

The Riches of Christ in His Saints: Ministry With the Lord

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeing Christ in the Spirit, not in the flesh, and understanding the unsearchable riches of Christ, which is revealed through the Church.

Duration: 1:15:26

Scripture: Psalm 68:18, Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 3:7-8, Ephesians 4:7-8, Ephesians 4:11

Topics: "New Covenant", "Christ's Ministry"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker uses the analogy of a centipede with a hundred feet to illustrate the danger of overthinking and self-focus. He emphasizes the importance of fixing our eyes on Christ and being joined to Him as members of His body. The speaker then discusses the grace given to him to proclaim the good news of Christ's riches among the nations. He contrasts the old covenant ministry with the new covenant ministry, highlighting the call to be ministers of righteousness and life.

Transcript

O Lord, as we are before Thee, we do pray that Thou wilt turn our eyes towards Thyself, that we may have our gaze fixed upon Thee, Thou who art the Risen, the Ascended One, Thou who sit at the right hand of the Father, who is above all things and is waiting for His enemies to be His footstool. Lord, we do pray that we may see Thee, that we may be delivered from ourselves, from earth, that we may be caught up. into that heavenly realm, and there, not only see Thee, but reign with Thee.

O, we do pray that through Thy Church, Thou mayst be able to manifest Thy all various wisdom, in the present time, to the principalities and authorities, that Thou mayst be able to reveal Thy unsearchable riches, even to the unseen world, through Thy Church. So we do come to Thee and ask Thee that by Thy Spirit, Thou will reveal again Thyself to us. We pray that we may forget ourselves by being absorbed into Thyself.

We ask Thee that as Thou dost reveal Thyself to us through Thy Spirit, that truly we may be absorbed, lost in Thee. O, we do pray that we may see no one but Jesus only. We do desire that in this whole universe, the Lord Jesus may be the only one seen, and seen by all.

We do look to Thee, in the name of our Lord Jesus. Dear brothers and sisters, we have been occupied just with one thing, and that is the unsearchable riches of Christ. O, let us put it in a better way.

We are occupied with one person, and that is our Lord Jesus. We mentioned last night the unsearchable riches of the mystery of the cross. Paul, on the way to Damascus, was given a heavenly vision.

And in that heavenly vision, he saw not only the risen Lord Himself, but in that vision, he saw also the body. We mentioned last night that it was a vision of the one new man. With Christ Himself as the glorious head, and with the church as His body.

The fullness of Him who fills all and in all. Dear brothers and sisters, if we try to know Christ in the flesh, we will see a very different Christ. We will have a very wrong concept of Christ.

We have to see Christ in the Spirit. And if we see Christ in the Spirit, then we see Him as He is. In the same manner, if we try to see the church with our natural eyes, with our natural mind, in the flesh, it does not look very beautiful to us.

Rather, it is very ugly. But, if by the grace of God, we are delivered from that fleshly look, and are able to see the church in the Spirit, we shall find that it is the most beautiful thing that you can see in this universe. Last night, I feel that I have left off something, which I would like to mention very briefly now, and then we will go on.

Because our emphasis is rather on the practical lifestyle. Now brothers and sisters, when Paul was shown that heavenly vision, when he discovered that this One is Jesus, the Risen One, He who is above all, the Lord in glory, what is the effect upon the life of Paul? If you really see something, that something is bound to have a lasting effect in your life. If you proclaim that you have seen something, and yet it does not affect your life, it does not change your life.

As our brothers say, revolutionize your life. Then we wonder, if you have really seen. Now dear brothers and sisters, this man saw, who was called Paul afterwards, he saw the Lord.

He saw the Lord of glory, and immediately the effect was felt in him. You remember, the first question he asked was, who are thou Lord? I do not know you, who are you? And after he was told, who that One was, you remember the second question was, Lord, what do you want me to do? In other words, you find there is a drastic change, that came into this life. Dear brothers and sisters, maybe you will feel well, it is a change, but to Paul.

It was a tremendous change. What kind of person was Paul? Paul was Paul. He was a person, who was used to give orders.

He was not accustomed to listen and to receive orders. He was a born leader. He must be at the top.

He must lead. He was that kind of person. And for that kind of person, to turn around and ask, what do you want me to do? I am at thy order.

I am at thy disposal. I am waiting before thee. Dear brothers and sisters, it is a tremendous change, in seeing the Lord of glory.

The effect upon his life is, he cannot be head anymore. He lost his head. Brothers and sisters, immediately you will find that from that day onward, the Lord of glory becomes the headship of the Lord.

He is a reality in the life of the Lord. He is no longer one who gives commands. Instead, he is always one who is of the receiving side.

Dear brothers and sisters, if the Lord should give us a vision of himself. If the Lord should reveal himself to us as the glorious head. He is head over all things.

Then brothers and sisters, can you be head anymore? You are beheaded. This is the practical effect of seeing the head. Brothers and sisters, our God is a jealous God.

He never commits two heads, or more than one head. He has established his son as the head over all things. No matter how big your head is, there is no chance.

Dear brothers and sisters, that will revolutionize your whole life. He said, Lord, what do you want me to do? What do you want me to do? I am here at thy disposal. You just say a word, and there I go.

I am willing to turn around and go back to Jerusalem, if you want me to. Just give order, and I will obey. And do you know, Paul got another surprise.

Did the Lord tell him what to do? Yes or no? Not much yes, but more no. He was expecting the Lord to tell him what he should do. Now he had come to a point to see that the Lord is greater than he.

Now he had come to a place where he yielded his head, and made the Lord his head. And he was all ready to obey the Lord. But somehow, the Lord did not tell him what to do.

The Lord said, all right, go to Damascus, into that city. And what I want you to do, I will tell you. Dear brothers and sisters, do you have such experience? You know the Lord, but you are your own head.

You always do things in your own way. You always go your own way. But one day, you get such a revelation of the Lord, that you willingly yield yourself to the Lord and say, now Lord, from now on, you are my head.

Give orders. You will expect that the Lord will be so pleased by your yieldedness. And he is in such a hurry, in case that you will retreat.

The Lord will immediately tell you, now son, do this, do that. And even tell you your whole life, from the beginning to the end. But if the Lord does not tell you, and instead of that, the Lord says, you just wait.

What should be told to you, will be told to you. You just wait. Does that disappoint you? He is not too much of a Lord.

He does not know how to be a head. He may lose his opportunity. A real head is not in a hurry.

And brothers and sisters, the strangest thing is here. Even after he got to the city of Damascus, and waited there, praying and fasting for three days and three nights, all he got was a little unknown man came to him. The great Paul, well known in the circle of Judaism.

Capitulated himself to the Lord of Glory. Now that is the right thing to do. Because after all, he is the Lord.

But here you find the Lord sent a little man. Ananias. Known in that city, but certainly unknown in Jerusalem.

And Jerusalem is the capital. The center. And the Lord sent this man to Paul, to tell Paul what the Lord has chosen him to do.

Dear brothers and sisters, it is very hard to swallow this. For Paul to let Christ to be his head is comparatively easy. But instead of directly giving command to him, the Lord sent a small member to tell this large member what he ought to do.

Isn't that humiliating? A great apostle? To receive instruction from the Lord, through the hands of a little member? Dear brothers and sisters, that is the practical application of the vision of the body. Dear brothers and sisters, if you say the Lord has shown you the church, the body of Christ, what does it mean? What is the effect upon your life? Many brothers and sisters, good brothers and sisters, maintain a very strong position, saying that I obey no one but the Lord. There is no one above me but the head, the Lord himself.

If the Lord should tell me this, I obey, even jumping into the ocean. But that's all. I receive direct order from the Lord.

I am dependent only upon the Lord, and no one else. I am responsible directly to the Lord, and the Lord is responsible directly to me. Well, you may see something of the head, not too much.

But brothers and sisters, do you see the body? The fullness of him who feels all and in all? To see the head results in losing your head. To see the body results in losing your individualism. Dear brothers and sisters, are you related to the other members of the body of Christ? Are you the body to the head? Or are you just one member of the body? In 1 Corinthians chapter 12 verse 12 it is said that there are many members but one.

Though the members are many, yet one body, so also is the Christ. Oh brothers and sisters, do not forget that Christ, the person, is your head. But you are only a member of that big.

You are not the body. You are only a member. You are related to the other members of the body of Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters, are you related? That is the effect of seeing the church. That is the test of seeing the church. The reason why the Lord did not tell Paul directly and immediately his will and yet told him to another member is because of this.

If the Lord should tell him on that very spot where he fell, if the Lord should tell him all that the Lord wanted him to do, do you know what will be the result? He will be an independent, self-sufficient, unrelated. He will make himself the body. He will never be able to be entrusted with the mystery of the Christ.

From the very beginning of his life he had to learn this lesson, relatedness. Relatedness unto fullness. He was not able to know the will of God until Ananias laid his hands upon him and told him.

Dear brothers and sisters, relatedness is untruthfulness. Do we know that? If we really want to anchor into the unsearchable riches of the Christ, brothers and sisters, you cannot be here. Many say, I cannot live without the Lord.

Praise God. If you have come to a point where you cannot live without the Lord, that's a very good position. But dear brothers and sisters, have you ever cried out, I cannot live without you.

I cannot live without other members of the body of Christ. I need them and they need me too. Oh, brothers and sisters, there you will experience the unsearchable.

I just feel that I have to mention this in a brief way. Otherwise, it doesn't seem to be too practical. Now let's come to what by the grace of God we would like to fellowship tonight.

Will you please turn to the letter to the Ephesians. Chapter 3 Letter to the Ephesians Chapter 3 Verses 7 and 8 Ephesians Chapter 3 Verses 7 and 8 I am become minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me according to the working of His power to me less than the least of all things has this grace been given to announce among the nations the glad tidings of the unsearchable riches of the Christ.

Chapter 4 We'll read from verse 7 to verse 16 But to each of us has been given grace according to the measure of the gift of the Christ wherefore he says having ascended up on high he has led captivity captive and has given gifts to men but that he ascended what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth he that descended is the same who has also ascended up above all the heavens that he might feel all things and he has given some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some shepherds and teachers for the perfecting of the saints with a view to the work of the ministry with a view to the edifying of the body of Christ until we all arise as the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God as a full grown man as a measure of the stature of the

fullness of the Christ in order that we may be no longer babes tossed and carried about by every wing of that teaching which is in the leg of man in unprincipled cunning with a view to systematize error but holding the truth in love we may grow up to him in all things who is the head the Christ from whom the whole body fitted together and connected by every joint of supply according to the working in its measure of each one part works for itself the increase of the body to itself building up in love 2nd Corinthians chapter 3 2nd Corinthians chapter 3 we'll read from verse 2 through verse 6 Ye are our letter written in our hearts known and read of all men being manifested to the Christ epistle ministered by us written not with ink but the spirit of the living God not on stone tables but on

fleshy tables of the heart and such confidence have we through the Christ towards God not that we are competent of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves but our competency is of God who has also made us competent as ministers of the new covenant not of letter but of spirit who the letter kills but the spirit quickens dear brothers and sisters our brother mentioned this afternoon that we should not remain in that low level of asking everything for ourselves in other words we should not be self centered we should not be selfish even in spiritual things in seeking spiritual blessings we should from the very beginning of our life with the Lord dedicate ourselves to Him to serve Him to minister unto Him to serve the purpose of God in our generation this was true of Pope and this must be

true of every one of us of course we are familiar with that motto save we are saved to serve God is it not that God through Moses announced to Pharaoh let my people go that they may serve why are we saved why are we set free that we may serve God in Romans chapter 6 it is said having been free from the bondage of sin we have become bondmen to God bearing fruit unto holiness we are saved to serve and many take this to heart and go out now dear brothers and sisters the question is how do we serve by what do we minister now of course you have to forgive me because when I use that word ministry I do not mean what is commonly known today that limited restricted things of ministry the ministry that is to say you enter into the ministry you enter into a kind of special thing now I do not mean

that because the word is not used in that way in the word of God rather we are using that word ministry in its broadest sense it includes every one of us we are saved to serve to minister unto the Lord but how is there any relationship between our ministry and the unsearchable riches of Christ can we minister without the unsearchable riches of Christ if we can what are we ministering dear brothers and sisters ministry spiritual ministry is nothing but the expression of that unsearchable riches of Christ we read in Ephesians chapter 4 it is said wherefore he says having ascended up on high he has left captivity captive and has given gifts to men now this speaks of the ascension of our Lord Jesus what is the meaning of the death and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus it has been mentioned

again and again that through the death and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus a people is gathered a body is formed a church is born but after our Lord Jesus has risen from the dead he remained here for forty days but after forty days the evangelist recalls that this same one the one who was crucified buried risen from the dead this very one ascended up and is now seated at the right dear brothers and sisters what has happened in his ascension what is the meaning of his ascension to us here you find the apostle Paul quotes from Psalm he quotes from Psalm 68 verse 18 in that verse it is said thou hast ascended on high thou hast let captivity captive thou hast received gifts in man and even the rebellious for the dwelling thereof Lord dear brothers and sisters our Lord Jesus ascended on

high as the victor of Calvary our Lord Jesus ascended to heaven as the all victorious triumphant one and while he ascended he let his captive in his train has let captivity who are these captives you know according to the Roman times when a general or a consul had conquered a country and got many captives then when he came back from that battle there will be a parade a triumphant parade and there in his train will be those captives those who are captured and they will be sold or they will be used as slaves in the Colosseum he let his captive in his train dear brothers and sisters when our Lord Jesus ascends to heaven he has let captivity captive who are these captives of his thank God you we are captured by the Lord we are freed from our former captivity he has conquered the strong man

and has set us free but he has captured us he has great love towards us he has great mercy and grace towards us he has captured us he has made us in the Roman days when the general got captives how would he treat either he will put them to death or he will sell them for some profit he will use them as his slaves and ill treated them because they were his captives but dear brothers and sisters the Lord Jesus let his captivity captive how does he treat us he has turned the rebellious into the most willing he has turned these rebels, enemies who fight against him, fought against him into those ministers, servants ministers who minister the unserved the psalmist tell us he has led captivity captive thou has received gifts in man even the rebels these men become gifts to him they are the gifts

that the father has given brothers and sisters we are gifts to Christ given to the son by the father isn't that marvelous isn't that mercy more than that when Paul quotes that verse he doesn't seem to make the right quotation he becomes a little bit forgetful because if you read Ephesians chapter 4 you find that it is different it is different from Psalm 68 18 he has led captivity captive and has given gifts to man he received gifts in man that's in Psalm but in Ephesians he has given gifts to man brothers and sisters what does it mean it means that he receives us as gifts of the father to him and if it is a gift given to him by the father he will treasure it but as soon as he receives these gifts he gives gifts he gives us gifts for what purpose that we may minister unto him he equips us

he enables us to minister unto him in Ephesians chapter 4 it says he that descended is the same who has also ascended up above all the heavens that he might fill all things and he has given some apostles and

some prophets and some evangelists and some shepherds and teachers well you say some apostles some prophets some evangelists some shepherds and teachers some only some how about the rest does he only give gifts to the apostles to the prophets to the teachers to the evangelists are those apostles, teachers prophets, evangelists the gifts to the church and the rest have no place no share dear brothers and sisters it seems to be the common concept of the Christian world even though sometimes we say we are saved to serve yet those who are supposed to serve are just the sum there is a

special class they are the apostles the prophets the evangelists the shepherds and teachers isn't that God gave them to the church to serve the church yes sure they are to serve how about the rest the rest are to be served isn't that the picture of Christianity today oh how we have come short of the glory of God in this thing yet God has called some apostles some prophets some evangelists some shepherds and teachers with a view of ministry what is their ministry what is their service they are not to monopolize the ministry they are to stimulate to help to open the way to strengthen every member of the body that each member may become a living functioning member of the body every member has a ministry and in ministering one to another the body grows unto that full one servant of the Lord

the spiritual ministry of all the saints may seem to be a strange thing to us today but it is the very life of the apostles dear brothers and sisters through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus the church of God is there but he does not leave his church alone bond but not careful no parents will do the church is born through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus after she is born the blessed Lord provides for her how is the church to be matured how is the body to be full grown how can that manhood be reached how can we arrive at the full measure of the state through the special ministry of a few they may labor themselves to death but they will not they have their part in helping all the members of the body to realize that you are a member of the living body of Christ and

as a member you are given a gift no one can say I'm the foot and not the head therefore I do not belong to the body count me out if I'm here nobody will notice me if I am absent nobody will ask for me I'm just a little one I do not count what can I offer what ministry can I offer dear brothers and sisters such humility is not of God do not say that you are the I high above above therefore you do not need a dear brothers and sisters we need one every member is fit together in the body by God by His sovereignty and every member is given a gift for ministry what is the ministry it is the ministry of the building up of the body that is ministry let us return did Paul serve God before he was converted he did while he was persecuting the churches he thought he was serving God he was the

fulfillment of that prophecy of our Lord Jesus the Lord told his disciples the day will come when people will kill you and think they are serving God and that's Paul he thought he was doing God a great service but actually a disservice while he was serving God in that way he was serving God with his own wisdom with his own strength there was no need for him to be related no need for him to know the unsearchable riches of Christ he could well do that without Christ but dear brothers and sisters his true ministry began after he was met by the mercy the grace of the Lord transformed him makes him a vassal of honor a minister to the ministry his ministry is closely knit with the unsearchable riches his ministry is a spiritual ministry he himself tells us that he is not made a minister of the

old covenant but he is made a minister of the new covenant now dear brothers and sisters who are these ministers of the old covenant what is the old covenant the old covenant is the law who are these ministers of the law the Levites if you are born in that tribe if you are trained to read then after certain training and after a period of apprenticeship you naturally enter into the ministry of the old covenant you begin to

function in the temple everything is mapped out for you there is a program fully prepared you just fit into that schedule, that's all you need to do your own life with the Lord doesn't matter so long as you can read so long as you can remember that you do not do a wrong action at a wrong time but after you receive a training the law is engraved on stones, the letters

the pen letters if you can read them you can memorize them if you are trained under some senior priests as how to interpret these laws and you are told and you practice how to offer this and after that and all these many brothers and sisters you are a priest you are a minister of the old covenant a minister of condemnation a minister of death for the letter dear brothers and sisters even though we are not under the old covenant but how many today are ministering death and condemnation how are we qualified to minister because my father is a minister therefore I have the best environment naturally, gradually I am being channeled into the ministry it so happened my father was a minister how do we minister today or if you want to minister you have to go to certain training if you want to

minister, all right here is a program if you follow closely the tradition you are all right just add into that some of your dynamic personality dear brothers and sisters but we are called not to be ministers of the old covenant we are called to be ministers of the new covenant what is that? the new covenant we are called to be ministers of righteousness ministers of life how are you going to do that? when Paul was called God said you are to go to those people to the nations to open their eyes to deliver them out of darkness into light that their sins may be remitted and they may inherit with all the saints in the light brothers and sisters, how can you do that? how can you open people's eyes? how can you impart life to others?

Paul said who is competent?

I am not competent my competency is of God oh brothers and sisters what is true true ministry true ministry is the ministry it is ministering Christ this is not something that is appointed by man that can be appointed by man this is not something that is taught by man it has to come by revelation in the measure of the son revealed in your spirit it is the measure of your ministry to the children brothers and sisters it is the unsearchable riches of Christ that is first known to us and as our brother said brought into us become a part of us become our very life and by the power of the spirit this life is communicated pour out into the body brothers and sisters that is building up the body of Christ that is the only ministry that the Lord oh dear brothers and sisters look at Paul because of

his understanding of the unsearchable riches of Christ what a ministry he had and because of that unsearchable riches of Christ of that ministry entrusted to him with fear and trembling he ministered unto the Lord maybe you will say well I am not Paul I am not an apostle I am not a prophet I am not an evangelist I am not a shepherd and teacher certainly God does not require that of me dear brothers and sisters even though some may have greater ministry other may have smaller part but the nature is the same we are all called to minister unto by ministering Christ each one of us is given no one can take your place if you are not functioning the body lacks in that particular ministrations brothers and sisters it is a great responsibility a great privilege but a great responsibility now you

may say well I want to minister unto the body but I do not know what my gift is very often young brothers and sisters will come and say well brother tell me what is my gift will you tell me what is my place in the body whether I am a hand or I am a foot or I am an ear or I am a mouth or I am an eye well what am I I do not know what am I I do not know what my gift is how can I minister how can I function I don't know oh brothers and sisters it seems as if this question is very reasonable and many are asking that question I

cannot I dare not tell you what member of the body of Christ I cannot I will not tell you what gift you have God puts you in the body according to his will the spirit of God gives you gift according to his will I do not know but one thing I know if you are rightly related

if you are rightly related to your brothers and sisters if you grow in spiritual life if the measure of Christ is growing in you out of that that growth brings that spiritual nature you do not need to be conscious if my hand is always asking the question now what am I what is my ministry to the body now what should I do now if my hand is doing that it is paralyzed you all know the story of the centipede with a hundred feet do I pronounce it right with a hundred feet you all know that story do you oh a centipede with a hundred feet and of course he walks very fast but one day he stops and thinks now which of my feet starts first and you know as he is thinking of that and trying to figure out which foot step moves first he was he is transfixed to the ground he never moves until finally he

gives up and says well that's hopeless and off he goes brothers and sisters if we try to figure out now what member am I of the body now what is my gift you are paralyzed forget yourself fix your eyes upon the risen and ascended oh brothers and sisters if you are joined to the ascended lord without knowing it you are ministering Christ in your particular capacity to the body nothing official nothing formal but it is Christ being ministered into the body and dear brothers and sisters the result is the body grows is built up in love and when the body is built up dear brothers and sisters you find that it is Christ ministering is ministering Christ and that is the only ministry that builds up so may the lord be gracious to us that we may be delivered from that old notion of ministry the

ministry belongs but let us see that the spiritual ministry of all the members of the body is needed for the completion of that body may we be faithful oh lord we praise thee that thou has ascended upon high and has led captivity captive oh thou has turn us the rebellious into the obedient thou has turn us thine enemies into thine bonds thou has not require us to equip ourselves to serve thee but as a good master thou has equip us with thy gift we pray that we may be faithful that we may grow in our spiritual life that we may know more of thy riches in order that we may serve thee better and be better servants of thine oh have mercy upon all of us in the precious name of our lord Jesus

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