

The Path to the Throne

by David Wilkerson

According to Paul, we who believe in Jesus have been raised up from spiritual death and are seated with him in a heavenly realm.

"Even when we were dead in sins, [God] hath quickened us together with Christ and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:5-6).

So, where is this heavenly place, where we're seated with Jesus? It is none other than God's own throne room - the throne of grace, the dwelling place of the Almighty. Two verses later, we read how we were brought to this wonderful place:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

This throne room is the seat of all power and dominion. It's the place where God rules over all principalities and powers, and reigns over the affairs of men. Here in the throne room, He monitors every move of Satan and examines every thought of man.

And Christ is seated at the Father's right hand. Scripture tells us, "All things were made by him" (John 1:3), and, "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). In Jesus resides all wisdom and peace, all power and strength, everything needed to live a victorious, fruitful life. And we're given access to all those riches that are in Christ.

Paul is telling us, "As surely as Christ was raised from the dead, we've been raised up with him by the Father. And, as surely as Jesus was taken to the throne of glory, we've been taken with him to the same glorious place. Because we're in Him, we are also where He is. That's the privilege of all believers. It means we're seated with Him in the same heavenly place where He dwells."

Of course, the world has every right to question this concept. How could any Christian be living in a heavenly realm, as well as on the earth? Even believers admit they don't understand Paul's teaching here. And they confess they don't experience this truth in their daily lives.

We don't have to look to the example of the troubled, despairing church to see this. All we have to do is examine our own walk with Christ. Multitudes of Christians are downcast and fearful. They go to church, sing praises to God, and testify of his overcoming power in their lives. But for many of these same Christians, life is a constant series of ups and downs. They're overwhelmed by worldly cares and troubles. And when they face trials, they're totally bowled over, their faith collapsing in a heap.

I ask you: does this reflect the heavenly life Paul describes? Does it resemble anything close to what you imagine the throne-life to be? We're told that Christ himself has brought us into a heavenly position with Him.

Yet if that's so, then many Christians are living far beneath the promises God has provided. Think about it: if we're actually living in Christ, seated in him in the throne room of heaven, how could any believer still be enslaved to his flesh? We've been given a position in Him for a reason.

But many in Christ's body have not claimed or appropriated it.

Read closely Paul's words:

"Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:20-22).

Most Christians don't have any difficulty believing Christ is there. We preach, "Jesus is even now on the throne. He's above all principalities and powers, far beyond Satan's reach." Yet we find it hard to accept the following truth:

"[God] hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6). We can believe Christ is already in that heavenly position, seated with the Father. But we can't accept that we're also seated there, in the very same throne room. Yet, Jesus himself already told us, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2), not just in glory, but even now.

To many, this sounds like a fantasy, some theological illusion: "You mean, I don't have to live my life being hot and cold, up and down? When I'm shaken by tribulations, I don't have to be moved? I can keep my intimacy with Christ intact?"

Yes, absolutely. Paul declares, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"(Ephesians 1:3). Notice where Paul says all spiritual blessings are bestowed: in the throne room. All the riches of Christ are available to us there: steadfastness, strength, rest, ever-increasing peace.

So, why are so many well-intentioned Christians missing these things? Is it because we're not taking our position in the heavenly place with Christ? Is that why we hear so much talk these days about the need for revival? Is it because multitudes of believers simply aren't living the resurrection life?

Paul makes it crystal clear: to have the blessings of Christ flow through us, we have to be seated with the Lord in the throne room of heaven.

Something has gone terribly wrong in God's house today, a problem I see as a "power failure."

Satan is wreaking havoc in God's house, and he isn't being challenged. Instead, he goes about freely deceiving many in Christ's body, causing despair and confusion, and bringing ruin to lifelong servants of God.

A sociologist who's an agnostic has written a book on the condition of the church. He concludes this about Christians:

"Far from living in the other world' [the heavenlies], the faithful are remarkably just like the secular world in practice, they are not the way they are supposed to be in their theology. The culture has trampled over them. Talk of hell, damnation and even sin has been replaced by non-judgmental language of understanding and empathy." C.S. Lewis said something similar decades ago: "The greatest enemy to the church is contented worldliness."

It seems the church has caved in, giving in to the troubles all around us. Simply put, we're no longer focused on Christ's victory or on living an overcoming life. I see one symptom of this in the proliferation of counselors. Much of the church has traded the throne room for the counseling room. Why? Few Christians believe it's possible to live the heavenly life in such troubling times. Instead, they rush to their counselor, crying, "I've had a horrible day. Please, give me something that can get me through tomorrow."

We find the same focus in much modern preaching. The majority of sermons today focus on meeting people's needs, rather than on the victorious life we have in Christ.

Preachers are offering three steps to surviving another day, a how-to plan for merely getting by. These messages totally neglect the throne room and the heavenly position we've been given in Christ.

The truth is, this world has always been troubled. It has always been under the threat of disaster, on the verge of collapse. That has been the mindset of godly preachers for centuries. My library at home contains many powerful messages preached by Puritan ministers from the 17th century. These ministers warn of rampant drunkenness, juvenile delinquency, fornication, bestiality, political unrest, dysfunctional families. In short, they spoke hundreds of years ago about all the things we see happening today. And some of them thought God couldn't possibly endure such wickedness for another fifty years.

In 1860, a powerful preacher in Newark, New Jersey, warned about "the wilderness of darkness" that was enveloping America. He preached fiery sermons crying out against the church's apathy and worldliness. This man also wrote a book called "The Millennial Experience," where he described false doctrines and cults that had sprung up everywhere. He, too, was preaching about the same things we see taking place today.

God's people have always faced an enemy who attacks from all sides. Things may be much worse today than they were in Puritan times, but we face the same devil. And those same preachers taught that every blessing prophesied for the future was available to God's people now. It doesn't matter if we see wickedness increasing all around us. According to Paul, God's grace abounds to us that much more.

So, why can't we believe God for the same spiritual blessings today? Why do we no longer trust that he answers us before we call? If we're in Christ - if he's both within us and at the right hand of the Father - why don't our lives reflect it?

There is a need in the body of Christ for what I call "a great awakening."

What do I mean by a great awakening? I'm talking about what Paul describes as revelation and enlightenment:

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power" (Ephesians 1:17-19).

Paul was telling the Ephesians, "I pray that God will give you a fresh revelation, that he'll open your eyes to the calling he's given you. I'm asking Him to give you new understanding about your inheritance, the riches in Christ that belong to you. There is a mighty power God wants to unleash in you. It's the same power that was in Jesus. Yes, the same power that is in the enthroned Christ in heaven is in you right now."

According to Paul, "(God's) mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead, and set Him at his own right hand in the heavenly places," is the same "exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe" (1:20, 19). For this reason, Paul exhorts, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" (2 Corinthians 13:5).

How are we to examine ourselves? We do it by measuring ourselves against the awesome promises of God. We're to ask ourselves: "Do I draw on Christ's resources to resist the devil? Do I access His power to overcome sin? Do I live continually in the joy, peace and rest Jesus has promised to every believer without exception?"

Beloved, the throne-life is no fantasy. It's not some theological illusion. It is a provision made possible to us through the cross of Christ. Therefore, if any believer doesn't have this throne-life, he can only conclude one thing: "I haven't yet appropriated the heavenly position I've been given with Christ. If I can't see his mighty power at work in me, then I haven't taken my place in him."

Your personal "great awakening" comes the day you look at your life and cry out, "There has to be more to life in Christ than this. All my plans have unraveled, all my dreams have been shattered. I'm living as a slave to my fears and fleshly lusts. But I can't do it any longer.

"I know the Lord has called me to more than this defeated life. And I won't be a hypocrite. Oh, God, is there actually a place where you'll supply me with strength to live victoriously? Are you really willing to make me more than a conqueror in my trials? Is it true you've provided a place of perfect peace for me in the midst of my battles?"

"Is it really possible for me to have continual intimacy with you? Is it true I don't have to slide into apathy anymore, or struggle to please you? Is there actually a place of rest in you where I'll never again need revival, because my faith remains steadfast?"

You're on the verge of awakening when you admit, "I love Jesus, but I'm not experiencing the throne-life Paul talks about." That's the moment when you're poised to come into revelation and enlightenment. God Himself has chosen you -not to live a joyless, despairing life under the enemy's foot, but to have a heavenly position. And the time has come for you to look up and claim that place in Christ.

There is but one path to the throne.

You can't weep your way into this heavenly place. You can't study or work or will your way in. No, the only way to the throne-life is by way of a living sacrifice:

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

Paul is speaking from experience. Here was a man who was rejected, tempted, persecuted, beaten, jailed, shipwrecked, stoned. Paul also had all the cares of the church laid on him. Yet he testified, "In every condition, I have been content."

Now he's saying to us, "So, you want to know how I came into the knowledge of this heavenly walk? Do you want to know how I came to be content in whatever condition I was placed, how I came to find true rest in Christ? Here is the path, the secret to appropriating your heavenly position: Present your body as a living sacrifice to the Lord. I came into contentment only by the sacrifice of my own will."

The Greek root for "living" here suggests "lifelong." Paul is talking about a binding commitment, a sacrifice that's made once for a lifetime. Yet, don't misunderstand: this isn't a sacrifice that has to do with propitiation for sin.

Christ's sacrifice on the cross is the only worthy Propitiation:

"Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26).

No, Paul is talking about a different kind of sacrifice.

Yet, make no mistake: God has no pleasure in the manmade sacrifices of the Old Testament. Hebrews tells us, "In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure" (10:6). Why weren't these sacrifices pleasing to the Lord?

Simply put, they didn't require the heart.

"I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true" (John 7:28).

But the sacrifice Paul describes is one that God takes great pleasure in, precisely because it involves the heart. What is this sacrifice? It's one of death to our will, of laying aside our self-sufficiency and abandoning our ambitions.

When Paul exhorts, "Present your body," he's saying in essence, "Draw near to the Lord." Yet, what does this mean, exactly? It means drawing near to God for the purpose of offering our entire selves to him. It means coming to Him not in our own sufficiency, but as a resurrected child, as holy in Jesus' righteousness, as being accepted by the Father through our position in Christ.

Jesus himself offered his life as a living sacrifice. I'm not talking about the sacrifice He made for our sins at the cross. No, there were two aspects to Christ's sacrifice.

First, there was his propitiation for sin. Then there was the abandonment of His will to the Father. In short, Jesus gave himself not only as a sacrifice for our sins, but as a living sacrifice to be used as an instrument by the Father.

Consider his testimony:

"Lo, I come to do thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7). "I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true" (John 7:28). "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him" (Ephesians 8:28-29). "I speak that which I have seen of my Father" (Ephesians 8:38).

Every believer is called to share in this aspect of Christ's sacrifice. We are to present ourselves to God, surrender our will to him, and enter into a life wholly dependent on him.

We're to come to him saying, "Lord, I resign my will to you. I exchange it for your will. I am committing myself to no longer say or do anything unless you direct me."

Of course, Jesus is our example in this. He didn't act by his own will, but spoke and acted only as the Father directed Him. And he did it all for one purpose: to bring "many sons unto glory" (Hebrews 2:10). In short, Christ showed us the path to the throne. He was saying, "Follow me, by laying down your will, your plans, and your dreams. Commit to a life that's wholly dependent on the Father. Then your life will bring glory to him."

Let me offer a definition of glory: it is the fullness of God in Christ.

Here is the glory every Christian is chosen to fulfill. You see, many are called as sons of the Father, with all the privileges of sonship. But not everyone walks in this glory, even though we're meant to appropriate it. Now, an incredible glory is going to be manifested when Christ returns to take his servants home. But there is also a glory that's meant to be manifested in God's church here on earth.

I'm speaking of the glory of being in Christ where He is now:

"I and the children which God hath given me" (Hebrews 2:13).

This glory awaits the servant who comes to the altar to present his body as a living sacrifice. He has abandoned all his plans and ambition, because he has experienced the awful consequences of walking in his own will. He's worn out from struggling to fix his own problems. And he's sick and tired of seeing his plans fail, his dreams falter. So he comes to the altar to settle the issue once and for all: to surrender himself wholly to God's will.

This is the sacrifice every believer must make if he is to know the mind of God. The Lord never shares His plans with those who hold onto their own devices. Why would He direct anyone who's determined to go their own way? I know something of both sides of this path. On many occasions, I have followed my own will. Yet I also know the freedom that comes with stating, once and for all: "I don't have to do anything except Christ's will. I don't need to raise up some great work. And I don't have to get involved in any good works, except as He leads me. I have nothing to prove to anybody. All I want is to trust Jesus and depend wholly on him."

I can say from experience: this place of brokenness and trust is where you find the awakening and enlightenment Paul talks about: "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). You've given up trying to face life's trials in your own strength. You've had enough of wavering faith, of lingering fear, of never being certain about what to do. So you lay everything on the altar - your ego, your pride, your plans - and you come to Jesus with a broken spirit and contrite heart. You're in a place where you trust him alone to work everything together for good.

The moment you resign your will to him, the sacrifice has been made. It happens when you simply give up the struggle of trying to please God on your own. You can't merit His pleasure by living upright or doing good works. No, you're committed simply to trusting in him. And when you present your living sacrifice to Jesus, here is His response: "Now, come and let us reason together. If you have sacrificed your will, isn't it reasonable for you to come and take your place with Me by faith?"

Indeed, this act of faith is the "reasonable service" Paul refers to:

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

It's all about trusting him with our will, believing he'll provide all the blessings we need.

Think about it: it's no longer reasonable to give up your will, yet not believe you can move into Christ's fullness.

He has called you to take up his will, by faith: "If you want my will - if you want to live a life where you draw on My peace, rest and wisdom at all times - then come to the throne room by faith. Here, you are in Me. When you pray, it will be as if I'm praying through you. You'll be where I am."

Are you ready to give up your life of struggle -of fretting about the future, of highs and lows, of never feeling you're pleasing the Lord?

If you're weary of the struggle, it's time to ask yourself: are you ready to offer yourself at the altar, as a living sacrifice? Are you ready to say, "Not my will, Jesus, but yours be done. I'm tired of

trying to direct my own life.

I've messed it up completely. Now I'm ready to trust you with it all. You alone have the power, the authority, the guidance I need. So, I come to you by faith. And I trust you to speak to me faithfully, saying, Here is the way, walk in it."

If this describes you, then you're ready to take your heavenly place with Christ. But be warned: Satan will do everything he can to try to shake you out of your rightful position. Your problems and trials won't end simply because you're seated with Christ. In fact, they may intensify. But now you'll have the inner resources to face your trials, because the power of God is working in you. And you can put the devil on notice:

"Oh, vile serpent, be notified: I'm no longer at my old address. I don't live on Despair Street anymore. I've taken a new position, at the throne room of God. And I'm residing in a new place, in the heavenlies with Christ. So, if you want to reach me, you'll have to do it in care of Almighty God. Oh, I'm also going by a new name. You can now call me prevailing prince with God."

Dear saint, the throne room is now open to you. Accept what Christ has done, and boldly take your position with him, by faith. He accepts your resigned will. Now, ask Him to open the eyes of your understanding. And confess, "I believe what the Lord says about me: that I'm a conquering prince. I also believe that I'm where he says I am: in the throne room of heaven. I'm sitting with him in a place of authority over all of Satan's works. Hallelujah, he has shown me the path to his throne. And now my daily residence is in him."
