

GAINING HIGHER SPIRITUAL GROUND 2

This is your Friend and Minister, dr. Joshua Uhiara, bringing you Healing Words 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.

We are back to the topic we were treating last time, that is, Gaining Higher Spiritual Ground. And we took our text from Philippians 3:1-14. That was a long reading, but for today, we want to make it shorter. To refresh our memory, let us read from verse 10.

Philippians 3:10

¹⁰ that 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, ¹⁴I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

PRAYER:

Thank You, father, for today, especially for this hour when we are reasoning with one another and with You in Your Word. Let the entrance of Your Word give light, and give life, and give health, and give healing to all who are reading now. Thank You for this opportunity we have, in Jesus' Name. Amen!

We saw last time, in our text, especially the segment that we read today; there Paul shows his intolerance of status quo Christianity. He was dissatisfied with which he worshiped Sunday only pure warming Christianity. We saw that Paul wanted more. He wanted to know the fullness of the life of Christ in his life. He wanted to be like Jesus Christ. And I reminded you of the hymn by Johnson Oatman, Higher Ground, where he 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..."*

What do we mean by higher ground? By higher ground we mean experiencing Jesus Christ in a personal intimate and deeper way. Spiritual high is the same as spiritual depth. And I pointed out last time that many of us are with nominal Christianity, which is not more than Christianity in name, Christianity without the power of the resurrected Christ in the life of the Christians. And Paul calls that kind of Christianity, *rubbish - dung*.

Gaining Higher Ground.

Paul looked at it from three perspectives:

- From where he started. He was not a Christian. He was a Judaiser, a religious man – but he did not know Christ. That's where he started.
- But on his way as he was carrying out his Jihad against the Church of Jesus Christ, the LORD Jesus arrested him on the road to Damascus, changed his life, and turned him around. And then from that standpoint Paul saw himself now as a Christian. But still a work in progress, Christ was not yet done with him. He was still reaching out for the goal.
- What he wanted to be. What he ought to be. What he should be, gaining higher ground in Christ.

Gaining higher ground. How do we get there? That's where we stopped last time. And then we said, to gain higher ground, these are the few things we need to take note of:

- i. We need to be aware of what we once were and reject it once and for all. You cannot aim at gaining higher spiritual ground and still want to go back to the mediocre Christianity that you had previously. We have to reject it once and for all, especially, self-righteousness.
- ii. We have to admit to ourselves and to others and to God that we have not yet arrived. It was at this point that I used that figure of speech: Jesus is the Way without a terminal, so we have never arrived. What that means is that, as long as we are on this side of heaven we must be pressing on to be more and more like Christ, but we never arrived at full knowledge of Him or the fullest knowledge of Him.
- iii. We have to be single-minded. Paul said, one thing I do, forget all that we had done in the past. We should forget all our successes, forget all our failures, and remember only what our aim is, to be more and more like Christ.
- iv. We must be pressing on, shunning every discouragement from people and circumstance.

In Hebrew 12:3

³For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

We must look on to Christ if we do not want to be discouraged by the things that we see around us, by the experiences that we have and by the things that happen to us. Then we also need to lay hold of the purpose for which Jesus laid hold of us.

The LORD saves for His own purpose, not for our own purpose. There are some who are taught to use Christ rather than Christ using them. They think that coming to Christ is like going to a vending machine: you drop a few coins, and you press a few buttons, and goodies will come down. God is not there waiting to please us. He has called us to Christ that we may please Him.

2 Samuel 7:23

²³And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name—and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land—before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods?

Do you see how many times God said in the verse above ‘redeemed for Himself’?

Acts 9:15-16

¹⁵But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. ¹⁶For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

It didn’t say for Saul’s sake. He saved Saul for the sake of Christ, for the course of Christ; not so Saul will start enjoying all the goodies of this life. It was to serve Him, and he was going to serve Him at a high cost.

Ephesians 2:8-10

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

It was for Him that we are saved.

Finally, fixing our eyes on Jesus Christ, the One who lifts us up to higher ground.

Hebrews 12:2

²Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Paul says: I press towards the goal, for the price of the upward call, in Christ Jesus.

LORD, plant my feet on higher ground. There is no spiritual higher ground without Jesus Christ. Jesus is the goal of the higher spiritual ground. Higher spiritual ground is not an experience, but a person. Without Jesus, we can do nothing. Remember John 15: 5

PRAYER:

Father, we have come to the end of our discussion now. We are praying that you would minister your grace to the hearts of all who have heard. Whatever problems they may have, O God, especially the things that hinder them from being what they ought to be in Christ, I pray, father, that You take care of it. Relieve them of such burdens that they may be free to live for You. And as many as have not given their lives to Jesus Christ, receive them now as they do calling upon His name and turning from sin once and for all. Thank You, in Jesus Name we pray. Amen!