

The pre-eminence of Christ

Part 1

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[00:00:00] Scripture, it's been often repeated, where the Lord Jesus said, these are they which testify of me.

And as we go through the Holy Scriptures, we find time and time again, our attention is drawn to the preeminence of Christ.

And there are some scriptures I thought we might look at tonight, dear brethren, that will draw attention to this in the typical teachings in the Old Testament, and first of all, in Joseph.

We find he was one that had a special place in his father's heart, but there was something that was divinely revealed to him in the dream.

This was looking right into the future, but we do find that it's a dream that is concerning himself, Joseph, but it has a wealth of teaching for us, because Joseph is one of the most [00:01:05] beautiful types of Christ in the Old Testament.

We find whatever type we take up, there is a falling short. That is to draw attention to the greatness of that perfect one of which they speak, the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

And here with Joseph, we find that the dream is concerning the sheaves, and it's something that drew hatred from his own brethren.

I wonder whether here tonight, we all have right thoughts of Christ.

It's good for us to challenge our hearts, no matter where we are in our Christian pathway, as to whether we've got right thoughts concerning that blessed one who occupies the highest place in heaven, who has the greatest name, and the one upon which God has heaped every glory and every honor, and he is worthy of all that is given to him.

[00:02:05] And we need to get into line with God's thoughts concerning this glorious person. He's the one that is going to be the center throughout all eternity. And as has been remarked already, the Old Testament looked forward to Christ, and we see time and time again, whether we go to the offerings, whether we go to the types, whether we go to the Psalms, whether we go to the prophets, we find that all looked forward to the man that was to hang on the cross of Calvary, and that blessed one was

the Son of the living God.

We see in that blessed man all the fulfillment of God's plans, and God sees all things completed in Christ.

God has got the whole picture, and there in the center is his beloved Son.

So in the Old Testament we find that it all points forward to Calvary, and there when [00:03:02] Jesus died and suffered at the hands of man and at the hand of God, there was the victim, there was the sacrifice, there was the mercy seat. And that blessed one who has been into death is alive forevermore.

Blessed and holy be his name, and may the praises of our hearts be drawn out in this time as we've been contemplating the Lord Jesus Christ himself, so that all look forward to Christ coming, and now as it has already been said, that we all look back and see what has flowed out of the cross of Christ.

May our hearts be challenged tonight in the presence of God as to whether we have a living link with this blessed person, because if we don't know Christ as our Savior, and we haven't got him as the object of our hearts, then we haven't begun on the pathway that reveals to us the glorious greatness of this blessed man.

[00:04:02] So let our hearts be challenged at the commencement of this meeting as to whether we know Jesus, we know him as the one who died in our stead at Calvary, the one of which Peter could write the just for the unjust to bring us to God. But a lot of people today that have not been brought to God, they don't know God, they don't know his ways, they don't know his plans, and they don't know what is all centered in the Lord Jesus Christ, because they've never come to know him as their Savior. And I do trust that tonight, if there's anyone in this audience that doesn't know Jesus Christ as Savior, that the Spirit of God may rivet something upon your heart, dear friend, and bring you to repentance before a holy God, and the acknowledgment of God's beloved Son as the only one who is able to take away your sins and give you peace with God.

God is not going to be trifled with regarding his plans.

[00:05:02] We are not entitled to what we think from an actual point of view of Jesus Christ. We've got to realize that God's plans are centered in that blessed person, and that's the one each one of us must come to know.

So here in this typical teaching of Joseph, we find that he dreamed a dream, and all the sheaves bowed down and his remained standing.

It stood upright.

It was there revealed, that which was going to be seen in a coming day, that Christ was going to have the preeminent place.

And Joseph, a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus, is seen here. He says, my sheave remained standing.

What a revelation.

This looked right on forward.

It looked beyond Egypt. We see that there, that his own brethren were going to come and do obeisance to Joseph. [00:06:01] But it looked beyond that. It looks right down to our day. It looks beyond our day. It looks right through to that which is going to be seen in the eternal day, when Christ is going to be enthroned, and he is going to be owned, Lord of all. Wonderful thing to arrive at what is in the future in our spirits even now, dear brethren, to be able to see that the plans of God centered in that blessed one is something that we can enter into and enjoy even now by the Spirit of God. Dear brethren, that's what the Spirit will draw attention to tonight, the preeminence of that blessed one whose face we're going to see, whose likeness we're going to be made unto, but the one who's going to be seen as standing, preeminent amongst all.

And so here a lovely picture of, in this dream, of what was seen, a type of Christ in Lordship.

[00:07:07] All bowed down.

Behold, he says, your sheep stood round about and made obeisance to my sheep, but the one in the midst remained standing. And that speaks of the preeminence of Christ. Oh, there's nobody to be compared with him, dear brethren. There's no one at all. He must have the preeminence, as the Spirit of God records to the saints at Colossae, that he must have the first place in all things. It's not just when we come together. It's not just when we get down on our knees and pray. It's not just when we pick up the scriptures to read, whether it be that we read it often or little, the Lord Jesus Christ is the one who is set forth as having the first place in all things.

And this should be a challenge to our hearts, as to whether we do acknowledge Christ as [00:08:01] having the first place. He must have the first place. He's the one who has created all things, for his praise, for his glory. It's by him that all things subsist. Oh, this blessed one who died at Calvary is the centre of God's plans. And whether it be in our study, our family life, our assembly life, our business life, whatever it is, Christ must have the first place in all things. We were noticing in Psalm 45 that what God has established in Christ is forever.

Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. Forever and ever. This is what God has established. The Word of God establishes too that this blessed person must have the first place in all things.

And if there's nothing else we remember from this address this evening, dear brethren, let us remember those two words, all things. Christ must have the preeminence there. [00:09:04] And so here his sheaf remains standing and all the rest did abases.

And then further revelation in the next dream, where he says he dreamed yet another dream, told it to his brethren and said, Behold, I have to dream to dream more. Behold, the sun and the moon and the 11 stars made of essence, all to see that the purposes of God are coming through. Not only is there going to be the acknowledgement by his brethren, but this is looking forward to all God's plans being accomplished in Israel. And Christ is going to be acknowledged. Oh, yes, the sun and the moon and all that the 11 stars made of essence to me.

Oh, what a person this is. What a lovely time for the son of the living God, Lord Jesus Christ himself.

[00:10:02] And these are the things that should not only lift us up out of the sea, but that it might draw out our gaze and our affections to be centred in this blessed man. Oh, dear brethren, are we in line with God's thoughts? What how sad it is, you know, to have our sins forgiven, to perhaps be conscious of the indwelling spirit, to enjoy in some major fellowship with saints. But do we know the purposes of God, they're centred in Christ. Are we in line with God's thoughts regarding him? All that we may get our vision cleared of everything that bogs us down here, how much it is that Satan is active in these closing days to mar the vision, to belittle Christ, as our brother Frank drew attention to in his word this afternoon. Satan is active, not only to belittle Christ, but to rubbish him entirely.

[00:11:02] Oh, are we in line with God's thoughts? Or are we falling victim to the thoughts that Satan would inject with his poison into our minds and into our lives, bringing in things that distract from the glorious greatness of this blessed person. Let's go to 1st Samuel, chapter 16. 1st Samuel, chapter 16.

Verse 12.

And he sent and brought him in. This is David. Now he was ruddy and with all of a beautiful countenance and goodly to look to. [00:12:06] And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him, for this is he.

And then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brethren. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.

Lovely to see here that although God had rejected Saul from being king over his people, there was one that he had to bring forward.

What a beautiful picture in David being anointed of the preeminence of Christ among his brethren.

Here we find in the first verse that we read, the Lord said.

You see here, Samuel was directed. [00:13:01] He had come down to the house of Jesse. And one after another, the sons had been rejected. Even although Samuel thought that surely this one is he.

But they were all rejected until the last one was brought in. And it says that he was ruddy and with all of a beautiful countenance. You know, dear brethren, when it comes to the beauty of a person, there is no one that takes the place of the Lord Jesus Christ. The preeminence of that blessed man in beauty, this has been referred to already today.

But it's lovely to see the way in which the Scripture draws attention time and time again to the beauty of that person. He was ruddy and with a beautiful countenance, goodly to look to. And the Lord said, arise, anoint him, for this is he.

And there he was, anointed in the midst of his brethren. [00:14:02] Spirit of the Lord came upon David. All to realize that God's plans are going through.

If we go back early in the chapter, we would say, well, it looks as though things are going down the wrong way. Here's one after another, and David's not even present. But all God's plans, dear brethren, they're going through. And they're going through. And so that Christ may be anointed. That the beauty of that person may be seen. And that the drawing power of his beauty might touch the

hearts of every one of us. Let me say again, dear brethren, there's no one to be compared with the Lord Jesus Christ. Have we an object here below, we sometimes sing, that would distract us.

That would turn us aside from following the man that God has anointed.

[00:15:02] Oh, that blessed one who suffered so much.

Who went down to the depths of death, was buried. Who rose again the third day. And what do we see? We see him crowned with glory and honor. Oh, doesn't this remind us of Peter's preaching at Pentecost? What a beautiful picture there. Here he goes out in the anointing of the Spirit of God. Peter says, that the one that you have crucified, God hath made both Lord and Christ.

Oh, Peter was preaching that Christ was the anointed one. He was the one that had been rejected. But what had God done with him? Made him both Lord and Christ.

Oh, the preciousness of this blessed man.

Not only Lord, but Christ. The anointed one was there. Here we've got the picture. [00:16:02] Beautiful to see it. That he was preferred before all else.

So we find that the presentation of Christ as the one whom God has anointed bows the hearts. What do we find following that beautiful verse? Peter's preaching in the day of Pentecost. We find the people cried out. They were cut to the heart. And they said, what shall we do? What shall we do? Repent, he said, and be baptized for the washing away of your sins. And there was repentance that day. We find 3,000 souls were added to the assembly. Beautiful triumph. Because Christ had been anointed.

Because he was the one that was set forth. He was the one that they rallied to.

Oh, what is the object of our gaze?

Do we see him as the one that's been anointed in the midst? Do we see him as the one who's been made both Lord and Christ? [00:17:07] Do we acknowledge him? We see him in all his beauty. This is what flows out. Oh, there's much history before David's on the throne. But of course, we see that with Christ. He came in the fulfilling of that scripture, riding upon the fold of an ass. And they said, Hosanna. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. But the kingdom is going to be taken up. The kingdom is going to be taken up. And just as David was anointed here in view of the kingdom. So Christ is the one who has been anointed by God.

And the one who is going to take up the reins of government. And all things shall prosper in his hand.

We get little glimpses later on of what prospered in the hands of David. So are the features coming through of the types of Christ in the next chapter?

[00:18:10] Chapter 18. Read a few verses there. Chapter 18. Verse 1. And it came to pass when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day and would let him go no more to

his father's house. And then Jonathan and David made a covenant because he loved him as his own soul. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and gave it to David, and his garments even to his sword and to his bow and to his girdle. David went out whithersoever. Saul sent him and behaved himself wisely, and Saul sent him over the men of war. [00:19:02] He was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants. We find here, we know that failure came in on Jonathan's part in not being fully committed, but here we get a beautiful picture of the love that flowed from Jonathan's heart to David. And what we see here is that with Jonathan, David was preeminent in his heart's affections.

Oh, does the Lord Jesus have the first place in our love, in our affections, in our heart's desire?

Is there anything that takes away the preeminence of the drawing power of the blessed man of Calvary from claiming all our affections?

Jonathan here is an example of one who was prepared at this point to show his love for David.

[00:20:02] It excelled everything else. It was something that was mutual between them, but I want to draw attention to what was seen here with Jonathan. Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Jonathan and David made a covenant because he loved him as his own soul. The pact was sealed, and Jonathan here had as an object for his affections the man that was anointed to be king, not only in the stead of his father, but in his own stead. He accepted this, and we find that he was in line with God's thoughts. And it's a lovely thought here, because Jonathan was fully in line with what Samuel had done.

[00:21:04] And his soul was knit. Oh, think of that which was there as a lovely example of committal because of the affections of his heart to David. And they made a covenant.

Oh, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, where do our affections lie? Let us look right down into our hearts and into our lives. Where do our affections lie?

Has Christ got the first place in regarding, in regard to our love?

Do we first consider for him because we have such an appreciation of what he has done and what he has brought us into and for who he is? Or that our affections may be touched [00:22:03] and that we may be drawn out to make a covenant with him that we might know what it is to truly love the one who suffered so much. Oh, the preciousness of that person. We go along through his pathway. We go to the Garden of Gethsemane. We go to Pilate's Hall. We go to the high priest's office. We go to the Hill of Calvary. What do we see? We see love all the way. There's a touch of cord in our hearts to respond to that blessed person, that we are knit to him, that we make a covenant to give him the first place in our affections or other things that come in and take up our heart's desire. Oh, that we might see not only the glorious greatness of this person but to see that he has loved us even unto [00:23:07] death. Oh, there's no one to compare when it comes to love. He's the one who's been all the way. He's the one who has displayed the very heart of God. He's the one that should draw out the affections of each one, young or old. To be drawn after this person, he stripped himself. Jonathan stripped himself and we find in this verse four that he was prepared at this point to give everything to David.

Where do we stand in a challenge like this? Is there a holding back in our affections or are we going

after this man with our gaze upon him, with our heart's desire toward that blessed [00:24:01] one who suffered so much for us, the one who has a right to our affections, the one who not only made known the heart of God but the one who made it possible to be blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies. Oh, it's not that we are just brought as those that have our sins forgiven but it's those that are brought into the blessed knowledge and appreciation of all that he has done and all that he has brought us into and the blessings beyond. To realize that no matter where we go, dear brethren, if we go to the cross, who's on the center cross? The Lord Jesus Christ. If we go to the tomb, we find it empty. If we go the road to Galilee and there we find the men of Galilee looked up and they saw Jesus going up and what was the message from the angel? Know ye not that the same Jesus whom you have [00:25:04] seen go into heaven shall come again in like manner. All their attention was drawn to the man that was going up, the man Christ Jesus and there should be that drawing power by that blessed one that will not only touch our affections but draw us out after him. Oh, that lovely verse, draw me and we will run after thee. So here we've got the affections of one that was drawn out to David. May our hearts be drawn out to the true David, the one who fulfilled all things, all the types falling short but when Jesus came in the fulfilling of all that we read, we find that he is the one that should have the first place [00:26:02] in our affections. We go on to verse, the next verse, six and it came to pass as they came when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine that the women came out of all cities of Israel singing and dancing to meet King Saul with tablets with joy and with instruments of music and the women answered one another as they played and said Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands. Oh, the one terrible in battle, is there any one to compare? Here the women are crying, they're singing with their musical instruments and they're saying Saul has slain his thousands but David his ten thousands. You see here a beautiful picture of what is coming through. We find that David now is coming in to the preeminent place [00:27:02] and the singing is directed towards him. He surpassed King Saul, so has been referred to by our brother earlier today. He's the one that's king of kings, what a lovely picture here. King Saul is on the throne but the women are singing to the one who is acclaimed as king of kings. Yes, David is the one that surpasses Saul but it looks forward to the one who's going to be seen as king of kings and lord of lords. Oh, here we see in the life of David something that's coming out the preeminence in battle, mighty in battle. Who is this king of glory? Oh, that's what the psalmist says. Who is this king of glory? Yes, the one who is beyond compare when it comes to the battle. Let's go back to the cross and what do we find? There he slew the enemy. There the enemy [00:28:09] was brought to his knees and down to the dust he led captivity captive. All the preeminence of the man who died at Calvary, mighty in battle. Battle death forces, yes, and the Lord Jesus was preeminent in battle. Lovely to see him. No matter where we look, we see that the man who delighted the heart of God, the one upon whom the heavens could open, no one else but this one.

This is my beloved son. Hear him. Oh, to think of those occasions in the gospel when heaven couldn't keep silent, when there was a breaking forth. This is my beloved son. Why? It just gives us [00:29:13] the little picture as though heaven was so anxious to see that man glorified. But the work had to go on and the pathway led on to Calvary. And we know that in that soon coming day, we're going to see him as the one who is glorified. The one to whom every knee will bow and every tongue confess his name to the glory of God the Father. Oh, is he preeminent in our lives? Is he preeminent in our thoughts? Is he preeminent in our affections? Is he preeminent as the one who's won every battle? And he subdued [00:30:01] all the enemies, and the last enemy is death. It's all in his hand and he's accomplished everything to the glory of God. Oh, blessed, holy, and wonderful person. Do we all know him? Are we moving close to him? Have we got him in our gaze? Oh, he's going to fill the scene throughout all eternity, the blessed man of Calvary, son of the living God. He's going to be acclaimed by all, and throughout eternity, each one of the redeemed are going to be singing the

glorious greatness of the one who sits upon the throne. God wants us to have him as the one who is the center of our life, a hall of our activity, centered in that one whom he has delighted to honor. Let's go on to chapter 22.

Chapter 22.

[00:31:07] Verse one, David therefore departed thence and escaped to the cave of Dolom, and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. Everyone that was in distress, and everyone that was in debt, and everyone that was discontented gathered themselves unto him, and he became a captain over them, and there were with him about four hundred men. David in rejection, and yet those that gathered to him in that very testing time, they made him a captain over them.

Their brethren were still living in the days of the rejection of Christ. The cave of Dolom was a place of refuge, and David went there, and those that were in debt, and those that were distressed, they came to David, and he became a captain over them.

[00:32:09] Their brethren, Christ is in rejection. Are we aligned with him?

Are we aligned with him? Are we identified with a man who has been rejected? He has a right.

David at this stage had a right to the throne. Christ has every right, and soon those rights are going to be taken up. But now in his rejection, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we need to be fully identified with him, and to realize that as we stand for that blessed person, we all know what reproach and suffering is, and we need to stand for him. Peter says we're not to think it's strange that persecution comes upon us. It's the normal Christian living to be identified with a man [00:33:06] that's been rejected in this world. What was the answer? Away with him, let him be crucified, we will not have this man to reign over us. Do we align ourselves with a world that has no time or place for the Lord Jesus, or are we making him a captain over us? In the day of his rejection, all the blessings that come as we're identified with Christ. Dear older believer, are you identified with Christ in your life? You know, we say, well, the young ones need to stand. Maybe the younger ones are not standing for Christ, because those of us that are older are failing in our duty, that we're not standing up and being counted for Christ, or that we might examine our own hearts as to whether we are truly identified with a man that was totally and absolutely [00:34:02] rejected in this world that his own hands had made. Oh, it's not going to be always so, but right now it is so. And Peter says, if ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happier ye, for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part he's blasphemed, on your part he is glorified. Oh, have we got a part in this? Glorifying Christ by being reproached by his name, fully identified with the Lord Jesus, and sharing in that which is bestowed upon only, only bestowed upon those that are prepared to stand up and be counted for Christ. The spirit of glory and of God rests upon you, and God is glorified. Or may we have part in this?

May we know what it is? To go to the cave of Adullam and be there, and let David be the captain. [00:35:05] He's soon going to take up his kingdom. He's soon going to be acclaimed. He's soon going to be seen as the one who God has set forth. And we're going to share the glory with him. But our part now, dear brethren, is to be identified with him while he is in rejection. Let's go to Ezekiel 44.

Ezekiel 44, speaking of the Levites, in verse 13.

[00:36:10] They shall not come near unto me to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things in the most holy place. But they shall bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed. But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein. That's the Levites. But, verse 15, the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God. They shall enter into my sanctuary. They shall come near to my table to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge. And it shall come to pass that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments. No wool shall come upon them whilst they minister in the gates of [00:37:03] the inner court and within. They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads. They shall have linen breeches upon their loins. They shall not gird themselves with anything that causes threat. And when they go forth unto the outer court, even unto the outer court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers. And they shall put no other garments. And they shall not sanctify the people with their garments. Neither shall they shave their head, nor suffer their locks to grow long. They shall only pull their heads. And over the page, verse 23, and they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. And in controversy, they shall stand in judgment, and they shall judge it according to my judgments. And they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all my assemblies. And they shall hallow my sabbaths. We find here an order of service.

[00:38:03] And we find that the Lord must have the place first. And dear brethren, I believe that this is absolutely essential amongst us. That if Christ has not got the first place in our hearts and in our lives, we're not fitted for service. Here we find that the prophet points out, those that come near to minister to me at my table, to minister to the Lord, that they have this desire and are qualified to serve the Lord.

And it's coming out of the divine presence that they minister to the people. That there is wisdom to look into matters. That there is wisdom to take up matters of controversy. But in these verses, and we haven't got time to fully go into the teaching of the details, but just to see that the order is this. That there must be the coming into the sanctuary. That there must be the [00:39:03] acknowledgement of what is due and right to the heart of the Lord. And it's coming out of the divine presence that service is rendered to the people outside. And dear brethren, let me suggest this. That if we're not free in the divine presence, and the Lord Jesus has not got the portion that he looks for from the hearts of every sister and brother, whether we be young or old, then we're not fit vessels to go to the people. And maybe that's why the Lord is holding back blessing in these closing days. He's blessing companies of Christians. Dear brethren, why are we not able to contain the blessing that the Lord is pouring out, in that souls are coming to Christ. And souls are being added to the assembly. Is it because there is a falling away of service to God, that he might have the portion first. And that the Lord Jesus may be the one that is the center of our worship. That he might have the preeminent place in service. That our service [00:40:06] is towards the Lord. And having a right appreciation of what he is, and the greatness of his person, we are then able to come out of the divine presence, and serve the people. Whether it be matters of controversy. Whether it be taking the word out to the unsaved. Whether it be the building up of the people of God. We must know what it is, to come out of the presence of the Lord. Him having the portion first. And dear brethren, I believe that this is the right order of service. We get it in Peter. We get it with the two priesthoods. There is that which is first to God, and then that which goes out to the people. Dear brethren, if we don't know the presence of the Lord, and we don't know the preeminence of the blessed man who's seated there at the right hand of the majesty on

high. If we don't acknowledge his preeminence, then how can we be fitted for service? This is flowing on dear brethren. It's not only flowing on, it's flowing out. [00:41:07] And we need to be on our faces before God, as to whether he is getting the portion from our hearts that is rightly his. So that he can use us to contact the young. That the Sunday schools may be built up. That the young may know and hear the truth, from those that have come out of the presence of the Lord, as having given a portion to him. But if our lives are lived pleasing ourselves, how can we serve the people? So whether it's to the children. Whether it's to the teenagers. Whether it's to the gospel meeting. Whether it's the ministering to the saints. If we don't know the presence of the Lord, we're not fit vessels. The Lord Jesus must have the preeminence in all things. And dear brethren, he must have the portion first. A lovely picture of this, don't we, with Elijah. He goes to the Shunammite woman. Here she is going out. She's got a handful of meal in the barrel, and a little oil in the [00:42:05] cruise. And she's going out to get two sticks, to make a cake for a son, and for herself. And then she's going to die. And what does Elijah say? Make me a little cake first. But what a picture we see there. That the Lord Jesus would say to her heart, make me a little cake first. And so that the meal won't waste, and the oil won't run out. And is there right through the barren times. Dear brethren, let us see that the Lord Jesus has a rightful place.

Or may he be preeminent in all things to each one of us. And lastly, let us look at the back in Genesis chapter 45.

[00:43:02] Genesis 45.

The dream of Joseph is being partly fulfilled. He's been through a rough time. He's known what it is to be sold out, to be rejected, to be falsely accused, to be in prison. Now he's through with the rule of the land. And in chapter 45, Joseph, his brethren have come back. Remember, we know the story well. Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him. And he cried, cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud. And the Egyptians in the house of Pharaoh heard. Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph, not my father yet live. And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence. Joseph said unto his brethren, come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. Oh, these are time when Joseph's affections are running over.

[00:44:06] Beautiful thought. Put every man out, he says. There was no one present when he made himself known unto his brethren. And if that wasn't enough, Joseph said, come near to me, my brethren. Oh, the drawing power of Christ. Joseph again here, a type of Christ making himself known to his brethren. Come near to me, my brethren. I am Joseph.

Do we know what it is? To answer to that tender appeal of the Lord Jesus that we might be not only identified with him, but come near to him. To enjoy his presence.

To know that there is nothing in my heart or in my life that bars communion with this blessed man. [00:45:02] If there are matters to put right, we need to put them right. Is there anything holding us back from coming near to the true Joseph? If there's anything that needs to be put right, the divine provision is there, dear brethren. For if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The way is open to come, enjoy the presence of the true Joseph. Come near to me, I pray. Lord Jesus would have us near to him. Dear brethren, to whom shall we go?

What does Peter confess at the end of John 6? When there were those that turned back and walked no longer with him, Jesus said, are you going to go away too? What does Peter say? Lord, to whom shall we go? To whom shall we go? The Father Christ, son of the living God. Oh, it's the person, dear brethren, that draws us. Not a position, [00:46:08] not a gathering, not a nice comfortable local church. No, it's the person of the Christ. And the Lord would say, come near to me, my brethren. He wants us close to him. He wants us to know his presence. And dear brethren, I believe that there is one scripture that we know very little of and experience little of at times because of our own state. And that's a scripture that's referred to, I suppose, in every assembly around the globe. Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst. We hear it at nearly every briefing. We often hear it in the morning. But dear brethren, what do we know about it? What do we know about it? Do we really acknowledge the presence of Christ? Do we know what it is to have him in the midst? We may say these things, but is Christ the object of our gaze? Is it the one to whom we gather? Is it the one that we're [00:47:05] able to come near to? Come near to me, my brethren. Oh, the preciousness of that person. The drawing power of his love. It's all centered there in the man that's at the right hand of God right now.

None in that last verse. In verse 13, when he sends his brethren back, he inquires my father yet living.

Verse 13 was referred to in closing prayer this afternoon. Ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt and of all that you've seen and ye shall hasten and bring down my father. Or have we such an appreciation of Christ? Do we really know him so intimately and enjoy his presence and are filled with the glorious greatness of his person that we're able to go into the presence of the father and tell him of all the glory of his [00:48:02] beloved son? You know that hymn 50, beautiful hymn? Glad that it's in the hymn book. Our God and father we draw near to thee in all the worth of thy beloved son. Beautiful words. Do we know what it is or is it just that we do lip service to these things? But dear brethren, are our affections so moved? Is the object of our gaze and the object of our whole life so centered in Christ that we are taken up with his glorious greatness to the extent that we can go into the presence of the father and tell him of all the glory that we see in his beloved son. Go tell my father of all my glory in Egypt. Oh dear brethren, as we're occupied with the Lord Jesus Christ, as our affections are flowing to him, we're drawn out in worship and praise and on the ascending line as being occupied with Christ, we rise to heights with the father and there tell forth the glory of his son. [00:49:05] Brought into the blessed relationship, my brethren, and as has been pointed out already, that it's in the midst that he leads the price. Oh the wonderful experience of the presence of Christ, but oh how he delights to draw us to the father that we might come into the presence of our God and our father and tell of the glorious greatness of his beloved son. Dear brethren, we're able to do this as we have a true appreciation of who Jesus is. Not only our affections move, but our worship flowing and our whole service Christ-centered and so that what flows out is that God is glorified. So it comes back to what Peter says, that he was a just for the unjust to bring us to God. God is looking for worshipers. He's looking for those that have a true appreciation of his beloved son and if God [00:50:04] has glorified him, and he has, and if God has placed him in the highest place and given him the greatest name, then dear brethren, our worship should flow as we have an appreciation of that blessed man in the glory and our worship will flow to the father. Or may we be helped to be so taken up with Christ that we're lifted out of this scene, realizing that Christ is not only the center of our life now, but he is the center throughout all eternity and we're soon going to be with him and like him. May we be more occupied with that blessed man. May we be found more like him and in line with God's thoughts concerning him so that worship might flow from true hearts that appreciate all the greatness of his blessed person.