
THE PURSUIT OF THE UPWARD CALL

By David Kuykendall

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Introduction

Using a word found only one time in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Philippi of his pursuit of a “goal.” The Philippians 3:14 passage reads as follows:

*... I press toward the goal for the prize
of the upward call of God in Christ
Jesus.*

The goal of Paul's pursuit was the prize of "the upward call."

By testifying in verse 13 that he had reduced his pursuit in life to "one thing," Paul indicated the depth of his passion to reach his goal.

This work is a study of the explanation of Paul's goal, how he pursued it, and the blessings that resulted from the pursuit. Following Paul in the pursuit is well worth the time and effort.

Part One

Defining the “Upward Call”

What did Paul have in mind when he wrote of his pursuit of an “upward call?” The only way to answer that question is to take a close look at the broader passage in which the term is found.

So, we begin this study by examining the statements of the third chapter of Philippians that precede Paul’s declaration of his goal.

Chapter One

The Meaning of the “Upward Call”

Paul begins the third chapter of Philippians with an encouragement to rejoice in the Lord and with the introduction of a warning.

Philippians 3:1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.

In verse two Paul warns the Philippian believers about those who teach that one has right standing with God by keeping the law.

*Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers,
beware of the mutilation!*

Verse three is a description of the true servants of the Lord.

*For we are the circumcision, who worship
God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus,
and have no confidence in the flesh ...*

In verses 4-14 Paul writes a personal testimony. He begins by saying that he has better human credentials for acceptance by God than anyone else. Then he adds that he rejects any “gain” his credentials might give him and even counts the “gain” as “loss.”

*Philippians 3:4-7 ... though I also might
have confidence in the flesh. If anyone
else thinks he may have confidence in the
flesh, I more so: 5 circumcised the eighth
day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of
Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews;
concerning the law, a Pharisee; 6
concerning zeal, persecuting the church;
concerning the righteousness which is in
the law, blameless. 7 But what things were*

gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

Paul then testifies that he counts all things as “loss” and “rubbish.” Notice his purpose for doing so as you read Philippians 3:8-10.

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death ...

The passage shows that it is the belief of Paul that his counting all things as “loss” and “rubbish” was necessary for him to “gain Christ,” to “be found in Christ not having his own righteousness which is from the law but that which is through faith in Christ,” and that he “may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings.”

In verse 11 Paul elaborates on the thought of his “*knowing Him and the power of His resurrection.*” Then

he expresses the central point to this entire passage. In verse 11 He writes:

... if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

The words “may attain” immediately capture the attention. “Attain” has in it the idea of arrival. “May” implies uncertainty.

This statement may raise an eyebrow of the person who believes in eternal security but who is not familiar with Paul’s writings. Is Paul in doubt about being included in the resurrection?

The answer to the question is, “No.” Paul believed in both a “bodily” and a “spiritual” resurrection. Since there is no doubt in Paul about his participation in the bodily resurrection of believers, we must conclude that in verse 11 he refers to the spiritual resurrection.

Why the seeming doubt—which continues through the next several statements and leads to the title of this work? Read the verses following the expression of uncertainty.

Philippians 3:12-14 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things

which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul's pursuit of the upward call was attaining-arrival at-spiritual resurrection from the dead. He indicates that the arrival involves time.

Present day believers can participate in the same pursuit. But we must do so with the same biblical basis of truth that was the foundation of Paul's pursuit.

Paul's letter to the church at Rome contains a detailed and lengthy statement about the "in Christ" life—which includes spiritual resurrection. In reading Romans, we can understand the meaning of arrival at spiritual resurrection from the dead.

In Romans 6:3 Paul informs his readers that all believers have been baptized "into" Christ.

Or do you not know that as many of us as have been baptized into Jesus Christ have been baptized into His death.

One can understand this statement only by knowing what Paul had earlier written about Adam. In Romans 5:12-14a Paul reveals that Adam infected himself and the entire human race with a sin problem and a death problem.

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because

all sinned—13 (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam ...)

In the last few words of verse 14 Paul adds:

... who was a type of him who was to come.

The “who” refers to Adam who infected the entire human race with his own sin problem and his own death problem. The words “... him who was to come” obviously are a reference to Jesus. The word “type” shows that in at least one way Adam and Jesus are alike.

Since the “type of him who was to come” statement follows the revelation of Adam as the head of the human race, it reveals Jesus as the head of a race.

Because of the truths of Romans 5:12-14, we can make the following statements about Adam and about Jesus..

*Adam is the head of the natural race.
Therefore, when we entered his race,
things true of him became true of us.*

*Jesus is the head of the spiritual race.
Therefore, when we entered His race,
things true of Him became true of us.*

Three things became true of us, at our conversion, when the Holy Spirit baptized us into Jesus. We were crucified, buried, and resurrected. Each of these facts is mentioned immediately following Paul's statement that we have been baptized into Jesus.

Romans 6:3-5 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

All of God's children are spiritually crucified, buried, and resurrected.

This does not mean that all of God's children are experiencing crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. Consider the following statement. It is not a passage of Scripture, but it is a truth for us to live by in our walk with the Lord.

There are some things true of us in the Christian life that we will not experience until we choose to experience them and believe they are true of us.

An obvious example of the above statement is the forgiveness of the sins of a believer. Perhaps without exception we believers testify that in the first days of our Christian lives we would commit a sin, confess with a repentant heart, and then confess again and again.

According to 1 John 1:9, when we confessed our sins, God forgave us and there was no need of other confessions. But the fact that we continued to confess is indication of something being true of us we were not experiencing. When we began to believe we were forgiven, we began to experience forgiveness.

The same is true of our crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. All believers are spiritually crucified, buried, and resurrected. But, as in experiencing the forgiveness of our sins, we must choose to experience our crucifixion, burial, and resurrection and we must believe that we are crucified, buried, and resurrected.

Paul provides specific guidance in our choosing and believing. Following his explanation to the Roman church that all believers have been crucified, buried, and resurrected, he writes:

Romans 6:11-13 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God

as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

There are five commands in the verses above that we must obey to experience our crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. Not to obey is not to have the experience.

In the seventh chapter of Romans Paul gives indication of times when he had lapses in obeying these commands resulting in lapses in the experience.

Furthermore, even if there is consistency in obeying these verses, one must obey them to the point of becoming a slave to them. Paul says as much immediately following his listing of them. Read Romans 6:16.

Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

So, Paul's pursuit of an upward call, was the pursuit of a life of consistently experiencing his spiritual resurrection. He had not yet arrived at such a life but was continually pursuing it.

Paul wrote in Philippians 3:12 that God had laid hold on him that he may lay hold on resurrection living.

What did resurrection living mean to the Apostle Paul? According to Ephesians 2:5-6 resurrection living meant three things. Read the passage.

... even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus ...

The three things that the resurrection of Jesus included are: the entrance of the life of God, being raised up, and being seated at the right hand of God in the heavenlies.

Interpreted this means that when we received Jesus, God came into our lives; we were raised from among the spiritually dead (as indicated in Romans 6:4 and Philippians 3:11); and we were seated with Christ and other believers in heavenly places.

Certainly, Paul did not struggle with the thought that God was in him or with the need of victory over close fellowship with the spiritually dead.

In the Philippians 3:11 passage Paul must be thinking about living out his life experiencing God “in Christ” at the right hand of the Father in the heavenlies.

Paul had experiences of living in the presence of God. He wanted such a life in that atmosphere without interruption.

So, this is the upward call of Paul’s pursuit. And it is as available to believers today as it was to the Apostle Paul. We can involve ourselves in the same pursuit.

The upward call involves living in two worlds at the same time. Jesus was the first to do that. Over and over the Gospel of John records statements of Jesus indicating

such a fellowship with the Father. Jesus implied the fellowship in his conversation with Nicodemus.

John 3:13 records Jesus as saying the following during the conversation:

No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

The best manuscripts do not include the last part of the statement, "... who is in heaven."

But if Jesus never said that, He did say, "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven." This conversation happened long before the ascension of Jesus. So, He obviously is referring to an event during His life on earth. There is evidence that He referred to many such events. In fact, He likely lived before the Father continuously as He lived out His life here on earth.

In conclusion, we need to remember that we are just as crucified, buried, and resurrected as Paul was. We have the same possibilities as did Paul. Perhaps our need is to have the same desire for the continual experience of living in two worlds at the same time. May God grant us that desire.

Part Two

The Essentials of the Pursuit

In chapter one we introduced the truth that the object of Paul's pursuit was arrival at continual resurrection living. We now need to turn to the nature of Paul's pursuit. What is involved in the pursuit? In Philippians 3:15-16 Paul writes:

*Therefore let us, as many as are mature,
have this mind; and if in anything you*

think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you, 16 Nevertheless to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

Paul obviously means that as he does not yet continually experience resurrection living, neither do his readers. He invites his readers to join him in his pursuit.

In addition to the writings of Paul we also have the advantage of the Book of Hebrews to guide us in pursuing the experience of continuous life in the heavenlies.

Chapter Two

Pursuit Through Divine Revelation

In chapter one we saw that for one to experience enthroned living he must have knowledge that he was spiritually crucified, buried, and resurrected when he received Jesus as Lord and Savior.

In the book of Ephesians the Apostle Paul shows that understanding of these truths does not come just by reading the Bible or by being in a study class. We need divine revelation.

The passage in which Paul expresses this truth is a recorded prayer for his readers. Follow the beginning of the prayer in verses 15-18a.

Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know ...

In the time sequence of the prayer “the eyes of your understanding being enlightened” comes first. And that is a divine work. No one but God can open our spiritual eyes.

Paul then asks that with the eyes opened his readers will be given a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God.

The ultimate object of the prayer of Paul is that his readers would “know.” Read again the last statement in the prayer quoted above:

... that you may know...

Ephesians 1:18b-19 lists the particular things Paul desires that his readers will know.

... what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe ...

Paul prays that his readers with open eyes and a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God will know three things: all the blessings that God has in store for them; what they mean to God; and what is the exceeding greatness of God's power toward believers who continue in a life of faith. The idea of a "continual" faith is in the tense of the verb "believe."

There is a subtlety in this passage. If one is not careful, he will conclude that Paul is praying that we may know all the power that is available to Jesus. That is not his prayer. *Rather, his prayer is that his readers will know the power that is available to the ones who live in continual faith.*

Then in Ephesians 1:19b-20a Paul writes that there is a measurement of that power.

... according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ ...

It cannot be said too strongly that this is not a prayer that we may know the power God worked in Christ. It is a prayer that we will know how much power we have available to us when we live a life of continual trust in

God. *The measurement of that power is that which God worked in Christ.*

Paul then proceeds to tell us those things God did in Christ which He also will do in us.

First, Paul mentions that we have available to us the power that raised Jesus from the dead. Paul writes:

Ephesians 1:20 ... when He raised Him from the dead ...

All believers can testify to being raised from the spiritually dead in that receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior the Lord drew them away from that spiritually dead group and attracted them to the spiritually alive group.

And we must believe that God is able to continue to draw us away from that spiritually dead group. And, in fact, we will be so drawn away as we live the life of total dependence on Him.

The next expression of power that is available to those who live in continuing dependence on God is expressed in Ephesians 1:20b:

... seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places ...

This statement of the power expressing what is available to mere humans is so great that some will try to explain it away.

Paul let the promise stand. This is the life Paul was pursuing when he wrote his letter to the Philippians. He

wanted to arrive at this life. He wanted a moment-by-moment experience of life in the heavenlies.

We can be sure that even though Paul knew he had not arrived at a continual experience of life in the heavenlies, he had his times. Consider the following.

2 Corinthians 2:10 For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ ...

2 Corinthians 12:19 Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But we do all things, beloved, for your edification.

1 Thessalonians 3:9 For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God night and day praying ...

1 Timothy 5:21 I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.

2 Corinthians 2:17b ... but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

1 Timothy 6:13-14 *I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, 14 that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing ...*

These verses should be enough evidence to show that Paul knew the experience of living in the presence of God. It is this experience Paul desires without hindrance.

But there is more to this living in the heavenlies. Paul continues in Ephesians 1:21-23:

far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 23 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

What Paul prayed for his readers he pursued for himself. He had not arrived at experiencing it without break. Nor will we. But as Paul wrote to the Philippians, let all who are mature in the Lord live with the same passion he had to arrive at this place of living.

Perhaps as you read the words of this book you sense a need to ask God for divine revelation that you may grasp

the things Paul was praying for the readers of the Book of Ephesians.

Many have sought to teach these truths to others who could not seem to grasp them. Prayer for those we teach these truths to is a significant part of successful sharing of this glorious message.

Chapter Three

Pursuit Through Faith

As we have seen, faith is another essential for pursuing the upward call. In Christian living we must ever keep before us a truth that we have already expressed.

There are things true of us in the Christian life that we will not experience until we believe they are true of us and choose to experience them.

Faith and knowledge go hand-in-hand. In some cases, if we do not act in faith on the knowledge we possess, we will be without the experience.

In Romans 6:3-5 the Scriptures inform the reader that at conversion (the Holy Spirit) baptized him into the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

Then in verses 11-13 five commands are given which, when obeyed, result in one experiencing his crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. Each command is either to believe something that the Scriptures have declared to be true or to choose to do something.

In this chapter we will look at the first and fourth commands—the ones commanding that we believe something. The first command is found in verse 11. It reads:

Romans 6:11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Some translate “reckon yourselves” as “consider yourselves.” A better translation for this context is “believe yourselves.” Paul had just written that all believers have been baptized into the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. In verse 10 he had written that Jesus is dead to sin and alive unto God.

In verse 11 he writes, “Believe what I have written.” Believe that you are crucified, buried, and resurrected just as Jesus is. Believe that as Jesus is dead to sin and alive to God you are dead to sin and alive to God.

Believing that Jesus is alive to God is believing that He is at the right hand of the Father in heaven. It never enters our minds to think of the resurrected Christ being on this earth or anywhere else except at the right hand of the Father.

In the verse we are considering Paul writes, “Likewise you also believe yourselves to be dead indeed to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

We believe that Jesus is at the right hand of the Father. We are to believe also that we are seated at the right hand of the Father.

The fourth command for experiencing crucifixion, burial, and resurrection is found in Romans 6:13b. This is a command to both *choose* and *believe*. It reads:

*... present yourselves to God as being
alive from the dead ...*

In light of its context, this is a command that we present ourselves to God *as those who are crucified, buried, and resurrected*. The last part of the command is the faith feature of it—and it includes enthroned living.

Many of us can testify that we have encouraged other believers to present themselves unto God. But how often have we added the words “as one who is crucified, buried, and resurrected?”

All believers at the time of conversion to Christ are seated with Christ in the heavenlies. And we are to present ourselves to God as ones seated with Christ in the heavenlies.

A study of the theme of faith is not complete that does not include the eleventh chapter of the Book of Hebrews. The chapter begins with:

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith knows that there is another world. It is a spiritual world. Verse three states:

By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

Verse 27 refers to the faith of Moses.

By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

And there is the famous verse 6 showing the absolute necessity of faith if one is to please God. It reads:

But without faith it is impossible to please Him ...

These strong statements about faith immediately follow chapter ten of Hebrews that contains one of the vivid passages concerning believers having the privilege

of living in the heavenlies while still living in this present life. Read Hebrews 10:19-22a:

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22a let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith ...

As the Israelites traveled from Egypt to Canaan, God gave them instructions to build a place of worship that was called the tabernacle. The tabernacle was divided into two sections that were separated by a veil. God promised that in the section behind the veil called the Holy of Holies He would meet with them.

One time a year God would meet with the high priest in the Holy of Holies. During this time the high priest would make atonement for the sins of the people. On two different parts of his garments were the names of the tribes of Israel. Wearing the names of the tribes on his garments was symbolic of his taking the tribes of the nation before the Father.

When Jesus died on the cross, the Bible says that the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

The meaning is obvious. Through the death of Jesus, God opened the door for all who would come through

the blood of Jesus to enter into His presence in the heavenly Holy of Holies.

It is proclaimed in Hebrews 8:5 that the tabernacle of the wilderness was a pattern of heavenly things. There is a heavenly Holy of Holies and we are invited to step right in through the blood of the Lord Jesus.

Life in the Holy of Holies is life in the heavenlies—presented in the chapter just before the great faith chapter of the Bible.

There is another presentation of life in the heavenlies in the chapter immediately following the faith chapter of the Bible. Read the following in Hebrews 12:22-24.

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

The passage does not declare that we “will” come to Mount Zion. It says we have “already” come.

The Bible teaches clearly that we have been placed in the heavenlies. Will we believe that teaching? The truth may be so great we will attempt to ignore it or explain it away. Yet, the truth stands.

Chapter Four

Pursuit Through Concentration

If one desires to experience life in the heavenlies, he will not do so apart from unwavering concentration. In one sense, experiencing life in the heavenlies can be likened to learning a new trade. Concentration is necessary to success.

Occasionally, when some athletic team has an outstanding game, the coach will say, "My players had good concentration. They were focused." Concentration

was a contributing factor in the coach's team winning the game.

The same can be said of the business world. Every employer would love for his employees to concentrate on their work.

Paul knew that concentration was necessary for arrival at enthroned living as a continual experience.

There are a number of indications in Paul's testimony recorded in Philippians 3:4-14 that he was very focused in his pursuit of attaining enthroned living.

Concentration Through Willful Rejection of Competing Interests

At the very beginning of Paul's expression of desire to arrive at the resurrection from the dead he indicated a rejection of anything that would hinder his concentration on his pursuit of his goal. He testifies in verses 8-11:

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His

*sufferings, being conformed to His death,
If, by any means, I may attain to the
resurrection from the dead.*

The “all things” Paul counted as loss and rubbish is as broad as only Paul knew. But they included anything that stood in his way of continually experiencing enthroned living.

Only the individual seeking to arrive at the experience of enthroned living knows what those competing interests would be for himself. In each case it certainly would include any driving pre-Christian interests. It may include the passion to be successful in the accumulation of wealth. It may be an emotional interest in one’s favorite athletic team. Television is a common distraction.

Whatever those competing objects of interest are, they must willfully be rejected by the person who desires to arrive at the continuing experience of enthroned living. Paul illustrates the point with a statement that he wrote to the Corinthian church. Read his statement recorded in 1Corinthians 9:24-25:

*Do you not know that those who run in a
race all run, but one receives the prize?
Run in such a way that you may obtain it.
25 And everyone who competes for the
prize is temperate in all things.*

Years ago a college student from the United States won three gold medals at the Olympics. Upon returning

home he was asked how he prepared for the Olympics. His answer was, “I stayed hungry all the time.” He was focused.

Concentration Through Zealous Intention

Paul’s testimony shows yet another indication of concentration for arrival at enthroned living. In Philippians 3:14, the verse that provides the words for the title of our book, Paul indicates a deep yearning for the experience.

*I press toward the goal for the prize of
the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*

The word translated “press” in this verse indicates strenuous effort. It is well illustrated by the word “run.” Running is often an indication of urgency.

Paul had mentioned his zeal in his pre-Christian days in the first part of Philippians 3:6 where he writes:

*... concerning zeal, persecuting the
church ...*

Now he writes of a zeal as a Christian—his longing to live face-to-face with Jesus without hindrance.

There is something God-like about zeal for the Lord. Read the following about God the Father in Isaiah 59:17.

*For He put on righteousness as a
breastplate, And a helmet of salvation on*

*His head; He put on the garments of
vengeance for clothing, And was clad with
zeal as a cloak.*

Then there is that well-known statement about Jesus recorded in John 2:17 following our Lord's first experience of cleansing the temple. It reads:

*Then His disciples remembered that it was
written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten
Me up."*

Paul expressed in Philippians 3:14 his zeal to obtain the upward call in the word revealing intense concentration—the word “press.”

Concentration Through Reaching for “One” Goal

Paul's usage of the word “goal” indicates concentration. It also indicates that he had knowledge of the Greek athletic contests and that he is using them as an analogy picturing his deep desire. Read again Philippians 3:14.

*I press toward the goal for the prize of
the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

Reaching for enthroned living as a goal greatly enhances the ability to concentrate on that goal. Yet, victory is more certain if there is only “one” goal.

Paul expressed his desire for arriving at enthroned living by writing earlier in the passage that he had reduced his passion in life to “one” thing. He writes in Philippians 3:13 the following:

... but one thing I do ...

Paul’s statement reminds us of what Jesus said to Martha when she was so disturbed that Mary was not helping her. Mary was content to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to Him speak. When Martha expressed her disgust with Mary, Jesus said:

Luke 10:41b-42 “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

Notice our Lord’s usage of the word “one.” “One thing is needed.” And that one thing was sitting at the feet of Jesus.

King David indicated that he had that spirit of “one” desire. Read Psalm 27:4.

*One thing I have desired of the LORD,
That will I seek That I may dwell in the
house of the LORD All the days of my
life, To behold the beauty of the LORD,
And to inquire in His temple.*

The author of the Book of Hebrews, who encourages enthroned living, was writing to a distracted group of people when he penned Hebrews 12:1-2a:

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith ...

The author of Hebrews understood the need of undisturbed concentration on one thing.

A student attended a track meet to watch a friend compete in the 100 yard dash. Winning was important to the athlete. It was important to his friend. So his friend situated himself at the end of the track where he could watch the entire race—and, in particular, he would be right there when the friend won.

From the end of the track he could see that the friend got an excellent start. He kept his lead. It was obvious that he would win—until he quit running 20 yards from the finish line.

What happened? The runner said, “I had my eyes on the wrong goal.” At this particular track there were two finish lines about 20 yards apart.

The above event happened in modern-day United States. But Paul could have very well seen the same thing happen. According to what he wrote, Paul knew the

importance of knowing where he wanted to go. And he wanted arrival at experiencing enthroned living as a lifestyle.

Reaching for enthroned living as one's only goal greatly enhances the ability to concentrate on that goal.

Concentration Through Forgetting What is Behind

A person's past can be a heavy burden. Paul had a past that could easily have consumed his thinking with regrets. He could well remember his persecution of the church. We do not know all he had in mind when he wrote the following passage, but he knew that it stood in his way of concentration on life in the heavenlies.

Philippians 3:13-14 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Every believer has said or has heard someone say, "The thing that bothers me more than anything else is guilt." Guilt is a heavy burden to carry. It is a distraction from experiencing life in the heavenlies.

Another great distraction is remembering the unwise things we have said or done. They can keep us at the point of both guilt but and embarrassment.

Remembering unwise words or actions can consume our thoughts. The result is annoying distraction from having our minds on life in the heavenlies.

Forgetting our disappointments is also necessary if we are to be free to concentrate on arriving at the place of enthroned living. Most have struggled for something and failed in the attempt. The memories can be bitter and can possess our minds.

Another type of disappointment that can possess our minds is thinking of some sin that someone has committed against us. The bitterness of that experience can possess our minds and make it impossible for us to give attention to the life of abiding in the heavenlies.

And just as our past failures can serve as a distraction, so can our past successes. We can become so consumed in our thinking of how we accomplished something or how we were praised for accomplishing something that our minds are greatly distracted from seeking the experience of the life of enthronement.

***Concentration Through Reaching Forth to
That Which is Before***

Paul adds to his statement of forgetting the past a testimony that he is still reaching for that goal of experiencing that unbroken life of face-to-face fellowship with the Lord Jesus in the heavenlies.

It is commonly believed that Paul was in his latter years when he wrote Philippians. But he still had that youthful passion for the future. Regardless of how much

he may have matured in the Lord, his desire was to continue growing. He wrote in Philippians 3:13-14:

Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

One more time we see Paul's example of intense concentration on reaching the goal of the continual experience of enthroned living.

Concentration Through Thinking About the Things in Heaven and not the Things on the Earth

One of the most enlightening and helpful passages on enthroned living is found in Colossians 3:1-4 where Paul wrote:

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Translate the beginning words of the passage “If then” as “Since then” and you have an emphatic assertion that all believers are seated with Christ in the heavenlies. The exhortation of Paul is that since we are seated in heaven, we are to get our minds off the things on the earth and get them on the things of heaven.

There is an old saying critical of some Christians that goes like this: “He is so heavenly minded that he is of no earthly good.”

One could read what Paul writes to the church at Colossae and say that would be the result. But what is going on in heaven? Heaven is greatly interested in what is happening on planet earth. There is no better example of that than the statements in Luke chapter 15 of the great rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repents.

To have our minds on what is going on in heaven is not to escape responsibility. It is to get heaven’s directions for our ministries on planet earth; it is to experience heaven’s love for earth’s inhabitants.

Concentration Through Divine Assistance

Most of us can tell of struggles with our ability to concentrate. So, how will we be able to follow the Apostle in his testimony and in his commands? There is help.

We must remember that when we accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, we were crucified, buried, and resurrected. We must remember that one feature of that resurrection is that we have been seated with Christ in the heavenly places.

And let us remember that we experience our crucifixion, burial, and resurrection—including enthroned living—by living in obedience to the five commands of Romans 6:11-13.

If the thought of obeying specific commands seems to be legalism or if the obedience seems to be a burden too heavy to carry, there is good news for you.

In Romans 7:21 the Apostle Paul begins a rather lengthy section of his letter writing of various laws.

Among the laws Paul mentions are some that are so-called because they are like the law of gravity. They refer to circumstances or actions that never vary. In Romans 8:2 Paul writes the following:

*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ
Jesus has made me free from the law of
sin and death.*

According to this statement, the Holy Spirit operates by a law. That is, there is a work the Holy Spirit does in the hearts of all believers from which He never varies. He does not vary this activity within an individual. Nor does He vary this activity from individual to individual.

Now examine the law of the Spirit. According to the context, the word “life” is a reference to the “abundant life” and the “in Christ Jesus” statement is a reference to the New Testament concept of our “union with Christ” in crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. With those explanatory additions consider two ways that Romans 8:2 can be translated.

*The law of the Spirit of the abundant life,
in union with Christ Jesus has set me free
from the law of sin and death.*

*The law of the Spirit, which is the
abundant life in union with Christ, has
set me free from the law of sin and death.*

Either translation of the statement is legitimate. Both mean that the Holy Spirit is continually seeking to give us the abundant life through our union with Christ.

This means, of course, that the Holy Spirit is constantly prompting us to live out our union with Christ—including life in the heavenlies. We are not on our own in our desire to concentrate on the New Testament message of enthroned living. The Holy Spirit desires enthroned living for us. He continually prompts us to experience it.

Our obedience to the five imperatives of Romans 6:11-13 is, then, not just a human act of obedience but a response to the prompting and leading of the Holy Spirit. May we respond without delay.

Chapter Five

Pursuit Through Experiencing Crucifixion

Another essential that Paul mentions for arriving at enthroned living is found in his statement “*being conformed unto his death.*” The idea is that of arriving at a place of experiencing death just as thoroughly as Jesus experienced death. The passage reads:

... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His

*sufferings, being conformed to His death,
11 if, by any means, I may attain to the
resurrection from the dead.*

Paul implies that our experience of crucifixion and resurrection will be in the same order as that of Jesus. We experience crucifixion before resurrection.

In the passage on enthroned living in Colossians 3:1-4 Paul also brings together the concepts of crucifixion and resurrection. In verses two and three he writes:

*Set your mind on things above, not on
things on the earth. 3 For you died, and
your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

In this passage Paul relates our crucifixion to our ability to set our minds on the things above and to get them off the things of earth.

There are four features to our crucifixion. We died to sin, our old man was crucified, we died to the law, and we were crucified to the world.

Our discussion of how each of these features of our crucifixion enables our experience of enthronement will be far too brief, but we will at least introduce the thought in each of the four.

The first feature of our crucifixion is *we died to sin*. In Romans 6:1-2 Paul writes:

*What shall we say then? Shall we continue
in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly*

not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

Think of “sin” here as our sin nature which, according to Genesis 3:6 and Romans 1:22, is that we think we are wise. We are dead to that. When we experience death to sin, we are free from our own point of view of what we should do next.

When we live in the heavenlies, we experience Christ as life. God reveals to us what Christ chooses to do through us. Through experiencing our crucifixion we are no longer in the decision-making business. Christ is free to express His decisions through us.

The second feature of our crucifixion is that *our old man has been crucified*.

Romans 6:6 ... *knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him ...*

Our old man is our sin nature and all that it has produced in us. We see, then, that not only are we dead to our sin nature but our sin nature has been crucified. We have a double victory over living out of our own point of view.

The third feature of our crucifixion is that *we died to the law*. Romans 7:4 states:

Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to

another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

In experiencing our death to law we are free from struggling with serving God in human strength and free to permit Christ to be our life.

The fourth feature of our crucifixion is that we were *crucified to the world*. Paul wrote this to churches of Galatia. Read Galatians 6:14.

But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

When we experience our crucifixion to the world, we are liberated from seeking to live as the lost world around us lives. We are free to permit God to meet our needs and give His directions for our lives.

It cannot be repeated too often that we experience our crucifixion, burial, and resurrection by understanding that when we became God's children, we were crucified, buried, and resurrected and by obeying the five commands of Romans 6:11-13.

Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do

not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Experiencing crucifixion is essential to experiencing resurrection.

Part Three

The Blessings of the Pursuit

The upward call is a call to arrive at a continual experience of life in the heavenlies. The call possessed the Apostle Paul.

Paul knew by experience the great benefits of experiencing life in the heavenlies. He knew the sense of fulfillment and meaning that enthroned living had brought to him. He wanted to abide continuously in that position. He wanted others to do the same.

In this section we will permit the Scriptures to speak concerning the benefits of believers pursuing the upward call.

Chapter Six

Living in a Place of Authority

One of the most awesome benefits of life in the heavenlies is that of living in a place of spiritual authority. This truth is expressed in the prayer Paul recorded for his readers in the first chapter of Ephesians.

Paul's first expressed desire in his prayer is for God to grant to his readers a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him by first opening their spiritual eyes.

Ephesians 1:15-18a Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened ...

Paul then expresses his reason for the request. There are some things he wants them to know. He writes:

Ephesians 1:18b that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe ...

First, he wants his readers to know “the hope” of their calling. He wants them to know all God has for them now and throughout eternity.

Secondly, Paul wants his readers to know “the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.” That is, he wants the readers to know all they mean to God.

The third thing Paul wants his readers to know is “the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe.”

The word translated believe is in a tense of continual action. The power is for those who live a life of trust in God.

Paul continues his prayer by introducing the thought that there is a measure to that power. It is found in Ephesians 1:19b-20a:

... according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ ...

This expression of the measure of the power available to those living by faith has caused some to misunderstand the passage. They have thought that Paul desires that we know the power that was available to Jesus. That is the wrong understanding. The power is available to those who live in continual trust in God.

Then Paul moves to specific expressions of that power. In Ephesians 1:20 he writes:

... which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places ...

Paul writes in Ephesians 2:6 that all believers have already been raised from the dead and have been seated in the heavenlies.

... and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus ...

The verbs in the verse above are past tense. It has already happened. But in the prayer of chapter one, Paul is saying that those who live by faith can actually experience what has already happened.

Even the awesome thought of experiencing life in the heavenlies does not exhaust the power available to those who live the life of faith. Paul writes on in Ephesians 1:21-23. Christ has been seated:

... far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Those children of God who live in faith experience life in the same position of authority. In that position they are seated above “principalities powers and every name that is named.”

Paul uses these same terms again in Ephesians 6:12 where he writes:

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

When we interpret the statement of our position in enthronement with Paul's description of Satan, we understand that in enthronement we are far above Satan.

Paul goes on to say in the passage on enthronement that all things are under our feet. The implication is clear. Satan is under our feet.

In order to get a better understanding of what is involved in the experience of living in the enthroned position with Satan under our feet we need to investigate other passages of Scripture.

One of those passages is a description of Satan found in Hebrews 2:14, where we find the following:

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.

This serpent, this vicious lion, this accuser of the brethren, this evil being was "destroyed" when Jesus died on the cross. Admittedly, the usage of the word "destroy" to translate the word used in this passage may give the wrong impression. We know that Satan is still alive and well. Yet, Jesus did something to him at the cross.

It is better to understand the idea of the passage as a "putting out of power." While Satan is greatly feared—and seemingly overly respected by some—we must admit that the death of Jesus took away his power. It would not be good for us to spend time seeking to understand all of

that. As believers we should, though, live out our lives believing that.

Another passage indicating that Satan was dealt a blow when Jesus died on the cross is John 12:31-32.

Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. 32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.

The Scriptures say that those enjoying enthroned living have a defeated Satan under their feet.

But there is more in the Scriptures concerning a believer's victory over Satan. Consider four statements made by Jesus.

Matthew 17:20 So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

Matthew 21:21 Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done.

Mark 11:23 *For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.*

Luke 17:6 *So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."*

With those passages in mind, consider the following statement from the Book of Zechariah.

Zechariah 4:6-7a So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts. 7 Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! ..."

This passage presents opposition to the work of God as a mountain that can be moved. Permitting that to interpret the "mountain" passages of Jesus and understanding that Satan is in opposition to the advancement of the Kingdom of God, we can understand that there is power to move him and his opposition out of the way.

An immediate warning is necessary. We must not think that we can get in our cars and drive through our communities and totally remove Satan and His opposition. We must move against Satan and his kingdom under the direction of the Holy Spirit. A pertinent passage is Matthew 16:19.

And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

It has been correctly pointed out by others that “will be bound in heaven” literally translated would be “shall have already been bound in heaven” and the “whatever you loose on earth will be loosed...” is literally translated as “whatever you loose on earth shall be having been loosed in heaven.”

The “binding” and “loosing” in heaven before we bind and loose on earth shows that we must bind and loose under the direction of a sovereign God.

There are those who can testify about many occasions when mountains have moved when spoken to under the Lord’s direction. They also would testify that there have been times when the opposition did not move. In those cases the opponent had not already been bound in heaven.

There are definite times when God has “bound” and “loosed” in heaven and guided one of His children to do the same from the enthroned position. When that believer responds positively, victories come. Such speaking has

cleared out a bad atmosphere, freed a lost person to receive Jesus, or liberated one of God's children to come back to Him. And these victories are only examples of what God does through His believing children.

Our position of authority in the heavenlies is another of those biblical truths that seems too good to be true. Consequently, some will try to explain it away. Some will reject it.

There is, though, a great power for ministry for those who will accept the truth. And that acceptance will result in far more effective fruitfulness for the Kingdom of God.

Chapter Seven

Living is a Place of Divine Guidance

“Pray for God to tell me what to do in this matter.”
How many times has someone made such a prayer request of you? How many times have you made that request of others?

Perhaps the prayer request comes in another form.
“Pray that I will know the will of God in this matter.”

God specializes in revealing His will for our lives.
And He has made it possible for us to know His will.

We should be aware that God has a timing for expressing His will. For example, the Lord may not reveal one's life calling until adulthood. But when God is ready to make known His will, He will do so. Of course, only those in fellowship with God are prepared to receive the revelation.

We need to keep in mind another factor about knowing God's will. He not only has a will for His children but He also gives moment-by-moment directions for living out His will. Ephesians 2:10 states:

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

God has prepared His children—we are his workmanship—for a lifetime of good works that He prepared beforehand.

When we abide in the heavenlies through experiencing our crucifixion, burial, and resurrection, we are in the very best position to know the will of God. Read Colossians 3:1-4.

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ

in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Translate the “If then you were raised ...” as “Since then you were raised ...” It is obvious from the words following this reference to being raised that Paul has in mind every feature of our resurrection—including being in the heavenlies.

While experiencing life with Christ in the heavenlies, we are to get our minds off the things of the earth and get them on the things of heaven that we might be guided in our actions on earth.

For our purposes in this chapter, we need to give most of our attention to verses three and four. Verse three says:

For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Our death here is a reference to our crucifixion when we accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior. But we want to focus on the statement “your life is hidden with Christ.”

When the New Testament says something is hidden, it does not mean that it cannot be known or understood. It means that it can be understood only by divine revelation.

The thing that is hidden according to this passage is the “life” of the believer. You could say of yourself even as you read, “My life is hidden.” You can then add, “And

the only way I will know my life is by divine revelation.” That is, God must guide us in the specifics of the things He desires that we say and do.

Take notice that our lives are hidden “with Christ in God.” Paul wrote to the Philippians “for me to live is Christ.” That is, “Christ is our life.”

Since our lives are hidden “with Christ in God,” the revelation we need is what Christ desires to do through us. When we receive that light, we know His desires of where we are to go and what we are to say and do.

Now give attention to the following words recorded in Colossians 3:4:

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Unfortunately, this translation of the original language has left some understanding this passage as a statement about the return of Christ.

There is nothing in the context of this passage concerning the return of Christ. The passage concerns believers keeping their minds off the earth and on what is happening in heaven. What follows the statement has nothing to do with the last days.

A look at Colossians 1:26 is helpful in understanding the passage before us. It reads:

... the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

The word translated “hidden” in 1:26 is the same as the one translated “hid” in 3:3. The word translated in 1:26 as “revealed” is the same word that is translated “appears” in 3:4.

The Colossians 3:4 passage is not about the return of Christ. It is about the revelation to each of us of what Jesus desires to do and say through us next.

We cannot by examining the things on earth determine what we are to say or do next. We must receive this knowledge by divine revelation.

And when we live out of divine direction for our lives, we immediately experience a fruitfulness we have not had before. We no longer have to make things happen. God has already prepared the way for us to be at the places we need to be and to say the things we need to say and to do the things we need to do.

Many serve others through prayer more than in any other way. Some pray only in times of emergency. Some have a daily time of prayer. Some believe God has called them to a lifetime ministry of prayer.

Prayer is a meaningful experience. And most of us have a continual desire to be more effective in our prayer lives.

The Apostle John records one of the greatest prayer promises in the entire Bible. Look in 1 John 5:14-15 and read:

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know

that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

This statement by the Apostle John removes the struggle from prayer and makes prayer more effective.

For us to pray according to the promise above, we first permit God to tell us His desires for our prayers. When we know that and then ask God to do what He desires to do, we will have answers to our prayers.

It is true that there are some things we do not need to ask God to do. He is going to do them whether we ask Him or not. For example, we do not waste time asking God to permit the sun to rise tomorrow. We know that the sun will rise tomorrow if Jesus does not return. We know it because it is in the plan of God. He will cause the sun to rise tomorrow.

On the other hand, there are some prayers that God is not going to answer. It is conceivable that on the night before our Lord's crucifixion some of the disciples spent the night asking the Father to deliver Jesus from Pilate and the Jewish leaders. If they did, their prayers were not answered. It was the will of God that Jesus die on the cross.

There are, though, countless things God will do but He is waiting on someone to ask Him to do them.

Our place is to permit the Father to guide us in our prayers. When we permit Him to make known His heart and breathe back to Him the thing He has spoken to us, our prayers will be answered.

The writer of Proverbs 13:12 shares a bit of information that we can all relate to our prayer lives. The passage says:

*Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But
when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.*

Unanswered prayer over a period of time can take the heart out of our desire to be a person of prayer. On the other hand, a few months of answers to our prayers can fill us with a sense of accomplishment and with a sense of meaning in life.

Abiding in the heavenlies is the very best way to stay in communion with God—permitting Him to express His will for our lives.

Chapter Eight

Living in a Place of Abounding Joyfulness

Keep in mind that we are commanded to believe we are alive to God just as Jesus is alive to God. Jesus is at the right hand of the Father. We are at the right hand of the Father, and we are to believe it.

It is not heresy to believe you have been placed in the presence of God. But it is disobedience not to believe it.

One of the features of life in the heavenlies is that of abounding joyfulness. There is clear evidence of this in

the Scriptures. Keep in mind the atmosphere of the heavenlies. Read again Hebrews 12:22-24a.

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24a to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling ...

Notice that the passage does not say, “We will someday come.” He writes “... you have come ...” He wants us to know that heaven is where God has placed us and it is the atmosphere in which God wants us to experience life.

Heaven is described as “Mount Zion,” “the city of the living God,” and “the heavenly Jerusalem.”

Angels are there, other believers like you are there, God is there, all those who have departed this life knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior, including your family members who “died in the Lord,” are there. Jesus is there, and the blood of sprinkling is there.

We can, and should, communicate with God the Father and God the Son. Just thinking of the possibilities of that communication should fill us with joyfulness.

It would be useless and even heretical for us to attempt to communicate with the angels, or with departed

loved ones, or with some believer living in some foreign country.

But think about this. You know that your departed loved one is there free from all the negatives of this life. He is there having been made perfect. He is there where all is love. He is there where all is light. He is there in a continuous, glorious atmosphere of worship.

And spiritually you are there with him. You cannot see him. You cannot touch him. You cannot talk with him. You cannot hear him. But nevertheless, you know you are in the very same atmosphere with him.

Spend some time in meditation on that reality and a joy from the Lord will surely begin to make its way into your heart.

As you meditate on the atmosphere of the heavenlies, think on these statements from the fifteenth chapter of Luke:

7 I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

10 Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Have you heard of the numbers of people who are receiving Jesus each day around the earth? Thousands are receiving Jesus every day. Not a minute goes by but

that heaven bursts forth with praise that another has accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior and is seated at the right hand of the Father. Think about it and rejoice.

A pastor was sharing with his wife thoughts about the joy of heaven. He said, "Have you ever thought about the welcoming committees?" She knew that he did not get that term from the Bible, and said, "What do you mean?"

He then suggested that she think of God's children who depart this life every day to be received into heaven. One could be filled with indescribable joy thinking of that reality.

Family reunions on this earth are joyful enough. But year after year it is obvious to all that the older ones are more feeble and less healthy.

Contrast that with the reunion in heaven. God has perfected the feeble and less healthy in every way. There is no such thing as declining health. And the atmosphere in which they have the reunion is one of perfect love.

Believe that we are alive to God as Jesus is alive to God. Then you will know that the words of this chapter are true. Meditate on the position in which God has placed you. Let these thoughts fill your mind and a divine joyfulness will be the result.

Chapter Nine

Living in a Place of Increasing Glory

A study of the term “glory” throughout the Scriptures yields a broad development of the theme. Among the prominent passages is the revelation of His glory that God gave to Moses.

It is recorded in Exodus 33:18 that Moses said to God, “Please show me your glory.” The following statement of Exodus 34:5-7 is the account of God’s revelation of His glory to Moses.

Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. 6 And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, 7 keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

The passage conveys the truth of God's love, His goodness, His faithfulness (truth), and His judgment on sin.

Romans 6:4 declares that Jesus was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father:

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

This passage grants a further understanding of God's glory by revealing it as God's power.

Perhaps the best-known passage concerning glory is the one relating the incident of the angel coming to the

shepherds on the night of the birth of Jesus. It reads in Luke 2:9:

And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

In this statement God's glory is revealed as radiance. A light so bright shone round about the shepherds that "they were greatly afraid."

With those Scriptural views before us, we move now to our discussion that living in the heavenlies is living in a place of glory. This truth is expressed clearly in the third chapter of Paul's second letter to the Corinthian church.

Almost all of chapter three concerns glory. Paul introduces the thoughts on glory by contrasting the glory of God on Moses in ministering the law with the glory on believers in the ministry of grace. The following is stated in 2 Corinthians 3:7-11:

But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, 8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? 9 For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds

much more in glory. 10 For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. 11 For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious.

On two occasions in the above passage Paul writes that the brilliant glory on Moses was passing away.

The first biblical reference to the glory that came upon the face of Moses is in the record of the giving of the Ten Commandments. Read Exodus 34:29:

Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him.

Later the passage reveals that this was not a one-time event but was something that happened repeatedly. Read Exodus 34:34-35:

But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. 35 And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses,

that the skin of Moses' face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.

Exodus 33:11 records that even before the construction of the tabernacle Moses communed with God in a tent. The communion was face-to-face.

So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

Perhaps this also is in the mind of Paul as he writes his second letter to the Corinthians. Also, he could have had in mind Numbers 7:89.

Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim; thus He spoke to him.

It was Moses' face-to-face time with God that resulted in the shining of his face. But always that glory would pass away.

Let us return in our thinking to the third chapter of 2 Corinthians and Paul's contrast of the glory on Moses

ministering the law with the glory on those ministering the Gospel. Considering verses 14-17 as a parenthesis, place together verses 13 and 18.

...[We are] unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. ... 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

This passage places us in a position of beholding the glory of the Lord. In 2 Corinthians 4:6 the Scriptures place the glory of God in the face of Jesus. The verse reads:

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

As Moses had his face-to-face encounters with the Lord, so may believers. And where would that be other than in the heavenlies?

But there is a vast difference between the glory that came on Moses and the glory that could come on

believers. In the case of Moses the glory would fade away. In the case of present-day believers it is a glory that can become more and more radiant. It is not necessary for believers to leave the face-to-face encounter.

Think of the three faces mentioned in the passage. The face of Moses had a fading glory. The face of Jesus has a constant glory. The believer who abides in the heavenlies has a countenance of increasing glory.

It is important that we look at two other passages before leaving this all-important discussion. First consider Paul's statement in Romans 8:17-18.

... and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

In what may be the greatest promise in the Bible, Paul writes that we are joint heirs with Christ. Then he adds that as heirs we will receive “glory.”

Paul says, though, that the glory that is ours is the result of suffering. The introduction of the theme of suffering moves us to the last passage in this discussion. It is as follows in 2 Corinthians 4:17-18:

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet

the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Suffering results in glory. And it does so because it places us before the Lord. But those who enter into a continual life in the heavenlies have an increasing glory in addition to that which results from suffering.

It has often been said that you can't take it with you. And that is true as far as material possessions are concerned. There is, however, one thing you can take with you that will last for eternity—the glory of God on your countenance.

Chapter Ten

Living in a Place of Divine Motivation

Speaking to pastors concerning church members, one famous pastor said, “You have to keep them running all the time. If you don’t they will quit on you.” Some pastors seem to have the gift to “keep them running all the time.” Most do not. And even if they did, the motivation might not always be within the will of God?

There is strong motivation for Christian service to the person who abides in the heavenlies.

Motivation in Evangelism and Missions

In the first place, abiding in the heavenlies provides strong motivation to participate in the work of missions and evangelism.

One abiding in the heavenlies is continuously aware of the joyfulness in that atmosphere because of the many from around the earth coming to know Jesus as Lord and Savior.

An abiding awareness of what brings joy to God should always be a motivation to participate in the spread of the Gospel of Jesus.

While abiding in the heavenlies one knows that he is in an atmosphere with redeemed ones—both living and dead—from every nation, race, tribe, and language. Meditation on that fact creates strong desire to engage in spreading the gospel of Jesus “unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Angels are in the atmosphere of the heavenlies. And while angels have no testimony of being saved to give, they have participated in the spread of the good news of Jesus. One’s awareness of being with the angels, then, is encouragement to tell others about Jesus.

The Book of Hebrews tells us that in the heavenlies we are in the presence of God as judge. Meditation on that fact intensifies our desire to participate in missions and evangelism.

Paul testifies in 2 Corinthians 5:10-11 that thoughts about Judgment Day put a passion in him to see the lost come to know Jesus.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 11 Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

The blood of sprinkling is in the heavenlies. Who could meditate on the shed blood of Jesus without desire to spread the message of the Lord Jesus?

And we have already seen that to abide in the heavenlies is to abide in the place where God reveals His will. The revelation that God gives will continually be leadership to be involved in the spread of the Gospel of Jesus. It may include such things as giving to mission causes or personal involvement in some mission effort. There will surely be an inner urge to pray for the spread of the gospel. There will be leadership to tell someone about Jesus.

Philippians 3:10 reveals another motivation for evangelism from the enthroned position:

... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death ...

What is “*the fellowship of his suffering?*” At least one answer is in a statement that a highly respected pastor

made while speaking to a group of college students. He stunned them with the following statement:

There is great grief in heaven.

The students had always heard the opposite. There is no grief in heaven. The guest pastor then explained himself. He said that he spoke of the grief in the heart of Jesus for the salvation of the unsaved.

Whatever Paul had in mind when he wrote of his desire to enter into the fellowship of the sufferings of Jesus, it must have included the suffering of a burden for the unsaved.

Has anyone ever expressed a greater desire to see the lost come to Christ than Paul did in his letter to the Romans? In Romans 9:1-3 he wrote:

I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit 2 that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh ...

It would only be conjecture to say that Paul's entire burden was the result of enthroned living. On the other hand, it would likely be incorrect to say that enthroned living had nothing to do with Paul's passion to see his Jewish brothers and sisters come to Christ.

In a less emotional way Paul again expressed his desire for the salvation of Jewish people in Romans 10:1. He wrote:

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.

In 2 Corinthians 5:14 Paul wrote:

For the love of Christ compels us ...

Where would one find a better place to receive such powerful motivation than being in the very presence of Christ in the heavenlies.

An Old Testament example of how the burden of one can spread to others in the same atmosphere is found in Ezra 10:1. It reads:

Now while Ezra was praying, and while he was confessing, weeping, and bowing down before the house of God, a very large assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept very bitterly.

The suffering of Jesus for the lost can become ours when we live in the atmosphere of the heavenlies.

We could emphatically conclude that a church filled with members who are abiding in the heavenlies will carry a burden for the advancement of the gospel.

Motivation for Christian Service and Fellowship

Remember that as Paul writes of experiencing life in the heavenlies, the author of Hebrews writes of the same life as experiencing God in the Holy of Holies. In Hebrews 10:22-25 we find the following:

... let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Notice that it is while we are experiencing God in the Holy of Holies that we are to “consider one another in order to stir up love and good works ...”

One could wonder why the Lord would have us in a place of face-to-face fellowship with Him and then desire that we think of others.

There is not another passage any more emphatic than this to prove that experiencing our life of oneness with Christ in crucifixion, burial, and resurrection does not lead to laziness but leads to vigorous activity.

It is while in the heavenlies that we consider each other to stir up one another to love and good works. *Even as we are face-to-face with the Father and the Son we can also be face-to-face with fellow believers to stir up each other to love and good works.*

There is another motivation God gives, as we are face-to-face with Him in the Holy of Holies. We are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. The author of Hebrews admits that some are guilty of such forsaking.

We can be certain that those who experience life in the Holy of Holies will respond to the motivation from God to assemble with other believers.

Motivation to Teach Believers the Life of Grace

There is strong desire on the part of one who is experiencing life in the heavenlies to tell someone else of the experience and how to have it. Just as a new believer wants others to know of his new-found life, the person experiencing life in the heavenlies wants others to know the experience of enthroned living.

Chapter Eleven

Living in a Place of Continual Grace

Returning again to Paul's statement about enthroned living in Ephesians 2:5-7, we read:

... even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in

*Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come
He might show the exceeding riches of His
grace in His kindness toward us in Christ
Jesus.*

It is Paul's contention that to experience life in the heavenlies is to experience continuing grace.

Paul knew that life in the heavenlies is a place of grace because it is a place of faith. In fact, he knew that it is a place of increasing grace because it is a place of increasing faith.

Faith grows as one ponders the number of people being saved. Faith grows in the realization of the numbers leaving earth that are arriving in heaven. Faith grows as one meditates on the intercessory work of the Lord Jesus.

Faith grows as one reflects on the spirit world of the heavenlies and realizes that this is the true world.

Faith grows as one experiences the power that is his through abiding in the place of authority.

Life in the heavenlies is a life of grace because to experience life there, we must experience our crucifixion. As we are blessed with the changes God makes in us through the experience of our crucifixion, God increases our faith. And at the same time freedom from the know-it-all attitude frees us for a life of utter dependence on God.

One could go on and on. But the message is that life in the heavenlies is a life of grace because it is a life of faith. And the more one experiences enthronement the more one grows in faith.

As we abide in the heavenlies, we are living in two worlds at the same time. The growing faith that God gives as we abide in the heavenlies results in abundant fruitfulness through our lives on planet earth. Knowing that God is using us with those around us then adds to our growth in faith.

Chapter Twelve

Living in a Place of Personal Acquaintance with Jesus Our Lord

In the seventeenth chapter of John the Apostle records a lengthy prayer of Jesus just hours before he was taken from the Garden of Gethsemane. Among other things He prayed:

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

In saying that knowing God the Father and God the Son is “eternal life” Jesus is not making reference to a salvation experience only. He is also referring to the “abundant life” mentioned in John 10:10.

In Philippians 3:10 Paul writes of knowing Jesus. He uses the same word for “know” as Jesus uses in John 17:3. Paul’s statement is:

... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death ...

But notice that in Paul’s reference to knowing Jesus there is also a reference to knowing the power of the resurrection. Paul expresses a desire to know the enthronement experience—and a desire to know Jesus. He places the two areas of knowledge together.

So, we can conclude that abiding in the heavenlies is the best place to know Jesus. Bible students tell us that the word translated here as “know” means to know by experience.

Paul wanted to become acquainted with enthroned living by experiencing enthroned living. And he wanted to know Jesus by becoming personally acquainted with Him.

We all tell others things about someone. And that gives a partial acquaintance with the person. You likely have said to someone you have just met, “I have heard so much about you that I feel I already know you.”

And before Jesus departed this earth He told His followers that the Holy Spirit would continue to reveal to them things about Himself. John 16:13-15 records the promise in the following words of our Lord to His disciples:

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

We know about Jesus because the Holy Spirit teaches us. The Holy Spirit enlightens us as we read and study the Scriptures.

But there is such a thing as “knowing Jesus.” and that is what the Apostle Paul had in mind.

Paul knew that living in communion with Jesus in the heavenlies gave him a great advantage for a better acquaintance with Jesus.

As we experience enthronement by living out our oneness with Christ, at the same time we are filled with the Holy Spirit. So, as we are face-to-face with Jesus in enthronement we are filled with the Holy Spirit Who is revealing more and more about Jesus.

It is as though we are with a friend who has just introduced us to another of his friends. As we talk with the new-found friend, our mutual friend tells us of his high qualities. We are getting acquainted with our new-found friend through personal experience and through words of our mutual friend.

Surely, we all want to experience life to the fullest. And the way we experience life to the fullest is to come to an increasing acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ through experiencing life in the heavenlies.

Conclusion

Experiencing life in the heavenlies was so fulfilling to the Apostle Paul that he reduced his goal in life to one thing—experiencing life in the heavenlies without hindrance.

One is reminded of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration with Peter, James, and John. When the glory of God came upon the Lord Jesus, the Apostle Peter was evidently so awed by the glory of the experience that

he boldly suggested that they all stay there. Matthew 17:4 records the following words of Peter.

Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

What Peter, James, and John experienced for a brief moment on a mountain can be a growing and a far more glorious experience of believers today living in the heavenlies.

Paul makes it very plain that his pursuit of a consistent life in the heavenlies is a work in progress. He writes in Philippians 3:12-13:

Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead ...

Then in verses 15 and 16 Paul gives a word of advise to his readers.

Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you

think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. 16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

It was because Paul had not arrived at an unbroken experience of life in the heavenlies that he was in “pursuit” of that arrival. May we live by the same rule.

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As an Assistant Warden employed in the Arkansas Dept. of Correction, I am faced with daily challenges that can often be very discouraging. David Kuykendall's book, "Pursuit of the Upward Call" has given the encouragement to face these challenges as one who is "alive from the dead." As I experience my "upward calling," I see life and its challenges from a Heavenly point of view. I recommend the reading of this book to those who may be suffering from daily problems and worries. Victory may be found in its pages.

Though Jesus told us that "the truth shall set you free," His divine prerequisite for that spiritual emancipation is "you shall know the truth." In *The Pursuit of the Upward Call* David Kuykendall presents the biblical truth of the believer's enthronement with Christ with such crystal clear simplicity that the reader can know and thereby experience the victorious freedom our Lord promised.

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