

Bible Basics Conference 2009: "Walk Worthy of the Calling!"

Part 2

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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:00] I think, if nothing else, Michael has set a very good example by finishing bang on time.

I have noted, other speakers please note. So we've learnt very much in the first section from these verses we've read concerning the blessings into which we're introduced. I'm sorry I'm having trouble with the sun in my eyes, so if I squint at you, it's not that I'm blind, it's because the sun is temporarily blinding me. The second section is concerned with the remainder of the first chapter of Ephesians. And so let us just read verses 15 to the end before we begin. Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, [00:01:04] cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion.

And every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. [00:02:05] And hath put all things unto his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

Thus far the word of God.

We've heard very much concerning the blessings that are laid out in this first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians. And the question might arise in some minds, who is it who possesses these blessings? Is it some distinct class of believer, someone who has advanced in the things of God? Or is it every believer? Well the answer is, it is every believer. [00:03:01] It is everyone who has redemption through his blood.

It is everyone who is covered by these blessings of which we've been speaking.

These blessings are possessed by each one. They are given us of God in Christ Jesus.

We do not have to attain them, but we do have to enter into the enjoyment of them. And that's what Paul's prayer is concerned with.

The apostle gave thanks for the saints, and he prayed for them. God chose the love that was in his heart for the saints in Ephesus. And we might just note that in passing. It's not the theme of the passage, but just to note the love that Paul had for these saints. [00:04:01] And I wonder if I love the saints in my local assembly in that way. Just something in passing. But this caused Paul to pray for the saints.

Our blessings are secured in Christ.

And we don't have to pray for blessing. We have those blessings. But the apostle wants us to understand what it means to be blessed in Christ. If I have something that's particularly valuable, it's not much good unless I know I have it. And it's not much good unless I enjoy it. In other words, I look at it occasionally, make use of it. It might be a painting. It might be a recording of a superb piece of music. Well, if I never play it, it's nothing to me, is it? And so it is that it is sad, but it is true that there are many Christians, [00:05:04] believers born again in Christ Jesus, who are unaware of the blessings that they possess in Christ Jesus, to whom, if you told them that they were blessed in the heavenlies, in Christ, they would say, what?

And you would have to begin to explain verse by verse. We need to lay hold of the blessings that we have.

Canaan has already been referred to today. And you remember what was said to Joshua in the third verse of the book of Joshua, every place where on the sole of your foot shall tread, have I given to you as I said unto Moses.

There it was. Canaan was there. God was going to give it to them. [00:06:02] God was going to give them the victory. That was his purpose. And it was carried out as God had purposed. But they actually had, in faith, to put their, each one had to put his foot upon that land to make it his own, to enter into the, not into the inheritance, but into the enjoyment of the inheritance.

And Paul's prayer, therefore, is not that we might be blessed, but that we might enter into, that we might appreciate something of the union of Christ and his assembly. And secondly, the place that Christ takes in the assembly, and that Christ takes in the universe, and what that means for the assembly.

The prayer is addressed to [00:07:03] the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The second prayer, of which we will be hearing later on today, is addressed to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And these distinctions, they're not just put in there for, to make variety from a literary point of view, but they are put in there for a reason. The names are not synonymous. The God of our Lord Jesus Christ speaks of a God in relation to Christ, not so much as Son, as man.

And it is as man that Christ enters into this inheritance of which we're reading and speaking in this chapter. [00:08:02] The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the one who raised him from the dead.

The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we'll come to in chapter three, is the Father in relation to the Son.

But here we see Christ as man.

We see him raised, exalted, and glorified. But we see him as man. We see him in that place for which he prayed to the Father while he was still in this world, even before he went to the cross. Glorify me with that glory which I had with thee before the world was.

In confidence that that work was finished, the Lord Jesus could pray to the Father that he as man might be glorified with that glory which was his and which he earned by going into the cross, [00:09:03] by winning the victory over sin and death, Satan's power, and ascending on high, leading captivity captive. Again, that is the subject of a later session. As Son of God, he created the universe.

But in this passage, as Son of Man, he has complete authority over it. This is part of the place that he has taken.

And this passage is to help us to understand what that means, this one with whom we're associated, the place that is his by rights.

We were once under the man of sin, the power of darkness, not a kingdom, but the power of darkness. We were once under the man of sin, but now we have to do with the second man, the Lord from heaven.

[00:10:01] And because of this wonderful victory, this wonderful place that Christ has taken, so we have to do with the Father of glory. And that is the reason for this second phrase of address, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.

The Father has glorified his own beloved Son. Now, what was it that Paul is praying for in particular? There are three things that he wants us to know. One is the hope of the calling.

We've heard about that in verses three to five of this chapter, so I won't go through it again. But we need to put, as it were, if I may so, speak our foot upon those blessings set out in verses three to five.

Blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, [00:11:04] chosen in him, holy without blame before him in love, predestinated us unto the adoption of children.

The hope of his calling, and it is his calling.

The calling was from above, and God has called us.

And secondly, the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

And for that, we might refer to verse 11.

We, in whom we also have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. In verse 11, it is showing us that we have

a part in that inheritance. It is our inheritance.

[00:12:03] But in the verse we're looking at here, it is his inheritance. Again, God takes up that inheritance through those who are his.

For Israel of old, God would take possession of Canaan.

But he did that in and through the Israel of old under Joshua.

And just as they took that land of Canaan and obtained a part in it, so God, through us, takes an inheritance in the saints.

The saints are closely involved in that inheritance, the inheritance which is his.

And the exceeding greatness is the third thing of his power to usward who believe.

[00:13:06] Verse 19, what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe?

According to the working of his mighty power.

The power that brings us into this wonderful position of blessing is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead.

And the same power that puts all things under him, which we will consider in verses 20 to 23, Christ's position in resurrection.

That is the same power that works now in verse 19, the working of his mighty power.

It is that same power which works to us or for us. That same power which raised Christ from the dead and which puts him now in the position of head of all things.

[00:14:08] Christ was raised from the dead, set down at God's own right hand in the heavenlies. And these verses describe to us how he is above every principality, every power, and every dominion, not only in this world, but also in that to come.

There is nothing which is not put under the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is true that at the moment, we do not see all things put under him. But we see Jesus, as the writer to the Epistle to the Hebrews says.

But he is the head over all things in the universe. That is his rightful place.

And that same power links us with Christ in his resurrection life. [00:15:10] And he is head over all things to the church.

Now, in your notes, it says head of the church.

That is not wrong, but it's not what we've got in this passage.

If there is a fault there, the fault is mine. And I would be pleased if you would take your pens and strike out of and write to double O.

It is, of course, perfectly true that Christ is head of the church. We get that in chapter 5, I think, verse 32. And we get it again in Colossians, where the thought is of a head in heaven and the body here upon earth. So it is perfectly true that Christ is head of the church. [00:16:01] But what it actually says here in verse 22, and it's always best to stick with what scripture actually says, is head over all to the church.

You see the difference? It's perhaps subjective rather than objective. But to the church, he is head.

He is the one to whom we look.

He is the one, the head in heaven, the body upon earth.

And to us, he is our head. He is the one to whom we are answerable. He is the one to whom we gather.

And he is the one whom we serve here in this world. He, the head, directs the body.

And that is the way that he is head to the church in a close and intimate way that perhaps we don't see him as head over all things.

[00:17:04] Because the head and the body are closely linked. Indeed, they are one.

We are blessed in Christ Jesus. The head and the body are one. So in a particular and intimate way, he is head to the church.

And the body is the fullness of him that fills all in all.

We go back to, this is a difficult concept to get hold of, isn't it? That we are the fullness of Christ. Our human minds struggle with this, do they not? I think it is a great help to turn back to Genesis 2, verse 18, where in relation to Adam, he was given a help meat for him.

And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone. I will make and help meat for him. [00:18:01] And so in the same way, in these wonderful councils that we've been thinking of and hearing of, God has purposed that there should be a help meat for Christ.

And when we get to a later session in chapter 5, we will see that the help meat for Christ is indeed referred to as his bride.

But here is the thought that we dare not say that, I think the easiest way to say it is, it is not good for man to be alone. That was written for Adam.

But in the same way, it is in God's purpose that Christ in all his glory and all his exaltation should not be alone.

And at this moment, there is a company being fitted to be his companion, his help meat, [00:19:06] his

bride in that coming day.

And that is what is here referred to as his body, the church, the assembly, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

The world has not acknowledged his dominion yet, but the day is coming when every knee will have to bow to him. Things on earth, things in heaven, and things under the earth, every knee shall bow. But we are not concerned with what the world thinks. He is our head.

That is a fact.

He is our head.

We must give him that place. And the purpose of the conference, as has already been explained, is a twofold one. First, that we enter into the blessings that God has given us. [00:20:02] But secondly, that we walk worthy of our calling.

The body is his fullness linked with him as man.

Linked with him as man.