

GAINING HIGHER SPIRITUAL GROUND 1

This is your Friend and Minister, dr. Joshua Uhiara, bringing you Healing Word from the Master, a program of the Master's Vessel Ministry which lets you know that Jesus loves you as you are, but loves you so much that He will not leave you as you are.

Friends, I welcome you again in the Name of Jesus Christ. Today, I want to speak on Gaining Higher Spiritual Ground. We will take our text from Philippians 3:1

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

²Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! ³For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, ⁴though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: ⁵circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

⁷But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸Yet 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 ⁹and 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; ¹⁰that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

¹²Not 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. ¹³Brethren, 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.

PRAYER:

Father, we thank You for another opportunity we have now to search the scripture. I thank you for my friends who are with me. I commit them into Your hands as they read, that the blessing you have earmarked for them today will come upon them, in Jesus' Name. Amen!

Gaining higher spiritual ground.

Our text, especially verse 12-14 shows Paul's intolerance of status quo Christianity. It shows Paul's dissatisfaction with which he worshiped Sunday only pure warming Christianity. Paul wanted more. He wanted to know Christ and His fullness. He desired strongly to gain a higher spiritual ground. With every fiber of his being he strained for the price of knowing Christ experientially and intimately. His pursuit of God was relentless.

Johnson Oatman (1856-1932) captured this spirit of pursuing God in his hymn of 1898: Higher Ground. In stanzas 1, 4 and the refrain of the chorus, Oatman says:

- I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining every day;
Still praying as I'm onward bound,
"Lord, plant my feet on higher ground

- I want to scale the utmost height
And catch a gleam of glory bright;
But still I'll pray till heav'n I've found,
"Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."

- Refrain:
Lord, lift me up and let me stand,
By faith, on Heaven's tableland,
A higher plane than I have found;
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground

Beautiful prayer! What do we mean by gaining higher spiritual ground? Gaining higher spiritual ground, by that we mean: deeper spiritual life. That's what gaining higher spiritual ground is all about: deeper spiritual life. It means experiencing Jesus Christ, in a personal, intimate or deeper way. A spiritual high is the same as a spiritual depth. Many of us are satisfied with the nominal Christianity which is no more than the Christianity only in name. Some are satisfied with identifying with a movement; a wave, a denomination or church, especially one that is large, popular and well known; when the individual knows little or nothing about Christ. Paul calls religious show without intimacy with Christ, rubbish: dung – the part of food the human body rejects and considers useless, and in fact – indeed harmful.

Gaining higher spiritual ground.

Paul thought of gaining higher spiritual ground, deeper spiritual life from three perspectives or three points. Let me mention them briefly.

1. Where he started his spiritual life from.

Jesus took hold of him on the Damascus road when he was engaged in jihad against the Church of Jesus Christ. He had to go back to where he started. If you cannot trace your Christian life back to what you used to be, and how you have come to be a new person, and what is ahead of you, you do not know what Christianity is yet.

2. Where he was at the time he wrote this letter.

He saw himself as an unfinished project, a work in progress. Paul reached for the goal. He was not perfected yet, not full-grown; that is, the perfection has not reached functional perfection. What we mean by functional perfection is, fully adequate for a given purpose.

You begin to wonder: what is he talking about? Isn't he the apostle Paul? Yes, the apostle Paul. As spiritually strong as he was then, he still considered himself one who has not yet arrived.

3. Where he wanted to be. Where he ought to be. Where he should be. Gaining higher ground in Christ, living the fullness of the life of Christ, knowing Christ better, being conformed fully in His image.

Philippians 3

¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

^{12b} *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.*

Gaining higher spiritual ground. HOW? To gain a higher spiritual ground we must:

- i. Be aware of what we once were, and reject it once and for all, especially self-righteousness.
- ii. We need to admit to ourselves, to others and to God that we have not arrived yet. Remember, Jesus is the Way without a terminal – so we never arrive.

Those who fly the airplanes will understand this figure of speech: *the terminal is the end of the journey*. As far as we are concerned in our life or journey with Christ, there is no terminal at this side of the heaven.

We will conclude this message next time.

PRAYER:

Father, in the Name of the LORD Jesus Christ again I present to You my friends. And I am asking now, Father, that You meet the needs in their lives, especially the need to know Christ. And not only to know Him, but to know Him intimately. I pray, dear LORD, that the manifestation of the life and the power of Jesus Christ would be their portion, that He may rid them of sin, of sickness and of disease of anything and everything that is of the devil. Do these in the lives of these ones, dear Father, and take the glory. And Lead them with the blessings, in Jesus' Name. Amen!