



MESSAGE TWO: THE BENEFITS OF THE CROSS

SUGGESTED PASSAGE: Ephesians 1:3–19 (NASB)

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. 13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory. 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, 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; 17 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. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 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...

MESSAGE GOAL:

The goal of this message on **The Hope of the Cross for Today** is to learn about the surpassing greatness, power, and authority of the cross so we can respond in praising God for defeating Satan and giving us access to Christ's rule and authority as heirs of an eternal inheritance.

INTRODUCTION:

It is unfortunate that many Christians come to church every Sunday and every Wednesday still functioning without knowing all of the rights and privileges that the cross has afforded them. They fail to maximize and utilize the benefits that God has ordained and bequeathed for His saints. Knowing about the cross without knowing the authority and benefits of the cross will keep you from experiencing all that God has in store for you.

What the cross provides to you and me is the opportunity to see what God can do beyond the normal, every day routine of life. The cross is the key to God invading the difficult or mundane circumstances of life just like He invaded the tomb of Jesus after He died on the cross, flipping things around in order to reveal His power and authority.

A lot of Christians sing about God's power, and talk about God's power, but can never testify to experiencing God's power since they have never accessed God's power. They have never seen Him turn, twist and tweak things beyond their human comprehension.

Have you ever watched an action-adventure film where the hero of the story is trying to locate a special artifact or treasure? All along the way, he or she faces opposition after opposition coming from the enemy who is trying to divert him or her from reaching their goal and benefiting from their prize. These films often remind me of what Satan attempts to do in the lives of believers.

See, you and I have a precious treasure – a unique possession – that our enemy doesn't want us to discover. We have things available to us that he doesn't want us to get. He will use no limits to stop you or I from picking up the treasure that God has for us.

Paul gives us some insight into the benefits and authority that the treasure of the cross has to offer when he writes to the church at Ephesus.





SERMON POINTS:

1. THE CROSS DISPLAYS GOD'S SURPASSING GREATNESS

Believe in the greatness of God's power

- The resurrection of Christ demonstrates God's power (Ephesians 1:19-21)
- God raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the heavenlies

Believe God provides power to you

- God's power that raised Christ from the dead is also available to you
- God has enough power to turn even the worst scenario in your life into a victory

2. THE CROSS DEMONSTRATES CHRIST'S AUTHORITY

Believe Jesus has supreme authority

- Jesus' ascension placed Him above all rule and authority (Ephesians 1:19-21)
- Jesus disarmed sin's power over you (Colossians 2:14-15)
- Jesus sits far above any situation you are dealing with

Believe Jesus imparts authority to you

- Authority is the right to use the power that you possess
- When you identify with Christ's cross, resurrection, and ascension, you identify with His authority that overrides Satan's power

Believe Jesus' authority rules over Satan

- Although Satan is more powerful than you, he is not strong enough to overcome Christ's authority
- Jesus disarmed Satan (Colossians 2:15)
- Satan doesn't have the last word because Jesus now sits high above all rule and authority

3. THE CROSS'S AUTHORITY AND POWER MAY BE ACCESSED THROUGH COMMUNION

Take communion to access the authority and power of the cross

- Communion ushers in both a physical and spiritual reality allowing you full entry into the cross's accomplishments
- Communion provides the blessings attached to Christ's death and resurrection (see 1 Corinthians 10:16)
- Communion reminds us Satan no longer holds

authority over us (see Colossians 2:13-15)

Proclaim the Lord's death by taking communion

- Eating the bread and drinking the cup proclaims the Lord's death (1 Corinthians 11:26)
- When you take communion you are proclaiming or preaching to the evil principalities that Christ has defeated Satan
- Through communion we proclaim the regaining of the victory and authority that was originally lost in the garden of Eden

4. THE CROSS GIVES US REASON FOR PRAISE

Praise God for His authority

- God is seated high above all rule and authority
- Because of our relationship with Him, we are seated with Him and have access to His rule and authority in our life (Ephesians 2:6)

Praise God for His triumph over Satan

- The blood of the lamb overcomes Satan (Revelation 12:10-11)
- The cross has conquered Satan, granting us access to an authority higher than Satan's authority

5. THE CROSS PROVIDES VICTORY OVER YOUR ENEMIES

Believe you are spiritually seated in heaven

- God seated us with Him in the heavenly places (Ephesians 2:5-7)
- Understanding where you are seated and what that means provides access to Christ's authority

Believe that your spiritual inheritance affects your physical reality

- Connecting with Christ's authority changes your fear levels, worry, dread and all else
- Living in light of Christ's authority changes how you walk, talk, and think because you remember He is ultimately in control

SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS:

INHERITANCE: There are certain advantages that come from being a platinum flyer. When you accrue a large number of miles with an airline company, they may send you a book of benefits and significant opportunities for you to take advan



tage of. There may be upgrade options, booking options, and priority access options among other benefits. But in order to use them you must know the privileges of what your platinum level relationship with the airlines company affords. Failure to understand your “inheritance” of benefits results in not enjoying the significant opportunities available for you to enjoy. Many Christians also fail to know all the rights and privileges that the cross has afforded them. They fail to utilize the benefits that God has ordained for His saints.

SURPASSING GREATNESS: Jesus was crucified, and nailed to a cross on Friday. Friday was a bad day. It was a bad day physically – Jesus was beaten to a pulp. It was a bad day emotionally – Scripture says Christ cried tears of blood. It was a bad day spiritually – He was separated from God, the Father. However, Friday did not determine where Jesus would wind up. What started off bad on Friday wound up being awesome on Sunday. This is because God reversed the effects of Friday, raising Christ from the dead and seating Him in the heavenlies. (Ephesians 1:19–21)

AUTHORITY: Referees are not the strongest men on the football field. In fact, they are older, slower and heavier. Yet when a referee throws out a yellow flag on a player who is much bigger than him, the bigger player has to yield. The faster player has to slow down. The stronger player has to do what he says. This is because the referee has a greater power called authority. Authority overrules power.

CHRIST IS ABOVE ALL POWERS: The president of the United States sits in the Oval Office at the White House yet what he decrees from there can impact you wherever you are, and can even impact people halfway around the world. This is because where the president sits is a powerful location above all other powers in our nation. If one man in one city can affect an entire nation, or even the world, politically, what do you think that the King of kings and the Lord of lords can do sitting far above all rule and authority?

CHRIST’S AUTHORITY OVER SATAN: What Satan does is similar to a man holding a gun on you. At first, you may feel afraid and at this man’s mercy. Yet if someone were to point out to you that the man’s gun did not have any bullets in it, he would no longer control you. That’s the difference between power

and authority. See, at the cross, Jesus Christ “disarmed” Satan (Colossians 2:15). Jesus Christ removed the bullets from Satan’s gun. Satan still likes to play like a tough guy and try and intimidate everyone with his power, but ultimately, Jesus Christ has stripped him of his authority; therefore, his power is only as strong as he can persuade you to believe that it is. In and of itself, it is not strong enough to overcome Christ’s authority.

BACKGROUND BIBLICAL HISTORY AND CULTURE:

INHERITANCE: (κληρονομίας) (Ephesians 1:14) “our salvation” (BDAG, 548).

PLEDGE: In Greek, the word “pledge” can mean a “down payment.” Through the cross, God has set aside a “down payment” on heaven for you to receive while on earth. As a believer, you are on your way to heaven. However, God does not want you to have to wait to get there in order to feel and experience what heaven is like. There is a piece of heaven that has been allocated to you right now.

POWER: (δυνάμεις) (Ephesians 1:19) “potential for functioning in some way, power; might, strength, force, capability” (BDAG, 262).

SERMON LINES:

This sermon will help you understand the power and authority of the cross so you can enjoy your inheritance in Christ.

This sermon will explain why the power and authority of the cross enables you to enjoy your inheritance in Christ today.

QUOTES ATTRIBUTED TO DR. TONY EVANS:

“...the surpassing greatness of God’s power that worked to raise Christ from the dead, turning death into life, is the same exact surpassing greatness of power available to you. God flipped the script with Jesus, and He can do the same with you.”

“Friend, whatever it is that you are dealing with, or whomever it is that you are dealing with, it or they do not have the last say. No matter how big, mighty, powerful or pushy they are or it seems to be, Jesus Christ is sitting far above all of it. He is positioned higher than all rule, authority, dominion and power.”





“Communion is your time to preach your sermon to the evil principalities and remind them that they have been defeated, and that you know it. It is your turn to serve notice on Hell, based on the cup and the bread, that Hell has already lost.”

“When you take the bread and the blood, you can tell Satan to go to hell because it is by virtue of the bread and the blood – the body and blood of Jesus Christ – that you have the ability to piggy-back on the authority of Christ over Satan.”

“Friend, not only does Jesus Christ have a chair in heaven to sit down in but you have a chair there as well. You have been “seated ... with Him” above all rule and authority. You have been spiritually relocated.”

“You must approach your life spiritually in order to attain spiritual authority. If all you see is what you see than you will never see all there is to be seen...Earth’s seat doesn’t give you authority. Only heaven has access to that authority because of what Jesus accomplished on the cross.”

“When you live in light of Christ’s authority, gained for you at the cross, it will change how you walk, talk and think.”

“Friend, before you give up, look up. Fix your eyes on Jesus and see yourself seated with Him in the heavenlies, granted full access to His rule and authority according to the power of God that works in you.”