



Sermon – December 2, 2018
Chris Osborne

Verses Covered

Ephesians 1:20 – 25
1 John 5:14 – 15
Romans 8:26 - 28

So if you're visiting with us, we are walking through the book of Ephesians. We're at the end of the first chapter. But before we go there, I want to read you a passage from 1 John, chapter 5. Now I want you to listen carefully to what this says. It has to do with where we are in Ephesians. When you, I've talked about this, the first three chapters of Ephesians, about your position in Christ which was settled through God's approval of it, Jesus' accomplishment of it, and the Holy Spirit's applying of it. So that position is settled. Now as he walks you past that, now he's walking you through various benefits that you have because of the position you're in. Position cannot be lost. And in 3:4 through 6 will be my condition which is my response in my life to the position that I have. Now one of the position benefits we've been walking through, and I want you to listen to what John writes and then we'll go back to Ephesians. Here's what he says.

¹⁴This is the confidence that we have toward Him, that, if we ask things according to His will,

Now understand what that means. When I come into my prayer closet, I don't get to come in with my list which is what most of us do. We step in, we give Him our list. We say, "OK, God, here are the 8 things. I need you to do this here, this here, this here, this here." And then we're gone. As if somehow we get to dictate to Him how He does what He needs to do in this world. I don't get to do that. I come into the realm and I get quiet and I listen to His list that He wants me to pray about in His way. And so here's what he says.

If we ask according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the request which we have asked from Him.

In other words, prayer's always a "yes" answer. It's never yes, no, wait, maybe. No, no, no, no, no. It's always a yes if I pray His list in His way. Now when you come to Ephesians 1, you have this great obvious God's prayer that He wants you to pray. Paul prayed this for the entire church. God has this prayer in here that the Holy Spirit wrote through Paul for you to pray, particularly if

you're a mom and dad. You pray this for your children. You pray it for your friends. You pray it for your spouse. You pray it for yourself because you're praying God's list here. Remember he said, "I want you to have the spirit of wisdom and revelation." That was the first part of the prayer. In other words, that I am what I should be and I'm where I should be.

Number two, that I understand that when I die, that's so real that it will affect my ability to stay where I should be and be what I should be. Thirdly, that there's a power in me through Christ that is greater than anything in the world. We get, and I don't know what it is with us, it's like we don't even read the Bible. We hand-wring and all this stuff in America. Listen, I don't care what happens in America. Our Jesus is bigger than anything that happens in this country. And we have got to quit wringing our hands and being terrified or you don't understand that third aspect of prayer. So particularly the parent, you're going to say, "God, look, let my kids know your power, your power." He uses the Greek word, the strength that comes from You is in us. Let them know that. And then the last thing he tells you to pray. He's going to be very precise here, OK. But the last thing he wants you to pray is that your children, your spouse, yourself, your friends, people in this church, that are in your circle, now listen. That they will understand absolutely as best we can who Jesus really is.

Now listen. Look down in verse 20. He says,

²⁰which He produced in Christ, raising when He raised Him from the dead,

He's talking about God's power. And he says it was demonstrated in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. Now we don't ever talk about the resurrection except Easter. When in fact it's the very basis of everything we know. He's the only person ever in this planet that went into the ground, came out of the ground, and didn't go back in the ground. He's the only one. Now why's that so important? Because when Jesus died, if He goes into the ground and he dies, we go into the ground because of our sin. Our rebellion against the Creator, that's why I go into the ground, I stay there. Because of my failure to be what He has chosen for me to be. Bible says, all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Fallen short of that, I go into the ground, I don't come back out. Jesus went into the ground and came back out for one simple reason. It was the absolute clear proof that He didn't go into because of His sin. He went in because of mine. It's my fault that He went in. Not His. And that's why He came out and He didn't go back in. He went home. So it's the absolute proof. Which means there isn't a way to God. There is one way. When Jesus said, I, and He says it in the Greek, I alone am the way, the truth, the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. The reason He says that is because He's the only one that's died, gone into the ground, come back out, and gone home. Everybody else has gone back in. He paid the penalty. There isn't any other hope except Jesus. That's it. Now you say, "Well I come to a Baptist church." Well that isn't going to help you. You can sit in a garage all day; you're not going to turn into a car. You can sit in here all day; it's not going to turn you into a Christian. When the Holy Spirit speaks to you about Jesus and you believe it, and then the Holy Spirit indwells you and you're forgiven; that's when everything's set. And that's the only hope we have. Now He did that to open up a personal, experiential relationship with the Creator. That's what He did. It's not a group salvation. It's individual. And it's personal and it's in your experience. You can actually, in your person, through Jesus Christ, experience the Father's presence in your life. That is why the resurrection is critical. It's the only way we have a shot. And it is to open us up

to the Father. And He's it. So there isn't any other thing. I don't have any other message for you except Jesus. And the resurrection is the proof that it was my fault He went in and it's the proof that my fault can be fixed.

Now here's the second thing. Look at what he says, and he says it in two ways.

²⁰which He performed in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and He sat Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, ²¹above all ruler, authority, power, lordship, and above every name being named, not only in this age but in the ages to come. ²²And He put all things under His feet,

Now he says that twice. If I'm over something, it's under my feet. If it's under my feet, I'm over that thing. But he says that twice because he wants you to be absolutely certain Jesus is the ruler in the universe. He's on the right hand of God. Everything's under Him. He's above everything. Not only in this age, but in the coming age. He's the eternal ruler. That is the end of the story. It says it both ways because we don't buy that. He is, therefore, God. The Mormons are wrong. When they say that Adam became a God, had relations with Mary and produced Jesus, they're wrong. When the Jehovah's Witness deny the deity of Jesus Christ, they're wrong. He is God Himself. That's why everything is under Him and He's over everything. Only everything is under God. Only God is over everything. He is over everything. Everything is under Him. He is God. End of discussion. Which means, by the way, OK, that everything He tells me to do, I'm bound to do. As a matter of fact, if I understand two things, that He took my place and that He's God, then let me tell you something. I don't want in my life, if I really understand those two things, I don't want in my life what put Him on the cross. And I want in my life what qualified Him for the cross. I mean those two things should be true. When I look at God's hand, "I know what you say, but." Listen. Then you don't get it. You don't understand really in your soul what it means for Him to be raised from the dead. And you don't really understand in your soul what it means that He rules now and will rule to come, and He is God Himself. You don't get that or that would not be your heart. You don't put a however on a statement. You say, "God, You said that. I'm in. There you go." That's how we do that. If I understand that He's God, we have to do what He says. And that's not always our way. And then He goes into Jericho, a city of priest, guys who should know who God is and demonstrate in the city. And he goes in there and there's this tax collector named Zacchaeus. And you've got to understand. The tax collectors were vile. I mean they really did betray their own country. They were Jews that Rome set up as tax collectors and they told them, "Look whatever you can get, you get. We charge this amount. If you can get beyond that, you keep whatever you get." And the tax collectors ripped off their people and they became unbelievably wealthy. Zacchaeus is no different. So Jesus comes into town. Zacchaeus is up in the tree. Jesus comes along. You've got to remember, I don't know whether or not he was married, but the odds are if he was, his wife's either as bad as he is or she's embarrassed. But the odds are he probably wasn't. Nobody spends time with him. So he hears about the big celebrity of the day, Jesus, coming into town. Climbs up in the tree. He's sitting there watching. Jesus stops under the tree and He looks up and He goes, "Hey. Come one down. We're going to have a little lunch today. Hurry up." In the Bible, I love the King James, he made haste. What a great phrase. He flew down out of the tree would be the English. And went off with Jesus. Now Jesus didn't cut him any slack. Because when they got to the house and he began to experience Jesus, he said, "Lord I've ripped people off and I need to repay them back." And Jesus doesn't go, "Ahh,

Zach. It's OK." He says, "You're absolutely right." But listen to me. Actually forget me. Listen to Him. He loved him before He dealt with him. The church sometimes has a tendency to deal with people before we love them. And so if He's God, and I don't want to do anything to put Him on the cross and I want in my life what qualified Him for the cross, then I'm going to love people before I deal with them. That's what He did. And that's an absolute. I can't do what I want to do. I can't put however on a sentence. If He says this, I do it. If He says don't do it, I don't. That is my option and it will be my heartbeat if I understand that He rose from the dead and paid for my sin and that He is, in fact, the ruler of the universe. You say, "Well how do we know really that He rules the universe? I mean, look at this mess. If He's ruling, why is it so bad?" We gave it to Satan when we sinned. And there's coming a day, we know, when He remakes this place. We get that. OK. So how do I know that He really does rule when it really is bad? Now listen. Listen. You are the reason that the world knows that. Look at the last thing he says.

²²He put all things under His feet, and He gave Him to be the head over all things in the church,

Now listen to this.

²³which is His body, the fullness of the One filling everything in everything.

Now listen. He says, Jesus rules. He's ruling the age to come. He rules right now. And the way He proves that is when He puts His fullness inside His church which is not someone that is not a believer. When you believe in Jesus Christ and you've yielded to Him. Listen. When His fullness reigns in you, that is the proof that He is ruling in the universe. You are the visible proof that He is alive and that He rules. Because He works through you. You are the visibility of that fact. You say, "What are you talking about?" Because He doesn't rule over anybody in their heart, unless they've yielded to His cross. Listen to this. Because the question's going to be, "Well how does that prove anything?" Well we go through the same thing they do. We lose four-year-old children. We bury newborns. We go the doctor and they say, "Listen. I'm sorry. You have cancer." We have heart issues. We have all the same stuff they have. We have bankruptcies. We have lost businesses. We have broken homes. We have all the stuff they have. So how in the world does God prove that He rules through us when we get the same stuff they get? Ah. But a massive difference. Listen to this.

²⁶The Spirit Himself intercedes in our weakness; for we don't know what to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes with unspeakable groanings; ²⁷and the One who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit because He intercedes for the saints according to God ²⁸and we know that all things work together for good to those who love God who are called according to His purpose.

Lost world doesn't have that. If I bury a four-year-old child, and my neighbor who doesn't know Christ buries a four-year-old child, what's the difference? He has no hope. He has no hope he'll see that child and he can't weather that circumstance. I, on the other hand, when I go through that, I don't know how to pray. That's the worst thing you can face. But the Holy Spirit inside me prays for me and somewhere down there, He's going to do something incredible out of that tragedy in my life because the Holy Spirit prays for me because why? He rules in my life and He doesn't

over here. And it's the visibility of that beauty and that fullness in my heart that shows off He does rule. Because He can even overcome the death of a four-year-old child in my life. He gives me the ability to live out what He says.

Worse war we ever had was the Civil War. Brutal. As a matter of fact, to be honest, we still live today in the ramifications of that war. We still do. There was a union general named Sherman. He had cornered the army of Johnston, Confederate general. And had him surrender. Now Lee, the main general for the Confederates, had surrendered to General Grant, the main general for the union forces, earlier. And Grant had been very gracious to Lee and given him some good conditions for his surrender. Sherman gets Johnston cornered and Johnston meets with him and they negotiate surrender. Now unknown to Sherman, Abraham Lincoln's just been killed. Now they don't have e-mail, they don't have text, so he has no idea what's happened. But he wants to be as magnanimous as Lincoln and Grant wanted to be. And so he offers some stuff to this army that was beyond what Grant offered to Lee at Appomattox. Stanton, who is the Secretary of War under Lincoln, he offers this right after Lincoln's been assassinated by John Wilkes Booth. And so you can imagine the fervor, particularly of the North, is "Boy let's deal with those rebels." So when he offers a better deal than Grant offered at Appomattox, Stanton goes nuts. And he basically in a public setting that gets back to Sherman, accuses him of being a traitor. Even to the point where he virtually accuses him of letting Jefferson Davis, the head of the Confederacy, get out of the country with millions in gold. So Sherman who has bled on the field and given his life, seen many of his soldiers give their lives for this calling, is understandably furious. And so shortly after Lincoln's assassination, the day of the review of the union troops in Washington, and so the generals come by and their troops walk by, thousands of men. And the second day it's Sherman and on the diocese, the president, Andrew Johnson, General Grant and Stanton, and several cabinet officers and their wives. Sherman's army comes in. So Sherman rides in in front of his army, gets off his horse, hands it to an orderly, walks up the steps, shakes hands with Andrew Johnson, General Grant, several others. He gets over to Stanton. Stanton puts his hand out. And everybody's watching. There are thousands of people in DC watching. Sherman gives this intense glare at him, ignores his hand, walks on, and speaks to the other cabinet members. Now just from a human perspective, I get that. You tell me that I've betrayed America. You tell me that I've let somebody get off. You slander my reputation and here I am in a public setting, and you slandered me and you had no basis for it, I'm just trying to do the right thing and you nail me. Buddy I'm probably going to be the guy that doesn't shake your hand either. Because that's exactly what you'd want to do. It would be the minimum of what you'd want to do. But a Christian can't do that because Jesus said, as God and your redeemer, forgive those who persecute you falsely. If you're a Christian, you've got to reach out and take the hand of a man that you absolutely in your soul despise. But when you do that, when the world sees you take the hand of someone who's absolutely lied and ripped you off, when you forgive them, you demonstrate that He is in fact in charge. Because they see it in your life. Because nobody without Jesus could shake his hand. You win at the end. You say, "Well preacher, how do we prove that we win at the end? Nobody sees my spirit and soul leave my body." No. But they will be at the funeral. As a pastor I've done hundreds of funerals. Just a few weeks ago I did a funeral for one of the gracious ladies in this church, Grace Payne. First Baptist Navasota. The church is packed. Her family's well-known there. Gracious family. Gracious people. Her husband's just shattered. Her girls are shattered. This lady's one of those ladies that when she's gone, you miss who and what she was. So when I did the service, it was like a celebration. I mean everybody missed her. Everybody in the

community loved her, but we were so absolutely sure of where she was. Because her life had demonstrated the fullness of God in a way that when we come to that service, we know where she is. And so it's an immense celebration. And then I've done other funerals which are diametrically the opposite emotionally. I remember I had a family in Midland. I'm sitting with them. We're discussing the funeral. And in the middle of it the wife looks at me and goes, "You know, my husband, he's come up out of the grave if he knew his funeral was in a church." So when we did the funeral, it was the opposite of what I had two or three weeks ago. It was dark, it was dank, it was dead. It was one of those times where you just can't wait to get out of the building. I may not see where our spirit and soul go, but I can tell you at the service where they went. Because we do demonstrate His fullness.

So parents, you want to pray this. You've got a wife, husband, you want to pray this. There's a lot of hand-wringing over all these studies that have come out that say 83% of our kids that grow up in our churches are not coming back. It's actually not true. It's skewed because in the homes where the parents model and demonstrate His redemption, His Lordship, and His fullness, those kids stay. They don't sin? Yeah, they sin. But they stay the course because they understand something that you've modelled for them. Don't misunderstand that. You don't have to be perfect. You're not going to be a perfect parent. But if you model more consistently who He is than when you don't, they will see that. And when you pray this prayer for them, it will impact their life because that is what 1 John 5 says. And when you do it they understand something. We're a culture just enamored, man, with celebrities. We go nuts. A few years ago my wife and I are at some big meeting at A&M and Chuck Norris is there. I've got to confess, I'm a little enamored myself at that point. So we got on this little bus and we're going with him over there and I'm like 4' from Chuck Norris and I'm wanting to go, "You want some of this?" But I didn't. Because it would have been my last sermon. So but the guy was, I mean, obviously everybody on the bus was going, and so we get in the theatre where we're meeting and, of course all the kids are like, "It's Walker, Texas Ranger." And so they're all running down. But the cool thing about Norris was, he had a packet of already signed cards. And he's just handing them out to the kids, man, loving on them, having a great time. Legitimate celebrity, right. We go nuts over celebrities. Listen, we know the best celebrity. And we have a chance to have that celebrity's fullness in our life in a way where we prove He's the Redeemer and the Ruler and it doesn't get any better than that.

Let's pray.

Father, You have so inordinately blessed us. Thank You for the position you gave us and the incredible benefit out of that. Thank You for what You've done, what You're going to do, and honor this moment today. In Jesus Christ name.