

## Heavenlies

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Let's turn to the Letters to the Ephesians.

Ephesians Chapter 1 verse 3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ."

The same chapter verse 20, "in which he wrought in the Christ in raising him from among the dead, and he set him down at his right hand in the heavenlies,"

Chapter 2 verse 6, "And has raised us up together, and has made us sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus."

Chapter 3 verse 10, "in order that now to the principalities and authorities in the heavenlies might be made known through the assembly the all-various wisdom of God"

And finally chapter 6 verse 12, "Because our struggle is not against blood and flesh, but against principalities, against authorities, against the universal lords of this darkness, against spiritual [power] of wickedness in the heavenlies."

Let's have a word of prayer, "Dear Lord, our hearts are full of thanks. We do thank thee for gathering us together in thy presence this morning. We thank thee for thy tremendous love towards us. Thou have not been silent to us. But by thy grace thou has been speaking to us again and again, that we may come to know thee more and more. We do commit this time to thy loving hands. May thy spirit quicken thy written words and enable us to see the greatness of thy salvation, that we may be what thou have ordained us to be. We ask in the name of our dear Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."

## Heavenlies

I thank God for the privilege to come here to see our dear brothers and sisters. As I waited upon the Lord for this time, it seemed that the Lord has impressed upon my heart one thing, and that is the phrase, "In the heavenlies". This is a phrase that is used by the apostle Paul in the Letters to the Ephesians. And we find that it is repeated again and again. You know, Brothers and Sisters, we all know that this letter to the Ephesians, together with the Letter to the Colossians, give us the highest truth in the Bible. Because this Book tells us of the full counsel of God. It shows us the mystery of God, the mystery of Christ, and the mystery of the gospel. Everyone who has read the letter had the sense that it is a tremendous, glorious revelation and presentation of God's heart. Often times when we read this letter, or sometimes when we heard preaching on this letter, if our hearts are right, you will find that we find ourselves being lifted up as to the third heaven. Because glorious things are being revealed to us. But there is a problem. Some people tell us that when they read this book or heard the words, they are so inspired and uplifted and yet they find that it is way beyond them. It is wonderful but whether it is practical. I often hear people tell me the eternal will of God is really glorious if you know what it is. But is it practical? It is as if it is in the third heaven. But how can you reach it? It is like a beautiful basket of wonderful fruits but it is high up in the heaven. We can see it afar

but there is no way to reach it. So what's the good of it if you cannot taste it, if you cannot have it? That only gives you a sense of frustration. And I think too many of God's children, this is the problem. So sometimes I wait upon the Lord and say, "Lord, is there a key, is there a way that will help God's people to possess our possession? And make that which is impossible possible in our lives.

One day as I was meditating before the Lord, the Lord seemed to direct my heart to this phrase – In the heavenlies. It is as if this is the key. This will open up that mystery and enable us to possess it. So this morning we would like to share together on this matter of "In the heavenlies". Actually, the word "heavenlies" is a difficult word. In the different versions, the English versions, sometimes it is translated "In the heavenly places". Sometimes it is translated "in the heavenly realms". But in the originals, it should be translated as "in the heavenlies". In the Chinese version, we have the same problems, because it says, "in the heaven".

But dear Brothers and Sisters, this is not the third heaven, because the third heaven is where the throne of God is. And now in the third heaven, aside from God, there is only one man there, and that is the man Jesus Christ. And there is no devil there. Because the devil has been casted out from the third heaven. So the heavenlies cannot be the third heaven. Now, can it be pointing to the second heaven, where the stars are? We know it is not. Or can it be in the first heaven that is our firmament? We know that that is the headquarter of the devil. So what is the heavenlies? It is not the third heaven, it is not the second heaven, it is not the first heaven, and then where is it? We only know the heavenlies is truly a heavenly realm or heavenly realms. It is a heavenly places or heavenly places. But it seems to me that we don't know where the boundaries are. It seems to be so vast yet it seems to be unexplainable. But we do know there is such a place or such a realm called the heavenlies. Because it is heavenly, it is spiritual and it is real. And there in the heavenlies, in that realm, God is there, we are there, and even Satan and his angels are also there. It is a reality.

### **The meaning of "heavenlies"**

How do we explain it? I think when you try to explain something, you ought to use illustrations. And that's why you find in the Bible there is a lot of types and lots of illustrations. Now let's think of Abraham. We know that Abraham was born in Er of Chaldea and that is where Babylon was. And we also know that he was born to a family that built idols. And in that time they were all idol worshipers. But thank God somehow the glory of God, the God of glory appeared to him. And because of the God of glory appearing to him, he was called out of Er or Chaldean. And he was called to cross the Euphrates River, and even the river Jordan. And God led him to the land of Cannan. And God promise to give him and to his seed the land of Cannan. It was a land flowing with milk and honey. But when Abraham was in the land of Cannan, he was a stranger and a sojourner there. He lived in tents and he lived by faith and not by sight. The land was promised to him. It was his inheritance and yet strangely he was a stranger and a sojourner in that land.

Now dear Brothers and Sisters, does that describe something of you? We live in

this earth. We were born of Adam. We were born under the sentence of death. We had no God. We had no promise. Just like Abram, he was born and reared and lived in Er of Chaldea. We were in total darkness. But thank God, the glory of God appeared to us in the face of Jesus Christ. He called us out of this earth and he called us unto Himself. We are in a sense, in a spiritual sense, we are all Hebrews. We know Abraham was the first Hebrew. Why? Because he crossed the river. So spiritually speaking we are all Hebrews. We are still in this world but we do not belong to this world. While we are still living on earth, we are aliens. Because our citizenship is in heaven. So physically speaking we are still in this world, but spiritually speaking we are not of this world. Even though we are not of this world, we are still here in this world. And we know this world one day will be our inheritance. Because the Bible says, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." And yet we are sojourners, travelers passing through this world. We live by faith, not by sight. So Brothers and Sisters, in a way you will find this is the situation; the situation of Abraham is our situation is today. So in a sense the land of Cannan can be a type of the heavenlies. Because in that land the Lord was there. The Lord appeared to Abraham again and again. And in that land you will find Abraham was there. But at the same time you will find the seven tribes of Cannan were there. Now the seven tribes of Cannan represent the evil forces. So in a sense you will find that the land of Cannan where Abraham was a sojourner can represent the heavenlies today.

While Abraham was in Cannan, you'll find that he had to live by faith. But sometimes he began to live by sight. When there was a famine there, you know he lived by sight. But Egypt has food. So naturally you find that he went to Egypt. How he failed. And by the grace of God, God brought him back to Cannan. And again you find he failed. He went down to the land of the Philistines. And he got into trouble again. Thank God, God used these troubles to discipline him and to draw him back into Cannan. Brothers and Sisters, does this describe our conditions? By the grace of God, we are not of this world. Now Brothers and Sisters, do you really know where you live? Physically, yes, we live in this world. But we do not live as the people of this world. We are not earth dwellers. So far as this earth is concern we are strangers and sojourners. We live by faith not by sight. People of this world, they live by sight. And that's why they seek for the things of this world. But we live by faith. Sometimes we fail. Sometimes we begin to live by sight. And how we are tempted by this world. As if we have gone into Egypt. If not as far as Egypt, the land of the Philistines. Because Egypt represents the earth, the riches of this earth. How God's people are attracted by the riches of this earth. And if we are not attracted by that, we are attracted by the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines represent the flesh. And how sometimes we yield to our flesh. And we lose our faith. But thank God He's so merciful to us. He will rise up circumstance and environments to bring us back. So strangely you find that we are living in the heavenlies. Whenever we get out of the heavenly realm we are in trouble. But thank God he would not let us go. Again and again He draws us back to that heavenly realm. So dear Brothers and Sisters, you see that this is not an abstract. The heavenlies is a very real, living, true, spiritual realm. If you lay hold of this phrase, and then you go into the letter to the Ephesians, then I think you get the key into possessing your possession. Now everybody knows today that the letter to the Ephesians can be expressed by three words, and I think many know the book "Sit, Walk, Stand." That in a sense gives us an essence

of the whole letter.

## **Heavenly blessings**

Now in the first two chapters, it is related to this matter of seated with Christ in the heavenlies. In Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ." Here you'll find every spiritual blessing. Now there is a difference between the New Testament and the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, the children of Israel, they were God's earthly people. So the blessings that God blessed them were earthly. If they keep the commandments, if they follow God, God will bless them with many children. God will bless their basket. God will bless their land. God will bless their animals. So all the blessings you'll find that God bless the children of Israel are earthly. But when you come to the New Testament, you'll find the emphasis is changed. It is not that God will not bless us with blessing, but that is no longer the point, because we are God's spiritual children, so God has blessed us with something more better than earthly pleasure. God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.

You know Brothers and Sisters; I find that there is a mistaken idea, especially in our days, because these are difficult days. So you'll find Prosperity Gospel is something that even God's people are seeking for. If you love God, God will bless you and give you perfect health, God will give you a good family, God will give you prosperity. You'll have a big house. You'll have a Rolls Royce. This shows you are blessed by God. If you are weak and sick, you have no children, if you live in a small house, if you can barely live, then you must be cursed. Now this was true in the Old Testament, but this is no longer true in the New Testament, because God has something better for us. What you can see is temporary, they will pass away. What God has blessed us with is eternal. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. You cannot think of any spiritual blessing that God has not blessed us with. He who has not spared His only begotten Son will He withhold any good things from us? Now if you try to count these spiritual blessings, you will be amazed. For instance, when you read the first two chapters of Ephesians you will see that some of these spiritual blesses are being listed there. For instance, He has chosen us even before the foundation of the world. Isn't that wonderful? Before we were born, before Adam was created, before the world was created, God has already chosen you. Isn't that wonderful? And He chose you for what? That you may receive sonship. Not only to be a Child of God, but to be son and daughter of God. Can you find how He redeemed us and forgave our sins? And today we are in His favor. And He tells us what He is doing. That one day He will sum up all things in Christ. And we will all be summed up in Christ. And not only that, He will use us as instruments to bring this summing up of all things in Christ. We are His inheritance, and he is our inheritance. We who are dead in sins and transgressions, children of wrath, in His mercy and grace He have saved us. He not only quicken us with Christ, He has raised us up together with Christ, and He has seated us together with Christ, where? In the heavenlies.

Now is this something in the future? No, not something in the future. When were our sins forgiven? Not something in the future. We have already had our sins forgiven.

When were we quicken from our death? We already have that resurrection life, Christ's life in us. It is not something in the future. And in like manner when have we been seated with Christ in the heavenlies? Now! We have already been seated with Christ in the heavenlies. Christ has been raised from the dead, and He has ascended up and seated at the right hand of God. He is in the heavenlies, and He has brought us into the heavenlies, and we are seated with Him in the heavenlies. Now what do you mean by seated? You do the sit until the work is done. So our Lord Jesus after He has finished His work, He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of His Father. Dear Brothers and Sisters, we are in the good of His finished work. We are already seated. You don't need to work. The work is done. His work is our work, and we are seated with Him.

### **Abide in the Lord is seated in the heavenlies**

Where are we seated? In the heavenlies. So Brothers and Sisters do you see this? We are already seated in the heavenlies. And because we have been seated in the heavenlies, so all the spiritual blessings in the heavenlies are ours.

Maybe we can use another term, and that is John Chapter 15. The Lord said abides in me, and I in you. You know seated with Christ in the heavenlies is the same as abide in Him. Because all the blessings in the heavenlies are in Christ Jesus. So when we are in Christ Jesus, and when we abide in Christ Jesus, you know we are in Christ Jesus, but whether we are abiding in Christ Jesus, if we abide in Christ Jesus, then all the spiritual blessings are ours. And if we do not abide, then what is in Christ, is not what we receive, because we are not abiding in Him. So seated and abiding are one and the same thing. So dear Brothers and Sisters, all the spiritual blessings you find in Ephesians Chapters 1 and 2, they are all in Christ Jesus. And if you are seated with Him, abide in Him, then all these are yours, and you will begin to experience all these blessings. So the key, the real key is here. God has already put you in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. Now are you seated together with him today? Do you abide in Him? If you abide in Him, and that means you are seated with Him, you receive what He has already done. Then you will experience all these spiritual blessings. Then these spiritual blessings will not be like a basket of fruit high up, cannot be reached. Brothers and Sisters, it's very simple. If you really want to possess your possession, just learn to be seated with Christ. Just learn to rest in Christ. Do not struggle. Do not try yourself. Because Christian life is a life of faith. And faith casts an anchor in Christ. And this is what abiding in the will of God is. It is a daily thing.

### **Walk- to testify the reality of Christ**

Then you move on, from Chapter 3 to Chapter 5. You will find another word, and that word is walk. Walking with Christ. Now what does that mean? It means that what you have received when you are seated with Christ in the heavenlies, now there is an opportunity of manifesting it, expressing it in your daily life. And when you are doing that, this is your testimony. Now what is our testimony? Our testimony is none other, but to testify the reality of Christ. That Christ is real. How do you know Christ is real? Because he has expressed Himself in us. And this is our testimony. Not only to this world but even to the unseen world. Because in Chapter 3 verse 10, it says, "In order that

now to the principalities and authorities in the heavenlies might be made known through the assembly the all-various wisdom of God.” Our testimony not only reaches to the world, it also reaches even to the heavenly hosts. They marvel at what God has done in our lives, how He can transform us sinners into saints, how he can bring us together into oneness. So you find in Chapter 4 that this is our church life, our body life. And then in the following our life in the society and our life in the family. All the spiritual blessings we have received in Christ Jesus are so real, so practical. Because they all can be expressed in church life, in social life, and in family life. And this testimony is powerful. So this is walking with Christ in the heavenlies. We walk not by sight but by faith. So Brothers and Sisters, it is nothing abstract. It is not like people say when you are so spiritual you are no longer a man. Instead you find you are the real man because it is Christ being manifested. And how wonderful when you read these chapters.

### **Stand for the spiritual warfare**

And then finally when you come to the last part of Chapter 6, and you find it is fighting with Christ in the heavenlies. The real spiritual warfare is in the heavenlies. And the real spiritual warfare is not against flesh and blood. Yes. We have our warfares with flesh and blood. And unless we have overcome, we are not fit for the spiritual warfare. There is a spiritual warfare going on. Whether the eternal purpose of God will be realized or not. Satan is trying everything to obstruct that. And now God will use those who are seated with Him, walking with Him in the heavenlies, to fight this fight of faith. Spiritual warfare has a purpose. It is not an aimless warfare. There is one purpose behind it. And the purpose is whether the eternal purpose of God will stand, whether it will be fulfilled. And thank God. He can even use man to fight against the angels that are higher than them. That is the glory of God. So we must stand, withstand, and stand. And the last stand means that we stand for the fulfillment of the eternal purpose of God. So dear Brothers and Sisters, this whole letter of the Ephesians is highly spiritual but deeply practical. And it is very simple. Seated with Christ in the heavenlies, walking with Christ in the heavenlies, and fighting with Christ in the heavenlies. May this letter be our possession.

Let's have a prayer. Dear Lord. We just look to thy spirit to reveal thy word to us. Not only to reveal but to make it real in our lives. And it is not for us. It is for thy glory, it is for thy kingdom, and it is for thy will to be done. Have mercy upon us that we may be a people who are apprehended by thee for thy purpose. And glory be unto God. In the precious name of our Lord Jesus. Amen