

Adopting a Heavenly Perspective

– living from God’s vantage point

SESSION 1 – OVERVIEW



LIVING
WORD
CHURCH

Introduction

In the time in which we are living, several things are becoming refocussed in people’s minds. Questions are being asked about the meaning of life and the uncertainty of the times. Health, jobs, recreational pursuits all are being affected by the crisis that has affected the world at this time.

The message that I have today is not an attempt to directly answer all the questions that could emerge at the present time. Rather it is to request that we as Christians adopt a different vantage point, a heavenly and eternal one.

Paul points out to us in a number of places that we are to adopt a larger perspective when we think of what God is doing in our lives.

In a very personal application he states in 2 Cor 4:16-18:

¹⁶So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

The letter to the Ephesians is a masterpiece of helping us to see things from God’s perspective and is insight into the mystery of Christ (Eph 3:4).

Mystery = something hidden that is now made known through the work of the gospel in us – Revelation.

These days make it absolutely imperative that we

view things from God’s perspective. It is a time to know the eternal not just the temporal and see that Jesus is not just a veneer we give to our lives or an add-on to our daily routine. It is for us to acknowledge that, ‘in Him we live and move and have our being.’ (Acts 17:28).

So as we look through this book, we are to be challenged and our head raised up so that we are able to see God’s purpose for us. This first session will help set the scene of what is to come later.

1. Order of writing helps us to understand what is going on

Paul does not begin with our everyday life, he does not start with our challenges, difficulties or problems. He does not begin with the situation of your life, marriage work and children. He only deals with these matters once he has brought us first into a revelation of heavenly realities.

This is what we need to be aware of in order to be able to live now. We need His perspective about us and His world and His plans.

Paul’s writing begins in heavenly realities and then applies them to the world and our everyday life. This makes the simple point that getting the perspective right will change the way in which I live and handle the good and bad of life.

2. In Christ, or In Him is a favoured theme

This is one of Paul’s favourite threads of revelation throughout all he ministers to the church through His letters. Being ‘in Christ’. This matters because of all that we are and everything that we have relates to Christ. Christ Jesus, then is the centre of our world and lives. Paul very much takes us to see Jesus as the one who has blessed us so that we are able to bless

others. He takes us to see that Jesus is the epicentre and circumference of the Father's plans for His world.

Summed up so well in chapter 1:7-8

⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

The will of God revealed in Christ, brought grace to us as part of His eternal plan to unite all things in Heaven and earth in Christ.

Ephesians 1: 22-23

²²And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, ²³which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.'

Ephesians 2:22

'In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.'

Ephesians 3:11

'This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.'

This highlights to us once again the importance of Acts 1:8 -

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

- The Holy Spirit has come to make us witnesses of the Christ, to reveal Jesus.
- However, as we once again see Jesus for who He is, not just the personal helper to us, nor just our brother, but Lord of all and God indeed, we are seeing that God has decided to use us to display His glory and praise.
- It is not merely a testimony of my personal blessing, but the testimony of what God has done in Christ; it is a community that represent Jesus to the world. We are seeing this reality come to view – a people who have

gotten it together.

- This is the community of the king

3. There is an unseen realm that is very real.

One great trap for us is to think that what we can see is all that is real. This is clearly not true and Paul talks about what is happening in the unseen realms. Jesus is not just the saviour of the world, but the cosmic King who reigns on high. How we live is going to be linked to our understanding of these truths.

Ephesians 1:19-21

'the working of his great might ²⁰that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.'ght hand in the heavenly places,

Ephesians 3:8-10

'To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages inb God, who created all things, ¹⁰so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.'

We read here of the following:

1. Heavenly realms
2. Power, authorities and dominions
3. This age and the one to come

So what we learn here in the book of Ephesians is that we have a position in Christ that takes us both into the eternal and into a position of authority because of where we are seated.

Ephesians 2:5-7

Even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – 6and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

4. The Gospel is what changes our position, it is the reason we can see differently. It is the only means that we are able to be 'in Christ'.

Paul describes to us our condition outside of Christ. He tells us that we were by nature objects of wrath. We were dead in our sins, but now by the grace of God we have been saved.

The gentiles are able to partake of the promises of God, 'through the gospel' is an important sentence (Eph 3:6). The word here for gospel means almost too good to be true news. Now through the good news of Jesus.

We should be so proud of the gospel. Paul knew that he had been opposed to it but God in his grace had saved him and He is now sharing

Sharing the gospel is not an add on or an inconvenient matter for the believer, it is right at the heart of our very existence.

'To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ...'
(Ephesians 3:8)

This desire to see people come to Jesus, is expressed in Acts 26 when the apostle Paul is before King Agrippa;

'And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?"^b 29 And Paul said, "Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains." (Acts 26:28-29)

How easily we could say:

I wish all people could know the peace I know, the joy I know, the life I know, the hope of a good future that I know. They can, through the gospel, through responding to Jesus.

5. Your everyday life counts

When we read about marriage, work, family, spiritual warfare and other down to earth, aspects of life, if we see them from the perspective of heaven, we see that they matter, they count.

Our everyday life, can be extraordinary because being full of the Holy Spirit, we are able to enjoy God and demonstrate him in these contexts.

Now our everyday life has had to change, the routines have changed and we are not doing things like before, yet my everyday counts. The principles we read about husbands and wives, family, work etc are brought into sharp focus in a fresh way. Be refreshed in this.

Ephesians 2:10 – (NLT) For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

God has planned to involve us in His eternal plan through walking in the good things he has planned for us to walk in in our everyday life.

So as overview In these times we can respond positively:

1. Adopt an eternal perspective – Take the q's from what God says and not what the immediate situation is saying. Let the ultimate determine your immediate – Matt 6:33
2. Be Christ focussed. Enjoy Jesus, talk about Him, think about Him more than anyone else
3. Remember the cosmic victory that Jesus has won
4. Share the good news of Jesus everywhere and at every opportunity – Jesus is the only one who can save, heal and deliver
5. Decide to walk in the good things that Jesus has planned for you today – enjoy the opportunity to invest in the everyday life so that the glory of God is seen.