

(The Works of Faith) What God Has Done for Us

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding what God has done for us as the foundation of the Christian life, and how this understanding leads to a life of joy, victory, and spiritual blessings.

Duration: 1:08:52

Scripture: Ephesians 1:3, Ephesians 4:1, Ephesians 4:31

Topics: "Christian Living", "Faith Works"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the contrast between the first three chapters of Ephesians and chapter four. He points out that the first three chapters do not contain any commands or exhortations from God, but chapter four is filled with them. The speaker highlights one specific command from verse 4:31, which instructs believers to put away all anger from their lives. He uses the analogy of removing chairs from a room to emphasize the importance of completely eliminating anger. The speaker also emphasizes the need for balance in the Christian life, highlighting the two legs of the Christian life: what God has done for us and what we are supposed to do for God. He warns against falling into the trap of only focusing on one aspect and encourages readers to meditate on the verses in Ephesians 1-3 to understand the foundation of what God has done for them in Christ.

Transcript

In Ephesians we read about, we read something which I would say is perhaps the most perfectly balanced epistle in the entire New Testament. And I don't know whether you've noticed this, but Ephesians has got six chapters, and those six chapters are divided exactly into half. The first three deal with what God has done for us, and the next three deal with what we must do for God.

I don't know whether you've ever read Ephesians like that, but that's the way to read it. And the interesting thing is that in the first three chapters of Ephesians there is not a single command, not a single exhortation, not a single thing that we're told to do. Have you ever heard a sermon in your life without any exhortation, without being told to do something? We think something is missing there.

We probably need to hear some sermons like that, which tell us what God has done for us, because that's the foundation. Remember the man who built his house without a foundation? What happened to it finally? The reason why a lot of Christians don't make progress in their life, why there's not more joy and victory

and fruitfulness and usefulness, is because they have not got a solid foundation in their life concerning what God their Father has done for them. They're trying to do things for God without first knowing what God's done for them.

And no wonder they run into a lot of problems. No wonder they run into a lot of depression. Just like that with me.

It's many years since I got depressed and discouraged because I've understood what God's done for me. It's brought joy and victory. There's no shortage of trials.

I mean, the more we progress in the Christian life, we're going to have more trials and opposition and difficulties. But in all of that, we triumph. We have a spirit of triumph.

We're more than conquerors in every situation. It is not God's will that a child of his should be defeated by anything that happens to him in his life. The devil can get at him on all sides.

He will be a conqueror. That's how Jesus was. Jesus was a conqueror in every situation.

You could never get him to be depressed. And the Bible says the Christian is to walk as Jesus walked. But that's because Jesus had a clear understanding of his relationship with his heavenly Father.

And I am tremendously encouraged when I read Ephesians chapters 1 to 3. Imagine reading three chapters which don't tell me a single thing to do. We hear so much of preaching about what you're supposed to do and what you're supposed to do and what you're not supposed to do and what you're not supposed to do. And imagine reading three chapters of scripture where you're not told to do anything.

It really is wonderful. And that is the balance of scripture. The reason why a lot of Christians fall is because they're not balanced.

Have you ever tried standing on one leg? Whichever leg it is, you can't stand for long. You fall. And we can say these are two legs of the Christian life.

One, what God has done for us. And the other, what we're supposed to do for God. And you try standing on any one of them all by itself and I guarantee you fall.

I've seen churches who go to the other extreme, who only talk about what God's done for them. They're like the fellows who laid the foundation and never built anything on top. Jesus spoke about that too.

And they fall too. Because that's imbalanced as well. So we have these Christians who take advantage of the grace of God and just rejoice in all that God's done for them and they're some of the most worldly Christians you can ever find, taking advantage of God's grace.

And then you have on the other side a lot of other Christians who are always hearing about what they're supposed to do and what they're not supposed to do. And they don't have a solid foundation in their life. And they're some of the most miserable and discouraged and long-faced Christians I've met.

Legalistic, bound by so many rules and regulations. And God wants us to be balanced. God wants us to rejoice in what He's done for us.

And on the basis of that, that we live for Him. Let me share some things with you of what I've been blessed by in Ephesians. Let's turn to Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 3. It says here, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

Now I told you in the first three chapters in Ephesians, there is not a single thing that God tells us to do. I mean I've read through it and I haven't found a single exhortation in it. A single command.

But as soon as you come to chapter 4 verse 1, it's just command, command, command, commandments, exhortations, you've got to do this, you've got to do that, you've got to do the other thing. And a whole lot of some fantastic commands. I mean think of a command like this.

I'll give you an example to see God's standard. Ephesians 4.31 says that we've got to put away all anger from our life. To put away all anger from our life.

Now if you say put away all the chairs from this room, how many chairs will be left in this room? None. None. If you've got one chair left in this room, you can't say you put away all the chairs from this room.

So do you understand what it means to put away all anger? That's in your Bible. Ephesians 4.31. To put away all bitterness and all anger from you. How many Christians in the world do you think obey that command or even attempt to obey that command? Or believe that such a thing is possible that you can live on this earth without ever being angry.

You know why? Because they don't have a foundation. They don't start with chapters 1 to 3. They jump straight over to chapter 4 and they try to live a life without ever getting angry. Does it succeed? It doesn't.

It doesn't succeed in their home. It doesn't succeed in their office. It doesn't succeed in the church.

A lot of people pretend that they do have such a life. But it's not true. I want to tell you in Jesus name, that is the will of God for you and me.

It's a very blessed life. And there are many other things like that. It speaks of standing against Satan in a way that you have overcome everything.

Having overcome all, we stand. It says in Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 13 that you may be able to resist in the evil day and having done everything to stand firm. That means every single attack of Satan we overcome and we are still standing.

We haven't fallen. Is that possible? It's possible if you got the foundation of chapter 1 to 3 right. Without that it is impossible.

There are a lot of churches where all they do is confess their hope forever. They confess their hope, one day I will get victory over anger. And 30 years later they are still saying the same thing.

They never get to it. And the reason they never get to it is because every wall they build is crumbling because it doesn't have foundation. I'm just showing you what a tremendous standard.

Think of a verse like this. Ephesians 5.20. Always giving thanks for all things. Just a few words.

It's just about six words. Always giving thanks for all things. That means there is never a single thing we ever complain about or murmur about or grumble about at home, at work, no matter what happens.

I mean does God really mean these things or are these suggestions? You know that God doesn't give us suggestions. He only gives us commandments. Why is it that so very few Christians ever come to such a life? I'll tell you.

Because they haven't got the foundation of chapters 1 to 3. They have never heard a sermon in their life which doesn't contain a single exhortation. They feel a sermon is incomplete without exhortations, without commandments. They think Paul was off his head to write something like Ephesians 1 to 3. You'd have to blame the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit wrote Ephesians chapters 1, 2 and 3 without a single exhortation.

We need to reorient our thinking to think like the Holy Spirit thinks. God says my ways are not your ways. The way I think, Isaiah 55 verse 8 and 9. My way of thinking God says is not your way of thinking.

You go according to your way of thinking and you have a lot of problems. Change your thinking to my way of thinking. That's what God says.

Ephesians 1, 3 we read. This is one of the big differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament. And we need to understand that first of all.

It doesn't say in verse 3 that God has blessed us with every material blessing, but spiritual blessing. It's not in earthly places. It's in heavenly places.

In the Old Testament when God told Israel that he's going to bless them, he promised them blessing in earthly places. He gave them a land and said this is yours. But he hasn't done that for the church.

He's never promised material blessing to his people in the New Testament to Christians. He's promised to provide us all that we need. If we seek his kingdom first and his righteousness, the other things like food, clothing and shelter will be added to you.

And when a person is satisfied with God adding the minimum material things necessary, he can be a true Christian. When he sets his mind on acquiring more and more of material things in earthly places, he's going to miss what God has for him in the New Covenant. I've seen that universally.

You've got to decide whether you want Old Covenant or New Covenant. You can't have a mixture of both. I've seen movements of God that started wonderfully with godly men who pursued the heavenly things.

And in succeeding generations, their followers began the pursuit of earthly things. And the movement goes down the drain because there are only two masters in the world, God and mammon. And you've got to choose which one you're going to serve.

It's God or mammon. It's not God or the devil. It's God or mammon.

So that's the first thing we need to see that God says, God has blessed us. I mean, if you're really interested in entering the New Covenant, Ephesians is not for people who want to live in the Old Testament blessing. Ephesians was written to New Testament Christians.

To those who are, like it says in verse one, who are faithful in Christ Jesus. To the saints, to those who long to be New Testament Christians. They're tremendous blessings.

God's called us to a wonderful life if we can enter into it. It doesn't say that he's going to bless us. If I am in Christ, when I give my life to Christ, Christ comes in me and I am in Christ.

Both are true. Ephesians speaks more about me being in Christ and Colossians speaks more about Christ being in me. Both are true.

In Ephesians it speaks about me being in Christ. And it says here, this expression, in Christ, verse three, I am already blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. In other words, potentially, it's all mine.

If I can lay hold of it in faith and claim it, it's mine. It's like when Joshua entered the promised land, the Lord said to him, the whole land is before you, it's yours, take it. But you'll only get as much as you put your foot down and take.

Every place where the sole of your foot shall tread, I have given to you. In other words, he had given him the whole land, but he could actually possess only what he put his foot down and claimed. It's something like that.

When it says here, this is the New Testament equivalent of the land of Canaan. Every spiritual blessing means every blessing of the Holy Spirit in Christ. It is my birthright to be filled with the Holy Spirit every day.

Every day to have the blessing of the Holy Spirit in my life. It's my birthright to be constantly fresh in Christ. Morning, noon, night, middle of the night, any time.

I'm never supposed to be dry. I'm never supposed to be empty at any time. God has blessed me with every blessing of the Holy Spirit in heavenly places in Christ.

And if I can claim that and I say, Lord, I accept that, I believe it, it's mine, it is mine. But you know, just like in the land of Canaan, it says that God told 600,000 Israelites, all that land is yours. Take it.

And it says, most of them looked at it and said, it's a wonderful land, but we can't take that. It's too difficult. And they backed away from there.

We read in Numbers chapter 14. And God was so angry with them that he punished them, that they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. But there were two people who said, yeah, we can take it.

And they went in and took it. And very often, I think among 600,000 believers, there may be just two who believe that this land can be ours. Such a life as described in the New Testament can be mine.

That God hasn't given, God hasn't described a life in the New Testament which is impossible to fulfill. When he says, put away all anger, it's possible. The man of faith says, it is possible for me in this earthly life to come to a life where I put away all anger.

When God says, in all things, always give thanks for everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the man of faith says, it's possible for me in this life to come to such a life where I never grumble or complain about anything. I always give thanks for everything in Christ. But there are 600,000 believers who say, no,

no, no, that's not possible.

You're trying to be unrealistic. You're trying to preach perfection. And all that.

That's the tragedy. And it says, those 600,000 people, you know, it says, they wanted to stone Joshua and Caleb. Have you read that? One would have thought that Joshua and Caleb should have been given a medal for proclaiming faith.

But instead of that, those 600,000 people wanted to stone them. And that's exactly how it is today. You try preaching this message, and you'll get some type of stones thrown at you.

Because people don't, they don't want it because it shows up their sin. It shows up their defeated condition. It shows up their materialistic Christianity.

It shows up their love for the things of earth and their defeated condition. It shows that their victory is only theoretical. It doesn't work.

It doesn't work at home. It doesn't work in their place of work. It doesn't work anywhere.

It's just a lot of knowledge. And they get angry. But if you can get past all that and say, Lord, I want to come to simple faith in your word.

If your word says that I have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, it must be mine. Every blessing of the Holy Spirit that God ever has is already mine. But I have to claim it.

Just like Joshua had to go and put his foot down, even though the land of Canaan was given to him. He'd get only as much as he put his foot down and claimed. And I get only as much as I put down my foot and say, that's mine and that's mine and that other thing is mine and the other thing is mine.

And I can go through the New Testament and take every command and say, that's mine. I'm supposed to live like that. When it says, rejoice in the Lord always, I'm supposed to rejoice 24 hours a day.

That's how I'm supposed to live. People should never in my whole life ever see me in a bad mood at any time. That's how a Christian is supposed to live.

Most Christians don't believe it's possible. It's exactly like the 600,000. They say, no, it's not possible.

Such a life is not possible. There are two out of 600,000 believers who believe that such a life is possible. Remember that.

You know, many times in the New Testament, in 1 Corinthians 10 and Hebrews chapter 3, we are told about that example of those 600,000 people who died in the wilderness because they would not possess the land of Canaan. And it says in 1 Corinthians 10, this is written for our example. As an example for us, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Lest we also fall like them. So, my brothers and sisters, God has promised us far, far more than what we have actually possessed. You know, it's like a multimillionaire, to use an illustration, a multimillionaire father who has given all his resources for his son to use.

And his son lives like a poor beggar because he doesn't claim his inheritance. I think a lot of Christians are like that. So, it's a wonderful verse to begin with, to understand.

It's not an exhortation. We are not told here to do something. We are told here what God has already done for us.

I only have to receive it. It's like forgiveness of sins. You know, every false religion in the world teaches that we got to do something to get forgiveness of sins.

We got to do something and work something and people go on pilgrimages and people give money to God and people do so many things to get forgiveness of sins. But we know that they are all wrong. How did you and I get forgiveness of sins? Like we sing in that song, Rock of Ages left for me, nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling.

We came with empty hands, didn't we? That's how we got forgiveness of sins. We didn't do a single thing. We just received what God had done for us on Calvary's cross.

But that true faith that's proclaimed in true Christianity is contrary to everything that false religion teaches, even false Christianity. It says you got to do something before God forgives you. It's a lot of rubbish.

You just receive freely. By grace are you saved through faith that not of yourselves, it's the gift of God. It's the same here.

I don't need to do anything to get this. It's been given me. When a baby is born to a multi-millionaire father, that baby doesn't even realize it.

He's born a millionaire. That's how we are spiritually. Don't you think that should excite us a little bit? More than a little bit.

The fact that every single spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ is mine. Think if you got a letter tomorrow from someone, from some attorney saying that somebody left a will with your name on it and you just inherited a few million dollars. How would you feel? I think we should feel more than that when we realize that God's blessed us with every single spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ, which means that there's not a single situation I can ever face in my life on earth for which there is no answer from God.

There is some provision, some solution, some blessing that God has provided for that particular problem which I'm going to face next week or next month or next year or whatever it is. It's all taken care of. I praise the Lord for it.

From the time that I have understood that, it's made a tremendous difference in my life. As I look into the future, I don't know what's going to happen next week or next month or next year. But I know one thing, that there is not a single situation I can ever face in the future for which there is no answer from God.

God's made a provision. He knows the future. He knows exactly what's going to happen to me.

He knows exactly how other people are going to treat me. Nothing takes Him by surprise. And therefore, if I live trusting Him, knowing that I am an inheritor of all of God's wealth in Christ, I can live in triumph every day of my life.

That's how the Apostle Paul lived. When I was a young Christian, I read about the testimony of the Apostle Paul in different places where he writes. And I wondered why that was not my testimony.

Why couldn't I live like that? Was it only for Paul? Was it only for some of these people? And I decided that no matter how long it took, I wanted to find the secret of that life. And if you're eager, God will show that to you also. But it begins here.

It does not begin with what we do. No, it begins with what God has done for us in Christ. It's not just forgiveness of sins.

We all rejoice in that. And that's what's made the difference between us and all those people in false religions. Why do the people in false religions today live without any peace, wondering whether their sins are forgiven? How is it you and I are so happy that our sins are forgiven? Because we believed what God said.

That's the only thing that's made a difference between us and them. It's not because we're better people than them. We're probably worse sinners than them.

And yet, we've got a peace they don't have because we believed what God had said. Now, just think if you can believe this verse, that every single blessing of the Holy Spirit in heavenly places is yours in Christ. I say, Lord, I want to believe that too.

Not just the forgiveness of sins, but I believe that every single blessing in the heavenly place in Christ is also mine. Okay, let's go to verse four. Here's something else, which brings such a tremendous security in our life.

When we read in Ephesians chapter one and verse four, it says that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. One of the things that the devil seeks to do with God's people, with God's children, is to make us feel worthless or unimportant. He constantly tells you that you're pretty rotten and you're not going to amount to anything.

You made so many mistakes in your life and made a mess of your life so much and you're not going to amount to much. You're really not all that valuable to God. God's got many other things to bother about than about some little fellow like you.

That's what the devil keeps saying. It's not true. If you believe that, your life will be miserable.

What does it say here? He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. Now you see, God can look into the future in a way we can't. He knows the whole future.

Before things happen, he knows it's going to happen. He knows what's going to happen tomorrow, next week, next month, next year, a hundred years from now, a thousand years from now. He knows every little detail.

We can't understand that, but we believe it. It's true. Which means, way back in eternity, he knew all about the future and he knew that you would give your life to Christ at some point in time.

Therefore, he chose you. The Bible says, he chose you, he elected you according to his foreknowledge. It says in 1 Peter chapter 1. That means because he knew that you would be one of those people who at some time in your life would give your life to Christ, he chose you by name before the foundation of the world.

Just think of that. We shouldn't rush through these verses. We need to stop and think and meditate on them so that we get the full benefit of them and apply it personally.

I take a verse like that and apply it personally. When did God know about me? It wasn't when I was born in 1939. God knew about me long before that.

He knew about me. Just think of that. Before Genesis chapter 1 verse 1, in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Ok, go back before that. My name was in God's mind before Genesis 1 verse 1. If you have faith, that applies to you too. I find great rest in that.

That way back in eternity there was Father, Son and Holy Spirit and my name in his mind. Don't you think I'm an important person? If my name was in God's mind before he created the heavens and the earth? I believe that. And that's why the devil can't fool me to tell me I'm unimportant or I'm insignificant or I'm good for nothing.

He doesn't succeed with that with me. Why does he succeed with you? I'll tell you. You don't believe what God's word says.

You've been exhorted so much to do this and do that and not do this and not do the other thing. That's why your life is miserable. Let's begin with what God did for you first.

Then we can move on to build the superstructure. We've got to get the foundation first. Any builder will tell you, you've got to put a foundation first.

And here's the foundation. That God chose you in Christ before the foundation of the world. That means your name was in his mind before the worlds were created.

If you're a born again Christian today, your name, I tell you this in the name of Jesus, please believe it and change your life. It'll make you secure. You were not an accident.

Don't ever let anyone tell you, you were an accident. You were not born into this world accidentally. The things that are happening in your life are not accidental.

God chose you in Christ. I am a very important person in God's purposes. I believe that with all my heart.

And you must believe it. And that's how we overcome the devil. The devil is constantly trying to run down Christians and tell them they're good for nothing.

God's got no time for them. And you're unimportant and you're useless. You're just one person in the millions of people in the world.

Where has God got time for you? I would say, I'm not like that. If some fellow wants to believe he's like that, that's up to him. But I believe God's word.

You know the difference between the man who is secure in Christ and the man who is insecure is just one thing. The man who is secure in Christ just believes what God says. The other person doesn't.

That's all. That's all the difference. It says, we who believe, Hebrews 4 says, enter into rest.

That means we come into a life of security. And the other person who doesn't believe lives an insecure life forever. And just think if some of you young people can live like this right from your youth.

To believe that God chose you before the worlds were created. Your name was in his mind and he's got a plan for your life. It's wonderful.

He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. And we should be holy and blameless before him. That means he's got a plan for me.

And his plan is that I should be holy and blameless before him. God doesn't care what other people think about my holiness. I'm very thankful for that.

You shouldn't be bothered either. He chose me to be holy before him, it says, not before men. Don't waste your time trying to be holy before men.

You'll never satisfy men in any case. Seek to be holy before him. That's all.

He called you and he's planned for you to be holy and he's gonna do it if you can trust him. If you can trust him, he will make you holy and blameless before him. All your years of effort and self-denial have not made you so holy.

You're defeated in so many areas. Why not lay a good foundation and believe that he can make you holy and blameless before him. It says here about the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace in verse 7. See, that's another thing that we must believe when it comes to our past life.

I know for many years after I was born again, the devil would keep on harassing me, reminding me of some terrible sins I'd committed in my unconverted life. That would bother me. The small sins wouldn't bother me, the big ones did.

I presume that a lot of other Christians are like that too. Is there something in your past life that still bothers you? You wonder whether God's really forgiven you that terrible sin way back there. There should be no memory of it because it says that we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us.

The word used in the New Testament is justified by his blood. The sins and iniquities I will remember no more. We're talking now not about what you and I have to do.

We're talking about what God has done. This is all what God has done. He has blessed us.

He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. He has planned that we should be holy and blameless before him in love. He has blotted out our past sins according to the riches of his grace.

That means he doesn't want us to live under condemnation about any sin in our past life. The only sin that should bother you is the one you have not confessed. I was talking to somebody the other day and he was telling me I don't feel sorry enough for my sins.

I said you know the Bible doesn't say anything about that. The Bible doesn't say if we are sorry enough for our sins he will forgive us. No.

You know what it says in 1 John 1.9? If we confess our sins. Have you confessed it? Have you acknowledged it? That's it. He forgives you.

You don't have to waste your time trying to find out whether you're sorry enough. This is all the devil's tactics to make us feel condemned about something. Even if it's something we... Let's say you lost your temper this morning and then you go to God in prayer.

You confessed it. You're sorry for it. Then you go to God in prayer and the devil reminds you of that and says well where is God going to listen to you? You know how you lost your temper this morning.

You think God's going to waste time listening to you and we feel so condemned. Well God won't listen to me. That's a lie.

If he confessed our sins he's forgiven us. It's gone. It's blotted out.

The blood of Jesus cleansed me. I can go to God in boldness. I find that everything the devil does is to rob us of our boldness before God.

And if there's anyone sitting here, you're a born again Christian, you confessed your sins and you're not bold before God, something is wrong. God wants you to be bold. Just like even your little child can come boldly to you and say dad I want this.

That's how we're supposed to go to God. With boldness. He's much better than any earthly father.

And that the devil robs us of that boldness by reminding us of something in our past life. The Bible says, the Lord says I will not remember your iniquities anymore. Hebrews 8.12. Now if God doesn't remember it, why should I remember it? The devil remembers it, he remembers it only to harass me.

But God says I won't remember it. I won't remember it. When you come before me I'm not going to remember your past iniquities in front of me.

We need to have tremendous boldness when we come before God. Our position in Christ is far far greater than we have realized. Far greater.

And I believe God wants us to find that position in Christ. I want to say something further. In Ephesians chapter 1, Paul is praying for these Ephesian Christians.

He says I pray in verse 18 that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened. That you may know the hope of his calling. And here's something interesting.

It says here, the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. Now you got to read this carefully. This is not talking about the inheritance we're going to get when we go to heaven.

It says in 1 Peter 1, there is an inheritance incorruptible undefiled reserved for us in heaven which we're going to get when we go there. This is something amazing. It's speaking about God becoming rich when he got you.

How many of you believe that God became rich when he got you? I think a lot of Christians can't believe that. You mean God became rich when he got me? That's right. I believe it.

Because God's word says it. The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. That means God's got an inheritance in me.

It's unbelievable but it's true. That I am a valuable asset to God. I'm not just a nobody.

And don't let the devil ever tell you that. You're not a nobody. You're a valuable asset to God.

And Paul says, I'm praying that the eyes of your heart will be enlightened to see it. It'll make a tremendous difference in your life when you see that. That when you accepted Christ, God became rich because of you.

And then he goes on to say, I also want your eyes to be opened to see what is the tremendous power available to us who believe. And the power he's speaking of here is not the power that God exercised when he created the world. God's creative power is a wonderful thing.

When he spoke a word, the worlds were created. But here he's talking about another power which is even greater than creative power. I want you to see this because a lot of Christians haven't seen it.

Many people think that the greatest manifestation of God's power is when he created the world. He spoke a word and from nothing all these universes came into existence. No doubt that's a tremendous manifestation of God's power.

But when the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul is trying to tell us of the greatest manifestation of God's power, he does not take the example of creation. There's something that's even greater than creation, he says, is the power that God exercised when he raised up Jesus Christ from the dead. The greatest manifestation of God's power in this universe was not when he created the heaven and the earth in Genesis 1 verse 1. It was when he raised up Jesus from the dead.

We need to see that. Why is that the greatest manifestation of God's power? Because that's where he conquered sin, Satan, death. Every enemy of man was conquered when Jesus rose up from the dead.

You know I met lots and lots of Christians who speak much more about the death of Christ than they do about the resurrection. And that's why their lives are so miserable. And that's why they're so often so defeated.

I believe the death of Christ is important, certainly. But do you know that the Apostles, if you take a concordance and you can check this up and see if what I'm saying is not true. Sometimes we got a fixation in our mind and we think that it must be like this and it's not like this.

For example, do you know that the Apostles never once spoke about themselves as witnesses of his crucifixion? You try and find that expression in the Acts of the Apostles. Never. They were not witnesses of the death of Christ.

They always said we are witnesses of his resurrection. Always. If you don't believe me, take a concordance and look it up in the Acts of the Apostles.

But there's very little emphasis in a lot of preaching on the resurrection. There's a lot on the cross, the cross, the cross, the cross, death, death, death, death. Yeah, it's good.

But without the resurrection it will just make you a miserable person. We are witnesses of his resurrection. The greatest manifestation of God's power was when he raised Jesus from the dead.

Because every enemy of man was thereby conquered. And it says here, this power, verse 19, is available to us who believe. Now let's stop for a moment.

The greatest manifestation of God's power in this universe is available to me if I believe. I can overcome every situation by faith. This is what Jesus said, all things are possible to him who believes.

That means I need never encounter a situation in my life for which I say, hey, is there a solution to this problem? There is. If you can believe, I don't know what problem you are facing today, but I want to say this, if you can believe these wonderful truths that we have been thinking of in Ephesians chapter 1, God chose you in Christ before the foundation of the world. You've already potentially been blessed with every single blessing of the Holy Spirit in Christ.

If you put your foot down and claim it in Jesus' name, it's yours. And as I told you, I'm not preaching the health and wealth gospel. It's spiritual blessings in heavenly places, not material blessings in earthly places.

That was in Israel. That's back in the old covenant. I'm talking about spiritual blessings in heavenly places.

That's Ephesians 1.3. And the same power that God manifested when he raised up Jesus from the dead, conquering all of man's problems, it says here, is available to me if I believe. And when God raised up Jesus from the dead, it says here that he placed him, verse 21, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And he put all things in subjection under his feet.

And there's nothing which is not in subjection to him. Everything is under the feet of Jesus Christ. Now, if it stopped there, we'd say, well, that's true.

It's wonderful that everything is under the feet of Christ. But it goes on to say, and God gave... Now listen to this. You've got to take it all in one sentence.

God put all things in subjection under the feet of Jesus and then he made him my head. See, that's the best part of it. The benefit that comes through everything being under subjection of Jesus' feet comes to me.

Because he's made Jesus my head. And I'm part of his body now. And therefore, all things can be under my feet too.

That's why the Bible says in Romans 16.20, the God of peace will crush Satan under whose feet? Your feet, not Jesus' feet. He already did it on the cross. Romans 16.20 says, God of peace will crush Satan under your feet.

Now, we're not afraid of the devil anymore once we see that. I find a lot of Christians are afraid of the devil. I've heard Christians say, the devil is harassing me here and troubling me here.

Rather, he's troubling me in my work, troubling me in my home. And he's put this sickness on me and the other thing on me. It's almost as though they've got such a huge devil and such a small God.

A lot of Christians are like that. Huge devil and a small God. Their God is too small.

God is almighty, ruler of this universe. He's put everything under the feet of Jesus Christ and given him to be my head. So that I don't have to be overcome by the things that come in my life.

God allows trials to come into our life to help us to be overcomers, to teach us how by the mighty power of God we can overcome them. No man can overcome. Do you know what God told Joshua? No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life.

That's what God told Joshua. You think it's gonna be less for us in the New Testament? No demon can ever stand before us all the days of our life. The devil cannot stand before us.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you. That's God's will for us. If I take my place in Christ.

If I don't take my place in Christ, then it's impossible. I have to see what God's done for me. He has brought me to that place of victory in Christ that I need never, never, never be overcome.

It's a position of victory, of blessing, of triumph and overcoming that God has brought me to in Christ. I have to accept it by faith. Lord, this is true.

What you have done for me in Jesus is far beyond what I have ever realized. All my life I've heard preachers tell me I've got to do this and I've got to do that and I've got to do the other thing. It's all true.

But the trouble is they told me to do all that before telling me what I was in Christ. They built like the foolish man. They tried to build a house without laying a foundation.

What I'm trying to do today is just lay a foundation. I'm not saying we don't have to do anything. We've got to build a skyscraper on this.

But before we build a skyscraper, we're going to lay a good foundation. And then we can build a massive skyscraper and live a wonderful life for God and have rivers of living water flowing out from us in many directions, blessing hundreds and thousands of people everywhere if I can get this foundation laid straight. And I'll tell you this, the devil, in spite of what you heard today, is going to do his very best to prevent you from believing most of what I said this evening.

If he can succeed there, he'll make sure that no skyscraper is ever built in your life. You just flounder along trying to do something or the other. My dear brothers and sisters, let's get this.

If you have never read Ephesians chapters one to three in this way before, I haven't gone through every verse. I'm just trying to give you a little taste of this tremendous section of scripture where there's no exhortation. It's only what God has done for us in Christ.

And we need to think a lot more about that than we have thought in our life. Perhaps the reason why there's been failure may be just this. This is the part of your spiritual diet that you've missed out on, to understand what God has done for us in Christ.

It's not what we have to do, it's what he has done for us in Christ. He's put all things under his feet and made him to be my head. And I see that.

I'm not afraid of the devil anymore. I heard a story of a great man of God once, who lived in the last century, 20th century. He was into a lot of casting out demons and a lot of ministry like that.

And one day, when he was asleep, he felt his bed shaking. And he woke up. In some way, he saw the devil actually sitting at the foot of his bed.

And he said, oh, it's only you, is it? And he turned over and slept. Think of that. Huh, it's only you.

I thought it was an earthquake or something. It's just you, Satan. I'm not bothered about you.

Think of that attitude. Think of that faith that man had. Yeah, well, Satan can sit at the foot of his bed.

He's not going to trouble him. He can't touch me in Christ. I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, would you do that if you saw Satan sitting at the foot of your bed one day? Oh, it's only you.

I'm going to turn over and sleep. You know, most Christians can't do that. They wouldn't be able to sleep anymore that night.

Do you know that most of us don't really believe the authority we have over Satan? We don't know that he's been defeated on the cross, that all things are under our feet. I remember once when one sister brought a woman to our house in India to be prayed for. I didn't know that she was demon possessed.

I thought she just wanted to accept Christ. She was having difficulty when anyone prayed for her. Anyway, I prayed with her and asked her to accept Christ.

And I asked her to say one sentence, which I usually ask all people who accept Christ to say. I said, say to the devil now, you were defeated on the cross by the Lord Jesus. And she shouted out in another voice, I was not defeated on the cross.

I said, you're a liar. You demon, you're a liar. You were defeated on the cross.

Get out of her in Jesus name. Of course, it left immediately. Then I told her, say to the devil, you were defeated on the cross.

And she said it. And I learned one thing that day that I've never forgotten, that the devil does not like to be reminded that he was defeated on the cross by the Lord Jesus Christ. And I decided that day that I'm going to tell the devil that as often as possible, that he was defeated on the cross as far as possible once every day.

Satan, you were defeated on the cross by the Lord Jesus Christ. You can't touch me. You were defeated on the cross.

I would encourage you to remind the devil of that. Don't you think it's true? Do you believe it's true? You know there's something that happens when we confess with our mouth. It's not enough to believe in your heart.

Do you know that? You know the Bible says in Romans chapter 10 and verse 9 and 10. It speaks about believing in the heart and confessing with the mouth. You read those verses Romans 10 verse 9 and 10.

It's not enough to believe in your heart and it's not enough to confess with your mouth. You must believe in your heart. It's no use confessing with your mouth if you don't believe it.

You believe in your heart and what you believe in your heart you confess with your mouth. I believe in my heart that Satan was defeated on Calvary's cross 2000 years ago and I'm going to tell the devil that. You were defeated.

You were defeated. Jesus Christ defeated you and the God of peace will crush you under my feet according to Romans 16 20. That's our position.

Don't let the devil ever take advantage of you in any situation. If he's invaded your home, don't let him have the run of your home. You're going to drive him out of your home.

Has the devil got one of your children? You can set him free. Bind that demonic activity there in Jesus name and set your son free in Jesus name, your son or daughter or anyone. See behind all these things are demons and I believe that we need to first of all see what God has done for us in Christ before we're going to be able to take that authority against Satan, against sin and all the wretchedness there is in this world.

And that's why these three chapters are very, very important. God has put all things under the feet of Jesus and he's given him to us to be the head. Just a few things from Ephesians chapter 2. It says here, God has raised us up, chapter 2 verse 6, and seated us with Christ in the heavenly places.

That's the position. It's not me trying to somehow get up to those heavenly places. No.

You know the Bible speaks about a religion called a Babylonian religion. In the end of the Bible you read about Babylon and Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the true church of Jesus Christ and Babylon is the counterfeit church.

How do you distinguish between the counterfeit church and the true church? Babylon began way back in Genesis 11 with the Tower of Babel. The Tower of Babel is where man said, let us build and let us reach heaven. See there is a religion like that which says, let us deny ourselves and we are going to be more spiritual and we're going to reach heaven.

It doesn't work. It's Babylonian. It says here, God has put me in Christ in the heavenly places.

From that position I deny myself. It's not my working myself up to reach a particular height. That's Babylon.

It started in Genesis chapter 11. Let's work ourselves up and reach heaven. You won't reach it.

God has put me there in Christ and because I am there, I live a certain type of life. This is all what God has done. He has raised me up.

He has put me in the heavenly places in Christ and once my eyes are open to that, I find that it's when I see my position in Christ that I can overcome a lot of things in this world because the things of the world don't appear so important to me now. One of the great schemes and tactics of Satan is to make the things of earth appear very very big to us. When we live on the ground, a skyscraper is so big and so many things are so big, you get up 30,000 feet up in the air in an airplane and these things, skyscrapers look like tiny toys.

And all the big big buildings and the cars on the road are like little toy cars. Everything on earth that looks so big when you are at ground level looks pretty small when you move up a little. And when God places me in the heavenly places in Christ, that's the position from which God wants me to see everything.

And if the devil can succeed in making you think that something on this earth is very big and very important, he's got power over you. It's true. He's got power over so many believers because he makes them think that money is a very important thing.

Let the devil make you think that money is an important thing and I tell you, you'll never be able to serve God properly anymore. Let the devil make you think that a pretty woman is a very important thing. You'll never be able to serve God anymore.

That pretty woman doesn't look very pretty when you get 30,000 feet up in the air. It's a tiny little dot. It's when you are on ground level.

And look, she looks pretty attractive when you are tempted. God has placed us in the heavenly places in Christ. This is real.

Many times I have had to say to the devil, this thing is not big. You are trying to make me think this is a big thing. It's not.

It's big to a person who lives at this earthly level. It's not big for me. The honor of men.

It's garbage. When you sit up in the heavenly places in Christ, all the honor and approval of men is just a lot of trash. Sex.

It's a very big thing to people who live on this earth, but not to those who are in the heavenly places in Christ. Don't let the devil make these things big in your eyes. Don't let the devil make money, comfort.

A lot of people think comfort is a very, very important thing. I tell you, if I believed that comfort was an important thing, I wouldn't ever serve the Lord. No.

A comfortable life is not the most important thing in life. We'll have enough comfort when we get to heaven. This is not the time for comfort.

This is the time for sacrifice. But if I think comfort is a very big thing, I'm going to look for a comfortable life. Because the devil succeeded in making it a big thing in my eyes.

He shows young men, he shows some pretty girls to them and says, this is the thing, this is what you got to live for. And he's got them. Or somebody else, he shows them money is a big thing and he's got them.

God has placed us in the heavenly places in Christ. And I say, Lord, that's where I'm going to live. I'm going to be in that position and all the things of earth that attract other people and which the devil keeps on trying to fool me.

He's fooling us, trying to fool us that this is so important and so big. And I tell the devil it's not. There are a lot of other things which are a lot more important than that.

God's approval we overcome. I have to take my place where God has put me. I don't have to struggle to get there.

He has already placed me, says in Ephesians 2.6, in the heavenly places in Christ. Let me show you one last thing before we close. It says in Ephesians 3.20. Now to him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works within us.

Who is going to do it? He. So often we think of what we are able to do. It says here, he is able to do far beyond what we ask or think.

He makes that power work within us for his glory. So perhaps some of these things that you heard this evening are new to you. But it's been there in Ephesians chapters 1 to 3 in your Bible all these years.

I want to encourage you to read them. Meditate on these verses. Let it soak into you.

Enjoy three chapters where you are not told to do anything. Where you are just being told what God has done for you in Christ. I really believe we need that foundation if we are to live as God wants us to live in these days.

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