

The Five C's of Saving Faith

by Richard Owen Roberts

This sermon delves into the five C's of saving faith, emphasizing the certainty of saving faith based on the absolute facts of Christ's life, death, and resurrection. It challenges believers to understand that saving faith is not just about justification but also about sanctification and final redemption, all made possible through Christ's work. The sermon highlights the need for believers to rely on Christ's power to live a holy life, knowing that the same power that raised Christ from the dead is available to transform their lives and enable them to overcome every challenge.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:4, Romans 5:10, Ephesians 1:19, Ephesians 1:22

Topics: "Saving Faith", "Transformation through Christ"

Description

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Transcript

Seeking to bring to your attention what I've called the five C's of saving faith. Now, granted anybody here could come up with a better title for this series, but I'm assured you couldn't come up with a better subject. Now, we looked yesterday morning at the opening of this series at the certainty of saving faith.

I hope it's clear to all that saving faith is not based on something we hope or even expect will happen. It is built on that which has already happened. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ may be denied by some, but it's an absolute fact.

Now, most of us are familiar with the name Abraham Lincoln, and to our astonishment there are some who are telling us that he never existed. But most of us know better than that. And in the same way, there are some who are saying that Jesus Christ was not born of the Virgin Mary.

But we know better than that. We know she was not a dummy idiot who pretended that her pregnancy had something to do with some relationship with some man. And so we were looking at that portion in chapter 2 of the Gospel of John.

Yesterday morning, when they ran out of—do I dare to say it in a Baptist church? They ran out of wine in a wedding and approached Mary. And remember, she said to the servants, whatever he says to you, do it! And so the servants took those six water pots that were standing there, containing between 20 and 30 gallons apiece, and as I pointed out yesterday, six times the in-between figure from 20 to 30, six times 25. Can you imagine a Baptist church with 150 gallons of wine for the wedding? And then we remind ourselves that wasn't the start of the wedding.

They'd already been drinking sufficiently to run out. But the issue that we were really concerned about was why, so adamantly, with such certainty, did Mary say, whatever he says to you, do it? And I made the obvious statement. She said that because she knew who her son was.

And as I pointed out yesterday, it's so obvious to the ladies here, almost without exception, every woman knows when she's a virgin and when she isn't. And surely, when the angel Gabriel told her she was to bear a son, she spoke with great integrity when she asked, how can that be? For I'm a virgin. And she was told very plainly that that which was to be conceived in her was not of man, but of God.

And what I hoped that maybe those who were here yesterday morning might face afresh is that saving faith is built upon certainty. Now, I emphasize that again this evening because it seems there's almost no end of the stream of professed Christians who are trying hard to believe, but they're loaded with doubt. And so for the vast majority of those who profess to be Christians, it's more a fire insurance policy than saving faith because they're not at all clear that Christ is indeed God.

And actually, I'm hoping that for you, it's a very clear issue. And we also looked yesterday morning at Nathaniel, who when invited to come and meet the Messiah from Nazareth, wisely and accurately asked the question, can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Because he knew perfectly well that the Messiah was from Bethlehem. But, as you recall, when he was approaching Christ, having already decided this could not possibly be the Messiah because he was from Nazareth, not Bethlehem, and he heard the Lord Jesus Christ say to him, Behold, and Israelite indeed, in whom there are no fishhooks.

Now, that's Oklahoma language, forguile, pretense, sham. And immediately upon hearing those words, he knew that it truly was the Messiah that he was facing. And he declared openly and boldly the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Christianity is not based upon hope or uncertain expectation, but upon glorious facts. The death of Christ is not a pretense. The burial of Christ is not a pretense.

The resurrection of Christ from the grave is not a pretense. The ascension of Christ back to heaven is not a pretense. Absolute fact! And saving faith is always based on absolute fact.

But then last night we were looking at a subject matter very, very different from the certainty of faith, and I gather that it was troubling to some and very blessed to others. Because what we were looking at last night in 2 Peter chapter 1 is that although saving faith is certain and based upon absolute fact, it nonetheless must be conducted. And so we were looking at that portion where the apostle Peter spoke briefly of the source of saving faith, a gift, and that the appearance of saving faith, that it must be just like what the apostles received.

But then principally the passage was dealing with the conduct of saving faith. Some of you, like me, have been in testimony meetings where some old codger, maybe 86 years of age like this old codger, got up

and said, I accepted Christ when I was 12 years of age. And many of us want to stand up and shout, So what? Because saving faith is not just something that sits idly in the life.

Saving faith must be conducted appropriately. And Peter singled out, and I'm going to read this again, because if you were tormented last night by the truth, praise God, and let's torment you again with the very same truth in the hope that it might do some good in the long term. And so we read, Now, for this very reason also, applying all diligence to your faith.

That's verse 5 of 2 Peter 1. Applying all diligence to your faith. Supply. And then we have a list of seven things that are to be added to saving faith.

We have moral excellence, number one. We have knowledge, number two. We have self-control, number three.

We have perseverance, number four. We have godliness, number five. We have brotherly kindness, number six.

And we have Christian love, number seven. And then we are told very plainly, if these qualities are yours. Now look, let's be sure we got this straight.

They are only ours if we have added them to saving faith. So we are told, if these qualities are yours and are on the increase. And that's where many of us, if we were honest with ourselves, would be greatly troubled, for we know perfectly well that even if by some off chance, some tiny measure of these qualities would be found in us, they're not on the increase.

And to go around boasting about possessing saving faith and yet not to be deeply concerned to be adding these qualities and being concerned that these qualities are on the increase in our lives, the apostle says, demonstrates one of two things. Either we are blind or we are short-sighted, not remembering the reason why God cleansed us from our sin. And although, of course, this is what I was preaching on last night, I would be amiss not to freshly emphasize that truth.

These seven qualities are to be ours, and they are to be on the increase. And if they are not, I repeat what I just said, there are two possible reasons. We're blind.

And if you care at all for Scripture, you know that the blind man is the man that doesn't know God. So you can't possibly have saving faith and not be conducting it according to the Word of God. Oh, you can pretend it.

You can stand in a testimony meeting as I already suggested and claim that you received it when you were 12 years of age, but every wise, thoughtful person does shout, so what? Because Christianity is not past tense. And then, of course, the alternative to blindness, short-sightedness, not remembering why Christ purified you from sin. And it goes without saying He didn't purify us from sin so we could sit like dumb donkeys.

He purified us so that we could add these seven qualities and see, too, their increase in our lives. And then the passage has this glorious conclusion that if these qualities are ours and on the increase, then we will never stumble. And some of us have gotten tired of helping back to the feet those that have stumbled.

Not that we're ready to quit, but it is a tiring task. But in addition to not stumbling, let me read again the last verse of this glorious passage. For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

And there are some here, apparently, who, if they think they could get away with it, wouldn't mind sneaking into the kingdom of God. But of course, they won't get away with it. But is it not wonderful to know that there is an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God for those who have these qualities and find them on the increase.

So, in the morning we were looking at the certainty of faith and in the evening on the conduct of faith. Now, here, midway tonight, we take up the third of these precious matters about saving faith. We look at the central concerns of saving faith.

What an incredibly significant matter. The central concerns of saving faith. If, by the grace of God, we survive until tomorrow, we will be looking at the comprehensive nature of saving faith, how it impacts everything we are and do.

And then, Lord willing, if permitted, we'll look on the last night, on the Wednesday, at the contagious nature of saving faith. And perhaps you can relate to it when I point out that we're not dealing with that today. Now, let me take a matter that does concern many of you and ask if you had ever heard this interpretation.

God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because they were lacking in hospitality. Well, you say, what a bizarre notion. Where did that come from? Well, that came from the fellow that served as Billy Graham's ghostwriter and Jerry Falwell's ghostwriter and E.J. Kennedy's ghostwriter.

You say, how would you know that? Well, it might be hard for you to believe, but I was offered the job and didn't take it and so was very interested in who did take it and it turned out to be a homosexual who took the job. Oh, in the closet at that time, but long ago out in the open. And the notion that God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of their lack of hospitality came from the same man who wrote some of the books some of you treasure in your library.

Now, if you think Christianity is advancing, that saving faith is like a contagion, you must be Ostrich-like with your head in the sand. Christianity appears to be shrinking and its influence lessening in America. Now, maybe that doesn't concern you, but I don't mind telling you it concerns me very greatly because I do believe that true saving faith is contagious.

But that brings us then directly to the concern of this evening and I want to invite you to turn to a passage that has suffered a lot of abuse at the hands of the church, but still stands as the word of God. I'm looking and inviting you to do the same at 1 Corinthians 1. I'm going to pick up the reading at verse 18, so then 1 Corinthians 1 and commencing at verse 18. And I'm not going to read it in a straightforward fashion, but bit by bit with, I hope, helpful comments.

Are you ready? 1 Corinthians 1, verse 18. For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing. Holiness.

Well, some of us who preach know what it's like to have a congregation that is circling their ear with that suggestive movement of the finger. An awful lot of people, whether it be as a result of preaching or the result of your personal witness, regard the preaching of the cross as foolishness. And while most are more

or less silent, once in a while you run into somebody with a big mouth, maybe perhaps a bit like someone you know, hopefully not yourself, who is forever spouting off and who sometimes say, that's ridiculous.

How could the death of anybody take care of the eternal destiny of anybody? But the simple truth is, for those of us who believe, the word of the cross is not foolishness, but our greatest confidence, the most precious and vital thing that we know. And just as it says here, for to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside.

Now, obviously God could just simply take his hand and sweep all of it aside, but instead what he's allowed to happen today is there are multitudes who claim saving faith, who are claiming something radically different than the Bible speaks of. And even the author, whom I've already suggested was teaching, that God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of their lack of hospitality. And the sad thing is, literally millions of people are believing the nonsense of the day.

So God is sweeping away rapidly in this nation all reliance upon Jesus Christ and his cross and substituting it with a lot of garbage that should never have existed, but has become much more prevailing than the truth. As I said, God doesn't need to let the church destroy the nation, but that's what's happening and it's long past time we begin to face the reality. The biggest problem in America is not the unregenerate politician and it's not an academic system that has gone astray and it's not a media that is loaded down with trash.

The biggest problem in America is the church that will not allow the God of the Bible to prevail. I hope with all my heart there's no one here so foolish as to reject the truth in favor of the trash that's being distributed in the name of Christ. And then we read in verse 19, it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside.

Most of our young people have been taken in by those who say the earth was not created. It evolved. And although right now some of those ridiculous views are prevailing at the right time, God will reduce to nothing the cleverness of the clever and the wisdom of the wise.

And so we are asked in verse 20, where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? Now do you see what we're really faced with? The world regards what we believe as foolish. But what we believe will prevail. This life will be, for most of us, soon over.

And this earth will disappear. And God's truth will prevail. And if somehow we get the notion that God is losing right now, we haven't got things straight.

Things do appear right now as if somehow things have turned quite rotten and the church is unable to prevail. But that's a temporary problem created by the church itself which refuses to pay any attention to what God really says. Read on with me.

Verse 21. For since in the wisdom of God the world, through its wisdom, did not come to know God, God was well pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. Now let me urge you to be mindful of the fact that things are not now as they always were.

As the pastor mentioned, I've been preaching for over 70 years and I remember the time when entire congregations were bathed in tears as they listened to the word of God. Now we rarely ever see a tear.

But the fact that we don't now see many tears, does that prove that there will never be tears again? Well, not only have I seen tears, but I've seen countless congregations like this where at the beginning of the service everybody sat with their back to the pew and then I watched as I preached entire congregations moving to the front and everybody hanging on to the rail and mouths dropping open and I've watched a half an hour, an hour after service, not a soul moves because God has come.

And I believe what some of us have had the joy of seeing with our own eyes and experiencing in person is going to happen again. And I believe we are headed toward the greatest revival of true religion the world has ever known. I don't really know what you think and I suppose in a certain sense I don't even care.

I'm so convinced that God is in charge and that he has allowed us to enter into a dismal period. But that dismal period won't prevail forever. We read in verse 22, indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom.

But we preach Christ crucified to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness. But to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. And though we wouldn't dare to say we don't care what's happening, we know that what is happening at the moment is but for a moment.

For we understand verse 25, the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men. And so we have this exhortation in verse 26, consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong. And those things of the world or the base things of the world God has despised and God has taken the things that are not to bring to naught the things which are strong.

Now, Pastor and I have had at least a wee bit of conversation. I don't mean to be insulting, but do you know before I met you I never heard of Stroud, Oklahoma? As far as I know, it didn't exist. One heard of Tulsa and Oklahoma City, but I don't anticipate that the next great work of God is going to begin in the well-known places, but in the places like this that almost nobody knew even existed because God somehow chooses that which is not to bring to naught that which is.

Now, I don't mean to belittle this pastor, but he and I have, I think, become good friends and I have a notion that God would be delighted to do something great here. But I'm not so sure folk in this area care enough to do what is mandatory to see a great outpouring of the Spirit. Suppose at least once a week at least as many who are here tonight come together to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the work of God here.

And suppose you come to pray not just thinking, well, not very likely to happen, but God has chosen what is not to overcome that which is. He has chosen the non-mighty, the non-noble, the non-wise by this world's standards to bring to nothing all the nonsense that surrounds us. I don't know how you look at it, but it doesn't look to me as if this is too inconsequential a place for God to do something wonderful.

I can see Tulsa and Oklahoma City and other places that are known finding the truth here and being transformed by what they find here. Not that it is likely to happen if you treat things as lazily as you have in the past, but it could happen if you take God seriously. And you can't imagine anything more wonderful than God in our midst.

And I read again verse 27. God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen the things that are not that he might nullify the things that are. And all of this with a very profound reason that is stated in verse 29 that no man should boast before God.

And now we come to our text for the evening. But by his doing, you are in Christ Jesus who became to us wisdom from God. That is righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

That just as it is written, let him who boasts boast in the Lord. Now, you did bring your Bible, didn't you? You are reading it, aren't you? And maybe you thought the old preacher didn't know what he was doing when you read verse 29. Now, I'm not responsible for the lousy punctuation that exists in the various translations.

Now, normally when we read, we don't say comma and then comma, God moved powerfully, period, and so on. We don't usually use the punctuation in speech, but sometimes there are equivalents that we could use. And so let me read to you the verse the way it ought to be understood.

But by his doing, you are in Christ Jesus who became to us the wisdom of God. That is righteousness and sanctification and redemption. And if you don't like the oral version, then use the properly punctuated version.

But by his doing, you are in Christ Jesus who became to us wisdom from God, colon. You know what a colon is? Well, I gave you the equivalent in words. That is Christ became the wisdom of God.

That is righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Now, we know if we've studied our Bibles that the wise man in Scripture is the man who knows God. The word wisdom here is that which God gloriously gives.

Now, some of you have heard the statement the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And, of course, there are many, many like passages in Scripture. But you do understand, I hope, that salvation is an umbrella term.

It covers the great work of God and includes such things as we were thinking of this morning. Regeneration. It includes repentance and faith.

It includes justification. It includes sanctification. And it includes, to cite what we have in front of us this evening, it includes final redemption.

Now, just for the sake of those who are somewhat careless, let me remind you that the word redemption is used in two ways in Scripture. It is used both in the past tense and in the future tense. And some of you love hymns and you are very much acquainted with this.

And you can even recall right now hymns like, Redeemed. How I love to proclaim it. Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

And some of you old folks can even remember when they used to give trading stamps. Now, as a boy, one of my jobs was to lick the back of green stamps and paste them in the book. And I remember when my parents said to me, we want you to go with us to the redemption center.

And they had gathered, with my help I must add, three and a half books of green stamps. And we went to the redemption center and they pushed their three and a half books across the counter and they said, we want an electric toaster. First one ever to appear in our home.

And we went that afternoon and all that evening. We had some toast that was edible. Not the burnt stuff that we got from hanging a stick with a piece of bread on it over the fire.

But the glorious toast made in an electric toaster gotten at no cost at the redemption center because of the green stamps. And some of us know that this precious word redemption can have an English equivalent to buy back. And so we describe Jesus Christ as the redeemer.

And we don't really get any benefit out of that until we understand that we were not born of our mother's womb into his family. We were born sinners and into the family of the evil one. And then as a result of that incredible work on the cross we were purchased back.

And instead of belonging to the family of Satan we belonged to the family of God because we had been redeemed. So as I mentioned to you redemption in the past tense a very much understood and appreciated doctrine. But in this passage I hope that it is clear to you that something different is being spoken about.

Let me read this again. But by his doing you are in Christ Jesus who became to us wisdom from God. That is righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

And that redemption is not referring to the past tense but to the future tense. And sometimes we use as a substitute for this glorification. Or what happens to us when we leave this earth and enter into the eternal presence? Redemption.

But now I have a few little questions I'd like to ask you. There are three things singled out here as part of this wisdom of God. There is righteousness.

There is sanctification. And there is redemption. Now the word righteousness is what happens when we abandon self and our efforts at salvation.

And we believe what Jesus Christ has done. And we who are anything but righteous are made righteous or justified as we sometimes speak of it because of Jesus Christ. So here's a simple question but one I do want to ask you and I know some of you haven't gotten wise to this but young lady if you'll pardon me calling you that you took an awful risk when you sat down here in the front.

Because the preacher is about to ask a question of you. What does one have to do to be justified? Well she's rather quiet about it but she knows the truth. Jesus Christ is our righteousness.

He is the justifier. So we can safely say that to be justified or made righteous one has got to believe. But sometimes even the fourth row can be dangerous.

So what does one have to do to be sanctified? Did you hear him? Say it out loud. He says to continue believing. And now this young lady is going to help us with the third question.

If you have to believe to be justified you'll excuse me while I fuss a little with this head dressing. If we have to believe to be justified and you have to believe to be sanctified what do you have to do to be glorified or redeemed as it's stated in this passage? Say it out loud. Well maybe some of you heard her.

She said believe. And I want to ask the rest of you is she right? We don't want to shame her but I'll tell you very plainly she's wrong. Justification by faith sanctification by faith final redemption by death absent from the body present with the Lord.

Now that may not seem very important to you but I'm going to repeat it because to me it is immensely important. Everyone here who is justified is justified by faith. And everyone here who is sanctified is sanctified by faith.

But every justified, sanctified person who dies is guaranteed the final redemption. Now I hardly need to speak to you about justification by faith because for some reason or another that seems to be at least somewhat understood. But we are thinking about the critical issues in saving faith and it does appear that the vast number of people who are really ready to say that they are justified by faith think somehow that their sanctification is a duty that falls on them.

So one more question. Did you ever try to make yourself holy? Come now you don't have to answer out loud but you do have to think about this. Did you ever try to make yourself holy? Honestly, I don't know anything in all the world more discouraging.

And not only discouraging but impossible. Now I wonder do you really know why Christ died? Was it just to justify or was it also to sanctify? Could it be correctly stated that a person who is already justified becomes increasingly holy by faith? Now I want to ask you to turn from this text which I deeply love to a portion of Romans that perhaps you have some familiarity with. I want to invite your attention first to chapter five.

So Romans at chapter five. And we'll begin at verse one because it is obviously a very essential issue that is addressed in verse one. Therefore having been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

Now I'm not going to go into that. That's a part of justification, right standing with God and we don't earn that. We don't say to ourselves now that I'm beginning to see a little of the light of Christianity.

I've got to be busy and good and see if I can't do enough so that God switches things around and instead of regarding me as a sinner, he regards me as a saint. No, that's not justification. It's justification when we know that Christ died in our place and took our sins upon his own shoulders.

But now, look if you will at verse 10, for if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his son, much more. Having been reconciled, we shall be saved. Now, are you reading? Do you see what it said? We are saved by his life.

You see, the problem with multitudes is they think themselves justified and they call it quits. But tonight, this old man is looking at you and saying please don't call it quits. You were justified by Christ.

But we all know that although Christ was buried, we know perfectly well that the grave could not hold him. And although the disciples weren't clear yet, and not even the Marys of the Bible were clear, that great stone placed across the tomb entrance was rolled aside and the Lord Jesus Christ came out of the tomb and lived. And the various disciples in a variety of fashions met him and talked with him.

And then, eventually, he beckoned them to Jerusalem where he commanded them to tarry. And then they saw him go back to the glory from which he came where he still lives and abides, making intercession for

us. So while we are justified by his death, we are sanctified by his life.

And I'm asking you now, have you adequately appreciated that? Do you understand that the true source of holiness is not your trying to be good? Though you surely must, but you'll never get holy trying. In fact, you'll have days in your life where you'll probably say to yourself, I'm tired of being good. I'd like to be bad for a while.

But we have on the throne an intercessor who was not good just occasionally, but who was tempted in every fashion like we are, and yet he never sinned. And so he managed to live his entire life without a single sin. And he is alive today to do something for you today, tomorrow, the next day, all the days of your life.

And the reason he did say, be ye holy as I am holy, because he was living to make that possible for you. You can't look at the situation and say it's hopeless. I'll never make it.

I've tried hard. I've gotten discouraged. I'm tired.

I'm not even going to try anymore. No. Christ is our holiness.

And suppose you began to cultivate such a relationship with Christ that each morning when you awoke, you said to yourself, today I have the opportunity to allow the life of Christ in me to change me from what I've been to what he wants me to be. And although I am going to set my heart to be as good as I can, I'm going to do something greater than that. I'm going to let the life of Christ flow through me and allow his holiness to become my holiness.

Now, with that thought in mind, I do want to invite you to turn to another passage. This time in the book of Ephesians. And I'd like very much to read something perfectly wonderful.

So, Ephesians 1. And we're looking first at the words that appear in verse 4. I'm going to go back to 3 just to help you to get the sense of things. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us. Now look at the wording.

Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. Now, don't overlook that fact. Everything you need for a life of holiness, Christ has already secured for you.

But now, look at verse 4. Just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him in love. Now there are people who say, it's too hard to be holy. And this old guy isn't here to try to talk you out of that.

This old guy is here tonight to say there's a better way. Christ is as holy now as he ever was. And while it can be wonderfully said in the years of his life, he lived without sin, we can still say the same thing.

Thousands of years later, he is without sin. And as he died to justify you, he lives to make you holy. And long before you were born, long even before your parents were born, even before your great-great-great-great-grandparents were born, from the very foundation of the earth, he elected you, and of course me, to be holy.

Now I want you to think about that word elected. He elected you to be holy. I'm going to use an illustration that has its weaknesses and its value.

Maggie, that's my wife and I, lived in California when Ronald Reagan was governor. And we understood that he actually had higher aspirations than the governorship of California. We knew he had aspirations to be the president of the United States.

But I hope you understand that there is a very great difference between an aspiration and an election. And some of you are old enough to remember how hard Ronald Reagan worked to become president of these United States. And some of you can even remember one of his favorite phrases.

Well, I can almost see it and hear it. I'm going back to the ranch. During that time, when he was a candidate for the presidency of the United States, he could not only go back to the ranch, but he could quit the rat race of running as president.

It was his choice, but now listen. Eventually, he had convinced enough people that of all the lousy candidates that were running, he was the least lousy. And he was elected by the people of these United States to the presidency.

Now, he could still say, I'm going back to the ranch. But he couldn't say, I, Ronald Reagan, am going back to the ranch. Because the matter was removed from his hands when he was elected, and so it was not Ronald Reagan going back to the ranch.

It was President Reagan. You understand that. But do you realize that it was not the peoples of the United States that elected you to holiness? It was the Lord God Almighty who never failed in anything he undertook.

He elected you personally. Have a look at yourself. You don't have a mirror, but do the best you can.

Look at the lousy little person you are. The inconsequential nobody that you have become like me. And let this truth whip you.

The Lord God Almighty, before the foundation of the world, elected you to be holy. And all you've got to do is to say, thank you, Lord. I'll enjoy a life of victory.

I'll enjoy a life of progress. I'll enjoy the life of Christ throbbing in my own veins, making me what I cannot be on my own, but what he desired me to be from before the foundation of the world, holy like him. And just as a wee bit of help to encourage and to assist you in this, we still have our Bibles open at Ephesians 1, and I now want to invite you to drop down in your looking to verse 15.

For this reason, I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus, which exists among you, and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayer, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what are the riches of his glory, of his inheritance of the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of his might.

Do you understand that the Apostle Paul is telling the Ephesians that he wants them to know experientially, not academically, though that has its place, but to know experientially the power of God as it is in Christ Jesus. Now notice how this prayer continues. Verse 20, which he brought about in Christ when he raised him from the dead.

I want to pause and ask a question. How much power did it take to raise Christ from the dead and to bring him back to life? Well, we don't have a good answer for that because we cannot measure the power of God, but we can say without fear of contradiction all the power that it took to bring Christ out of the grave, back to life, is available to you. To lift you out of the grave of sin and to make you what Jesus Christ lives to accomplish in your life.

Have you ever stopped to think that the very power that was exercised in bringing Christ from the dead is power available right now and the rest of your days to make you like Jesus? And then look at what is said next. This is still verse 20. And seated him at his right hand in heavenly places.

Now let's get a grip on this. Great power exercised in bringing Jesus from the grave, but also great power exercised in moving him from earth back to glory. And whatever power it took to take Christ back to glory is available to you every single day of your life.

So that you need not live merely as a subject of earth, but as a member of the kingdom of God with your heart and your mind set on heavenly things. And with the power of Christ's life surging through you to enable you to be what you could not possibly be on your own, but what you can be under the power of the living Christ. And look at this next matter.

Verse 21. Christ was not only raised from earth and raised to heaven, but in heaven he put under his feet every other power. We read in verse 21.

Far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named not only in this age, but also in the age to come. And again I ask, how much power did it take for Christ to put under his feet every power there was? And again we don't know how to measure it, but we do know that all the power that it took to enable Christ to put every other power under his feet is available to you. To enable you to put everything that's been bothering you under your feet and to live and to reign triumphantly with Christ in the here and now.

And then to live in expectation that sooner or later you too will know the final redemption of being welcomed into his very presence. That's too good to miss.

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