

Unveiling God's Purpose

by Charles Anderson

Charles Anderson's sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding God's divine purpose and our role within it through prayer and spiritual empowerment.

Duration: 48:39

Scripture: Ephesians 1:18

Topics: "Purpose Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on his experience at Camp Blanding and relates it to the Christian life. He emphasizes the importance of understanding God's purpose and plan in the universe and how we fit into it. The speaker prays for the listeners to have a fuller understanding of God's plan and for them to experience a transformation in their approach to life. The sermon also mentions the limitless resources and power available to believers through their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Transcript

And I do invite you to turn to the third chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians for our consideration this morning. Let me just review for a second or two what has come to our attention thus far so that we might not get so engrossed in some minutiae of the letter that we fail to see the overall purpose and plan of the Apostle as he wrote this epistle. I'm sure he had in mind the needs of the people to whom he addressed himself in this letter.

And I don't think he was thinking that they were all deep students, theological experts and all that sort of thing, but he was thinking probably more of their practical problems on a day-to-day basis that they faced as they sought to live for Christ in a pagan environment. And so although the truths are couched in magnificent and beautiful language, we mustn't lose sight of the fact that there is a practical application to the daily Christian living. For instance, what has the peak thus far revealed to us? Well, in the first chapter we noted that he called to their attention the fact that God had a special hope in his calling of them out of their darkness and into his marvelous light.

He reminds them that they are his sacred inheritance from which he expects some dividends. And all of that, that Christ might be formed in them unless they become discouraged and feel that that's an impossible goal to attain. He reminds them of all the limitless resources at their disposal, the exceeding greatness of the power that they have at their disposal for the accomplishment of that fact.

And then we moved on into the next chapter, into chapter two, and from that mountain peak they were reminded, or we are reminded, that despite our wretched and hopeless past, we are now in Christ. And in him, and from that lofty position in Jesus Christ, we are assured of an eternal home, an eternal fellowship with God in which he will display throughout all the endless ages of eternity his kindness and his love toward us in Christ Jesus. Now, that all brings us up to what shall we see from the mountain peak revealed in chapter three.

Well, maybe if any of you are at all interested, I suggest a very simple outline of this chapter as sort of hooks on which we can hang a few thoughts this morning. For instance, I would suggest that the verses one through twelve of the chapter, that's almost the full half and more of the chapter, might be entitled, Unveiling the Divine Purpose, The Unveiling of the Divine Purpose. We'll come back to these points in a moment and consider them separately.

And then verses thirteen through nineteen, bringing us almost totally to the end of the chapter, would be a prayer in which Paul seeks to have us understand the divine purpose or plan, understanding the divine plan. That's verses thirteen to nineteen. And the last two verses of the chapter we might entitle The Unleashing of the Divine Power.

Once again, he brings them down or around to the point that God supplies what is needed. If he makes a demand upon us, if he lays some claim upon us, he provides what is needed in order to meet that claim or requirement. Now, I wonder if it wouldn't help us a bit if I rather rapidly read, so as to refresh our minds a bit on this portion of scripture, these early verses.

So, with your indulgence, please follow. For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you, how that by revelation he made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in a few words, so that when you read you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel. Whereof I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of Christ to me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." Maybe the bottom line of that passage is found there in verse 11, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Germans have a philosophical term with which we here in America, it seems to me, are not very familiar. I became acquainted with this term in a rather odd way. As a student in seminary, we were informed that our professor of church history, who had had to retire, was being replaced by a very brilliant German scholar who was coming on from Germany to take up that post in our seminary.

His name was Professor Muller, and when he arrived he was so German in every way that it became sort of a joke in the seminary as well as a little bit of a burr in our saddles. He, first of all, had almost a very obvious disdain for American students. I learned, in my own personal embarrassment one day, what the German word dummkopf means.

If any of you understand German, you'll know too. I didn't know whether he was complimenting me or insulting me. He called me a dummkopf, simply because I did not know how to go to the blackboard and draw the Rhine River.

I said to him, Sir, I was born on the banks of the Delaware River and I can't draw that one. How do you expect me to draw the Rhine River? He says, You are a dummkopf, which I suppose, I think, means a cabbage head, in amounts of being a dummy. Anyway, this professor was constantly deriding us because of our abysmal ignorance of, particularly, philosophical concepts.

We learned to ride with that after a while. He one day asked a question in class of one of our students. He said, I want to ask you, what is your Weltanschauung? The fellow looked and said, I didn't know what was showing, Sir.

He said, ah, and that set him off, but always when he got one of those kind of replies from smart American college and university students, it usually triggered tirade against us. And so he began to tell us how that the young boys and the girls in Germany, when they are in the gymnasium in the early schools in Germany, they are called, they have a well formed Weltanschauung. And up to that point, all of us wondered if that was some physical exercise they went through that formed them so nicely physically.

Well, really it's not. And my wife, who understands and has taught German, will often times say, oh, how you murder the German language. And I say, I know that, but I think that people may understand that I'm just a dummkopf.

But at any rate, this phrase or this word is a philosophical term, a German philosophical term. It occurs, by the way, many, many times in Hitler's Mein Kampf. Hitler had a Weltanschauung.

What does that mean? A world view, a viewpoint of the world, a philosophy of what the world is all about, and how things are working in the world, and what ends and aims toward which events are moving. Do you have a view? Do you have some kind of a philosophical approach to the world so that you can somehow cope with the problems that come as you contemplate the world condition? Well, if there's any people in all of the world who ought to have a well-formed Weltanschauung, it is Christian believers, because we have a divine revelation in which there is unfolded to us a viewpoint of the whole world. And Paul talks about that in this particular passage.

We might say that here, as there is unveiled to us the divine purpose, this is really the disclosure of God's Weltanschauung. And that purpose, incidentally, is maybe a little better enunciated in an other passage, which says, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself, that, this is his purpose, this is what he has planned and purposed in himself, that, in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ. Both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him.

Here is disclosed then God's ultimate purpose. God has an eternal purpose and it is his fixed intention to gather the universe, all of it, and every creature in it, under one head, namely the Lord Jesus Christ. And this shall include things in heaven and things on the earth.

And God will never rest until all rule and all authority and all might has been cast down and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has been enthroned far above all. That's God's grand and glorious purpose. And he is working all things toward that end.

Now, you who may have served in the military, and I might say just in passing, it's an interesting thing for me to be here. My very first contact with the military was here at Camp Blanding. And Stark, Florida, was a very interesting place in those days.

It just swarmed with G.I.s. And I shall never forget, I thought I had reached the last edge of the universe when I came to this seemingly God-forsaken wilderness called Camp Blanding. And in this neck of the woods, it's all changed a great deal. But if you were in the military and you were given some kind of a task to perform, seemingly a meaningless task, like, soldier, your job is to guard this little crossroads here.

You're to stand guard eight hours a day, march back and forth and back and forth. And here we are, maybe a thousand miles from the battlefield. And I might say, what in the world am I doing here? This little crossroads, the only thing that crosses are a few cows and some sheep and a couple of people.

I don't hear a gun going off. I don't see an enemy. I've got a menial job here to do.

And it has no connection whatsoever with the war. So I might become very discouraged. Until one day, an officer comes.

He's got a chicken on his shoulder. That means he's a full colonel. He's up there somewhere.

And he's got, under his arm he has a roll of papers and he unrolls it and he says, hey, G.I., I want to show you something. Look, here is the latest disclosure of the battle plan. This is how the war is going.

This is what is planned by the high command. Here it is. See the whole plan right here? Here's where we're going.

Here's where we're moving. Here's where our forces are moving. And over here, in this little place with an X, is where you are.

You may not feel that you have a very vital connection with the whole battle, but this is an important little crossroads here. If the enemy, if they should possibly come through here, your job is to alert the forces. Well, all of a sudden, that little spot that's up to that point seemed like nothing.

Most discouraging. I understand now. I'm part of the whole plan.

And it becomes significant and meaningful. And it may alter my whole approach. Well, when you look at life itself, and we get lost in all the entanglements of life, and the problems that we can't solve beset us, and all of a sudden I say, who am I? And what am I? Where do I fit into the scheme? Of course the general doesn't send every day his plans down to the common G.I. soldier down here in this obscure spot so that he knows every single day what the strategy is.

Of course he doesn't do that. But our general has done it. He's revealed in his word what his overall plan is, and what his purpose is in this whole universe, in fact.

Not alone the world, but beyond the world. This is God's cosmological philosophical plan if you're pleased. For the universe, and it's all revealed right here.

Wonderful. And you and I fit into this whole thing. We know that we fit into it because he tells us so.

He says that we are involved, personally involved. The fact of the matter is, up to this point we've been reminded that we have been predestinated unto God's plan and purpose. And by the way, don't get frightened.

I think I mentioned that the other day. Don't get frightened by those terms. You know the Biblical meaning of predestination, the Biblical meaning, I didn't say the theological meaning.

I said the Biblical meaning. It has to do not with the destination of the redeemed, but the purpose of God in calling and selecting the redeemed. We have been predestinated, not unto heaven.

We have been predestinated to be conformed to the image of his son. There's a difference. It has to do with status, not destination.

We who have been called and selected and elected, we have been predestinated by God to be conformed to the image of his son. One day we shall be exact. That's what God's purpose is.

And we fit into that. See, and Paul is here unveiling that grand and glorious purpose. Then he comes to verse 13.

Wherefore, in the light of all of this, in the view of God's overall grand and glorious purpose to bring everything in this universe under the headship of our Lord Jesus Christ until he is Lord Supreme and Sovereign over everything and every creature in the universe. Wherefore, in the light of all of that, I don't want you to faint at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. I have a soul agony as I think about you.

I think of maybe you don't grasp this. Maybe you haven't comprehended all of this. And so I agonize in my heart and in my prayers for you that you might come into a fuller understanding of all of this.

It will alter, it will change your whole approach to life if you realize what God's purpose and plan is in the universe and how you fit into that plan too. So I'm agonizing in my heart and I have great tribulations for you. And for this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And if you start there, and once again, you'll find one of those long sentences in this epistle. Our first study, I reminded you, in that prayer was 199 English words. In this prayer that Paul now prays, there are 80 words in a single sentence.

We have the habit once in a while in some of our gatherings to have what we call sentence prayers. That's one way of limiting some of the saints who pray all over the earth when they pray and travel all around and eat up the whole time. So we sometimes say, now we just want a sentence or two to pray.

Just thank the Lord for something or petition Him for something, just a sentence. Well, I wouldn't dare risk that if the Apostle Paul were in the audience. His sentences were rather long.

And this prayer has 80 words in it. Let's notice it. I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

That, in each case now, you have hinge words, hinges. These are hinges on which there revolves or hangs a very important statement. There are several.

That, He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. That, Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. That, ye being rooted and grounded in

love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

That, you might be filled with all the fullness of God. We might say that all those that's could be enunciated in order that, in order that, in order that, in each instance. Now, let's see if we can analyze this prayer, because we are now on the slopes of the high peak in this chapter.

I think we reach the peak at a specific point, and we're approaching the peak in this prayer. When you analyze it, you will notice that the very first thing that he's praying for in verse 16 is for spiritual empowering. That, He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.

Beloved, I would say that my associations in the Lord's work have been, of course, most of my life has been occupied in church ministry, as well as an educational institution. And I would say, for instance, I was pastor of one single church for 33 years. I said that proved to me one thing.

It proved the validity of the biblical doctrine known as the perseverance of the saints, to endure one man for 33 years. My fellowship among the brethren grows out of the fact that my good wife was born and reared and raised among the brethren in the north of England. And in this moment, when we are free from pastoring churches, we fellowship with the Boca Raton Bible Chapel, the brethren in that place.

So I sometimes feel a little bit like, not quite like a Philistine among the Israelis, but I do feel a little bit like a stranger or a foreigner who is invading the camp. But it has been a very delightful and very helpful experience for me, personally, to have the fellowship with God's people among the brethren. My wife feels she is back to her roots and enjoying herself immensely.

I charge her, however, I say the only reason why you delight in going to the assembly is it gives you a chance to buy new hats. But at any rate, one of the things I have noticed is a marked difference in the public praying of the brethren as over against the kinds of prayers that one hears in most of our churches. I deplore the shallowness of the praying that I hear as I travel about the country among Christian people.

The dimensions of the praying are so limited and the requests are so sometimes puerile and childish. I go into a prayer meeting in a church and I sometimes think I am in a medical clinic. They are praying for everything from ingrown toenails to acute dandruff.

The whole prayer time is taken up with praying about somebody's illnesses and troubles. I don't deny that we ought to be praying for one another and people who are ill deserve our prayerful attention. But when that occupies almost the totality of our praying, then I think it leads to immaturity in the art of prayer.

This is so apparent that I thought one Sunday morning I would experiment. So I said to friends here in the church, and I expounded a little bit on this idea I have just spoken to you about. I said, what would you do if some Sunday morning one of the brethren walked up to you and instead of the usual, you know what we do, hello Joe, how are you? Oh, I'm fine.

How are you Bill? I'm fine too. Been a good week? Yeah, good week. Feeling good? Yes, feeling fine.

How's the wife? She's fine too. And the kids? Yeah, the kids are all well. And business going good? Yeah, business going pretty good.

We had a good week this week. I'm so glad you look fine Bill. Yes, you look the same John.

What have you done? You've battered your gums for about three minutes in a waste of breath and time. Isn't that the truth? But we all do it, you know. We can't get away from it.

We can't escape it. So I said, suppose some Sunday morning one of the brethren walks up to you and says, Jack, I've been praying for you all week. The first thing that happened, you may be bristled.

Am I that backslidden that you're praying for me? No, I've been praying all week. You know what I've been praying for? I've been asking God to so deepen your understanding of the things of God that you would become a mighty giant in our midst. That you would come to know the Lord in such a rich and marvelous and powerful and wonderful way that it would just shine through you Jack.

That's what I've been praying for. That you would be strengthened with spiritual might in your inner man by the Holy Spirit. I said, you know what would happen to you Jack? You'd faint.

You'd fall over. You couldn't believe it. See? That somebody would express their desires toward you in terms of grand and great spiritual concepts.

We could learn some lessons maybe from the apostolic prayers and what he prayed for. As he thinks of these Ephesians, he says, the one thing I want above everything else is that God would strengthen you with spiritual might by the indwelling power of His Holy Spirit. I tell you then you'll be able to cope with and conquer any situation that you face.

If it's strong within, what matters what's without? See, in Christ I'm an overcomer. In Him I can face every and any situation in victory. That's what he's looking for.

I want you to be strengthened with might by the Holy Spirit in your inner man. And God is so concerned with our inner man. This generation of ours is obsessed with concern about the outer man.

Do you know that? I watch people sometimes when they sit down at a meal and I have a friend, before he eats a thing he reaches in his pocket and he lines up about 17 pills. Blue, green, yellow, black. You know he's not sick.

Nothing wrong with him. But he just believes that these pills all contribute to his physical energy. So he takes the two pink ones.

The only trouble is those pink ones cause a little buzzing in his ear. So he takes three green ones to cure the buzzing in the ear. But they make those three green ones, when he takes them regularly, they give him a little bit of a crick in the back of his neck.

So he takes two pink ones. And the process goes on. But why are you taking all those pills? Oh, they make me feel strong.

Or, get up early in the morning and what do you see? Agonizing people. And I say the reason I don't jog is because they all seem to be enjoying it so much. Look how happy they are on their faces.

They're nearly dying, those people. Gasping for breath. What do they want? Oh, they're taking care of the outer man, all right.

If you're thinking of where to put your surplus money in a business that really pays, I advise you strongly to buy into a health club. They're the most important and the most lucrative businesses in America today. Everybody goes to the health club.

Mothers take their babies along dressed in those tights, you know, and they're all going up there to do aerobic exercise. What for? The outer man. The outer man.

Develop it. Improve it. Strengthen it.

Oh, if only we would spend a fraction of time spent on the development of the outer man, on the cultivation of the inner man, there would be a vast difference in our whole approach to life. So Paul says, I'm concerned about that inner man. So there's a plea for spiritual empowering.

Then he goes on, in order that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, semicolon. Now, Paul, just a moment. You've got me perplexed right away.

I thought, and you better be careful, Paul, about your doctrinal expressions. Be sure you're straight now. Paul, you taught in other places that when a person comes to Christ and receives him into his heart and life by faith, that Jesus Christ comes into that person's life really, and literally.

He dwells within their bodies, changing the nature of the body so that it is really now the temple of the Holy Spirit. But Christ dwells within. Is that right, Paul? He says, correct.

You've got it straight. But now you're praying that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith. This is a bit confusing, sir.

If he's already there, why are you praying that he may dwell there? Well, he said, you see, you have English listening antennae. You don't have a Greek antenna. You see, he uses a very special word here.

The word dwell, in this case, means to make your home and settle down in a place. Or put it the other way, settle down in a place and make it your home. Feel at home.

There are some homes we all visit where we feel we must sit on the edge of the chair with our feet in just the right position and hardly move, because one mustn't. You're not quite at home there. You're allowed to be there.

You're a guest indeed. But you don't feel quite at home. There are other places where you know what you can do.

You can even take off your shoes as soon as you come in. And they tell you, come on out in the kitchen. Sit down beside the refrigerator even.

Oh, you say, that's just like home. I feel at home here. All right, he says, I want you to be so strengthened within your inner man that the Lord Jesus Christ will settle down and feel at home in your heart and in your life.

Does he? Some have said that in the lives of some people, Christ has place. In others, he has prominence. And in still others, he's allowed to have preeminence.

That's the position he desires, preeminence, so that he may feel right at home, settle down there, that Christ may settle down in your hearts by faith and feel at home, so that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend what you can't comprehend. That's a paradox. To comprehend, be able to comprehend with all the saints, the breadth, length, depth, and height, and know the love of Christ, that passive knowledge.

I don't understand that passage of Scripture. I'm frank to tell you. I ponder it.

I search through it. I wonder why he put it that way. But I guess I have to just accept it and believe it and rejoice in it.

What I do pick up is that he wants us to be rooted and grounded in love. Now, our mother tongue, English, is very poverty-stricken sometimes in its words, its vocabulary. What is love anyhow? What do you mean by love? Oh, how we have misused that word.

It's like a worn coin now. It hardly has a basic definition anymore. We've worn it.

I see it on the bumpers. Now it says, I red heart my dog. You know what that means? I love my dog.

We stick that on our bumpers. So love has become symbolized by a red heart. Come Valentine's Day, we're smothered with red hearts that talk about love.

Love, what is it? Well, is it that I see we in the back there with two teenagers that look at one another with moony eyes and they sit so close you couldn't get a piece of paper between them and we say, ah, that's puppy love. Yeah, love. So is that what love is? Then I pick up the newspaper and I read that Ms. So-and-so is marrying Mr. So-and-so and each of them, she's been married four times before and divorced, he three times before.

And when the newspaper reporters interviewed her, she said, for the first time in my life, I'm in love. And she used the same word, love, L-O-V-E, love. Is that what love is? That emotional whatever, physical emotion shown by a four times exchanged woman who is really an adulteress? Is that what it is? Or I go into a sick room and I see a mother bent over the cradle of a baby who's torn with fever, restless.

She's almost frantic trying to comfort it. And I say, you haven't slept, you must take rest. No, no, no, she can't take rest.

Why not? Oh, look at her face. And there is described what we call mother love. Is that the same word that we use for those kids in the background for that Hollywood act? No.

Well, then what is it? Well, there's something that a minister sees that seldom other people see at a Christian wedding. When a young couple walked down the aisle and you asked them to repeat the vows of marriage, look at their faces. If you could take a picture, you would see a light that's so special.

I had a wedding once and it was nearly busted up by what a guy did. He didn't do what we had rehearsed. We went through the whole business.

And on the day of his marriage, I said to him, Albert, do you take Marie to be your wife? He said, I do. And so on. And then he turned and looked at her and he said, gee, but I love you.

Wow, that just broke it up. You weren't supposed to say that, but he couldn't help it. And the look on his face and her face betoken something very sacred and special that we call marital love.

And then I walk outside and I see a couple of people whamming away with some catgut and hitting a ball and one of them yells, 40 love! Is that what it is? This love? Then I turn to the word of God and it says, for God so loved his world. Demonstrated it in that he gave his son love. I want you to be rooted and grounded in love.

This something, this difficult to define something that really you cannot define, that's why I think he says, when you reach out beyond a human into the realm of God, length, breadth, height, depth, the love of Christ. Christ is incomprehensible. You cannot measure it.

You can't somehow put it together. What is it? Well, friend, in the world of Christians, I can honestly say, though I don't know personally, many of you, only a couple or so here, you are strangers to me, but I can honestly say, I love you. Now, is it because you're nicer looking than other people? Don't press your luck too far.

Is it because you're brighter and smarter than most people? I refuse to answer on the grounds that it would incriminate me. Is it because you're so nice to me? That might be a factor, but none of these are the reason I love you. I'll tell you why.

Because, you see, Christian love is an indefinable something that has in it, as somebody said, a minimum of emotion and a maximum of evaluation. You know what that means? You don't have to feel nice. There are a lot of people I love, but I don't like them.

I love some Christians, but, oh, the thought of spending all day with them in the same automobile is simply obnoxious to me. I must admit it. I don't like them.

They don't like me, so it's mutual. See? But I love them still. You know why? It doesn't... Christian love has a minimum of emotion in it, but a maximum of evaluation.

If God thought you were so valuable to Him that He was willing to give His Son to die for you on the cross of Calvary to buy you, then I can't think anything less of you than God thinks of you. An object of love. And the basis of my love for you is the evaluation God put upon you.

And if He thinks that much of you, what can I do but respond and say, I think also highly of you. That's what He's praying for, I think. Now He comes, and I'm sorry I'm over time here, but they tell me I'm running off the tape all the time.

But you'll have to forgive me. And to know the love of Christ, verse 19, which passeth knowledge in order that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. That's the peak in this chapter.

There you are, you're at the mountain peak. That you might be filled with all the fullness of God. Dear friends, let me tell you something.

The only other person of whom the scriptures speak that He was filled with all the fullness of the Godhead bodily was our Lord Jesus Christ. Can it possibly be that God wants you and me also to experience the fullness of God bodily in us? Is that what He's saying? If He is, it's the most breathtaking concept maybe in all this epistle. You'll not reach a higher peak of blessed truth anywhere else than at this point.

That you might be filled with all the fullness of God. Not in heaven, later on, now. Right now.

On this tawdry, miserable planet, to experience something like this, to know it, to really know it, that's it. That's what He's praying for. Little wonder then, that almost in the next breath He says now unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all you ask or think, of course it has to be God who does it.

I'm incapable of any of this, but He can empower and strengthen and give us all that is needed. There was a young Canadian, only 19, no he was an American, excuse me, he was an American, only 19 years old. He couldn't get into the Air Force during the war here in America, so he slipped across the border and I don't know how he maneuvered this, but he got into the Royal Canadian Air Force.

And he became a member of the crew of a fighter bomber. And after a few missions over Germany, one night as they flew over Schweinfurt in Germany, the AK-AK caught that plane and the fuselage of that bomber became a coffin. And all the crew died in the crash of that plane shot down.

And it was the sad task of the Canadian chaplain of his unit to do what they always had to do when boys died, gather together their belongings and ship them back to parents or wife or loved ones with a covering note or letter. But as he searched through the few belongings of this lad, he found a brown piece of paper on which was scratched some magnificent words. And John Gillespie McGee, Jr. had written what has now become known as High Flight.

And here's what he wrote. Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth and danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings. Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth of sun-split clouds and done a hundred things you have not dreamed of.

Wheeled and soared and swung high in the sunlit silence. Hovering there, I've chased the shouting wind along and flung my eager craft through footless halls of air. Up the long delirious burning blue, I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace.

Where never lark or even eagle flew. And while with silent lifting mind, I've trod the high untrustless sanctity of space. Put out my hand and touch the face of God.

What John Gillespie McGee felt as he pushed his plane high in the skies, that he could just reach over and touch God's face. We must feel as we stand on a peak like this and hear God say, I want you to be filled with all my fullness as my beloved son was. Then we reach out and touch the face of God.

We'll not get any higher than this in all the epistle. Now let's pray. Father in heaven, it's beyond our ken.

We can't take it in. We believe all these words, but we must be honest with thee. We must confess with deep shame.

We haven't known much in reality in our experience of what this is all about. So we pray that today as we walk our little path of life, wherever we go, in the ordinariness of life, the humdrum of it, or the excitement and the adventure of it, whatever, in the midst of it all, Lord, wilt thou feel so at home in our hearts. Wilt thou strengthen us with such spiritual might in our inner man that we'll be able to comprehend that love beyond our comprehension that somehow reached out and got hold of us and now takes the frailty and fragility of our lives and fills them with thy fullness.

And let some of it show. Let some of it shine forth in our words and actions this day so that at the end of the day we'll be able to look back and say we walked today with a king. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/7/SID7927.mp3>

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