lives in my heart.

That's how it should be for you too. Greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world. We won't be scared of the devil anymore.

We won't feel that there's any sin that can overpower us if we have faith in God. I want to say to all of you, the sin that you are defeated by today, you can overcome. God is on your side against the devil.

He'll always be on your side, even when you've messed up your life, He's on your side to help you get out of that mess and to save you from it. There's a great expression of the sovereignty of God in the Old Testament. And as I've studied the Bible, I find that is the most total and complete expression of the sovereignty of God that I've found anywhere in the Bible.

I believe in the total sovereignty of God, even though I'm not a Calvinist. In Daniel chapter 4, and by the way, this was spoken by Nebuchadnezzar, who was a heathen king and God taught him a lesson by humbling him for seven years, making him like an animal when he was very proud of what he had done. And when God restored him to his senses, he made this statement.

He said concerning God, verse 34 and 35. Let me tell you, this is the most complete statement of the sovereignty of God that I've seen anywhere expressed by any human being, anywhere in the Bible. He says, I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever for His dominion.

Listen to this, it's fantastic. His dominion is an everlasting dominion. His kingdom endures from one generation to another generation to another generation endlessly.

And listen to this, all the inhabitants of the earth are as zero before Him. That man whom you're scared of, that other person who's troubling you, your boss, your landlord, everybody else on earth, all the inhabitants of the earth are zero. Nothing means zero.

And this father of ours, Nebuchadnezzar didn't know his father, today he's our dad, he does exactly according to his will in the heavenlies. And he does exactly according to his will among all the inhabitants of the earth. And no one can stop his hand or push away his hand or say to him, what are you doing? This is my dad in heaven and if you believe it, it's your dad too.

Well, why is it Christians live such timid, fearful lives? Yeah, it's a wonderful thing to see ourselves in the heavenlies and there, seated in the heavenlies. And it says in Ephesians 6, we battle in the heavenlies. We fight Satan in the heavenlies.

Those who are on earth, on the earth level, fight with human beings. Israel was an earthly people, they were not a heavenly people. And so, their fight was always with Amorites and Hittites and Canaanites and many other ites.

And people who are under the old covenant, even today, who call themselves Christians, but who are living at the earthly level, are also fighting with all these human enemies, their neighbours or their wives or their mother-in-law or father-in-law or some brother or some sister. They are always fighting with human beings. That's the clearest proof they are earth dwellers.

But when you get to the heavenlies, it says in Ephesians 6 and verse 12, we do not fight with flesh and blood. I remember many years ago, the Lord said to me, if you want to fight the devil, you got to make one decision in your life that you'll never again fight with a human being about anything. I said, yes, Lord.

I will never fight with a human being from now on about anything. If they come to fight with me, I refuse to fight. Because I know that person who is fighting with me is under the control of the devil.

Why should I fight with him? I want to fight with the devil who is behind that person. Have you read that? I don't have time to show it to you. You read it sometime in 1 Samuel chapter 17 about David telling King Saul before he went to fight Goliath.

Saul says, how in the world can you fight Goliath? And David says, I will give you the testimony of what God did through me. I used to look after my father's sheep and one day a lion came and grabbed a lamb and walked off with the lamb in his mouth. And David said, you know what I did? I went after the lion and I didn't give a lecture to the lamb.

I killed the lion. Wasn't that sensible? Instead of giving a lecture to the lamb and saying, why in the world did you go away from the flock? No. He killed the lion and took the lamb out of his mouth.

The people who come to fight with you are in the mouth of Satan. That's why they come to fight with you. Fight with the devil.

Bind the devil who is behind that person. We wrestle not with flesh and blood. And I'll tell you, the battle will be over much quicker.

I've seen people who fight with human beings for years, 10, 15, 20 years. It never ends. Fight with the devil.

I decided years ago that I would never fight with flesh and blood even concerning doctrinal matters. I stand for the whole truth of the Bible from cover to cover. Every single thing.

Especially new covenant truths in the New Testament. And sometimes people who don't like the things I stand for, when I show them in scripture, they get a bit upset because it exposes their nakedness. And then they come to argue with me.

And when they find they don't know the scriptures well enough and I point out one scripture after another to them and they find they are losing the argument, they become angry. Because they are losing the argument. You know what I do? I change the subject.

I say, okay, let's talk about cricket. I say, you and I are both Indians. We want the Indian cricket team to win, right? You and I are agreed on that.

Let's talk about that. What about this doctrine? You know, I finished. Ah, he says, it's because you are losing the argument.

You can think whatever you like. But I refuse to fight with flesh and blood. It's actually happened.

I am not, because I don't want to win an argument and lose a friend. It's not worth it. I want to keep that guy's friendship.

Because if he really follows the Lord, I know ten years later he will agree with me when he knows the truth. So, I don't mind his arguing with me now. I want to retain my friendship.

So, I refuse to fight with flesh and blood. If a person wants to know the truth, I will explain it to him. I don't mind spending any amount of time.

But he is coming to argue and fight, not even on doctrinal matters. Because I know doctrine is understood by revelation of the Holy Spirit, not by argument. And if I win an argument, it only proves that I am cleverer than him.

Not that I know the truth. That I am a better lawyer. That's not what I am trying to prove.

So, we wrestle not with flesh and blood. I mean, take my advice. You can overcome the devil in your life if you stop fighting with human beings.

Ephesians 6.12. We do not fight with flesh and blood, but with these evil forces in the heavenlies. And I will tell you something. Over a period of time, if you really are faithful in this area, it will become true in your life, or I believe it will become true in my life, that the devil will be scared of you.

I know the Lord has spoken to my heart that as you were scared of Satan once, Satan is now scared of you. It's in scripture. 1 John 4.17. I don't know how many of you believe it.

I believe a lot of things in scripture we don't experience because we don't believe it. According to your faith, be it unto you is a law. According to your faith, be it unto you, that means if God offers you something and you don't believe it, you don't get it.

You know, Christ died for the sins of the world, but 95% of people don't believe it, they don't get it. Christ offers victory to all believers, but most people don't believe it. So, believers remain defeated in sin.

And 1 John 4. What do we read there in verse 17? The last part, as Christ is, so also are we, or let's say, so also am I in this world. Do you believe that? As Jesus Christ is, so also am I in this world. Was the devil scared of Jesus or was Jesus scared of the devil? Who do you think? It's pretty clear.

Satan was scared of Jesus. Wherever Jesus went, the demons would all get excited, he's coming, he's coming, he's coming here, be careful. Who's coming? Jesus is coming.

And as Jesus is, so am I in this world. According to your faith, be it unto you. You say, no, no, no, it can't be.

Well, it won't be in your case because you don't believe. But here somebody else says, sure, I believe that because it's in God's word. It will be true in your case, brother.

As Jesus is, so will you walk around this world with the devil scared of you. And the demons will go around saying, hey, he's coming here, he's coming here. Who? Disgusting disciple of Jesus.

What a way to live. What's the condition? Stop fighting with your wife. Stop fighting with your husband.

Stop fighting with your neighbor. Stop fighting with your fellow believers. Stop fighting with people in your office.

Stop getting upset with people who disobey the rules, traffic rules on the road. Let there be no road rage. Fight the devil.

Decide you'll never fight with flesh and blood. It will transform your life. Get into the heavenlies.

This is not theory. I feel sorry for the years I wasted as an earth dweller. Believe God.

Israelites were supposed to be earth dwellers. I'm a Christian. I'm not in Moses.

I'm in Christ. I believe the devil has robbed us of our inheritance. It can be yours.

Let's pray. Will you pray that what you've heard will not be taken away by the birds in the air? Will you pray that it will sink deep into your heart and bring forth fruit that will last forever in your life? That you will take

seriously what you've heard and never, never, never, never, never forget it. What you've seen in God's word.

That's why I showed you all those verses. Say, Lord, I want to live in the reality of what you've written in your word. Help me.

Thank you, Father. I believe that you will do this for us. For those who have faith, those who long, those with thirst.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, we'll think more about this tomorrow.

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