

Position in Prayer

Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-10

¹ *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,*

² *in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.*

³ *All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.*

⁴ *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,*

⁵ *made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.*

⁶ *And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,*

⁷ *in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

⁸ *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—*

⁹ *not by works, so that no one can boast.*

¹⁰ *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

Sermon

Last week was a controversial sermon in many ways, because what I did was to take Scriptures and show from heaven's perspective the response to one man's prayers. From Daniel's perspective one prayer was answered immediately and the other it took three weeks. What I wanted to show was the angel Gabriel's response in both cases, "*Daniel, your prayer was answered from the beginning.*" Now that seemed to mess with people and had some of you say to me during the week that respectfully you disagree, which is your full right, was the idea that in both cases God answered immediately.

Always remember that if you receive any teaching or hear any opinion; if you cannot find what I or any other person teaches in the person of Jesus, you have a reason to question it. People can be very convincing, but whatever they are teaching must be in line with what you see in Jesus, because Jesus said if you have seen Him you have seen the Father (John 14:9).

The point of last week was simply that the way that we experience answers prayer does not necessarily correlate with how heaven answers them. I also used 1 John 5 as a base for the point and I could have used John 15 as an example as well, but the point remains that God answers prayer and that there is something that we need to understand about having the prayer answered and seeing it in our lives.

Tonight I want to take a look at this process and say this, "*Answers to prayer flows from your position.*" Have you ever considered John 3:13 when Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus about being born again what He meant when He said no has ascended but the one who descended from heaven, that is the Son of Man? At that stage we see clearly that He has not yet ascended, because He had not yet been crucified and exalted. Let us see whether we can answer that from Ephesians 2.

The letter to the Church in Ephesus is the only letter where there was no problem that Paul had to write in response to. So in this letter you find the most amazing statements as we heard last week. But Paul ends chapter 1 by praying that our eyes would be opened, that we would receive a revelation, so that we could have a deep knowledge of what God has given to us in Jesus. He follows this prayer in chapter 2 by taking a look at our worldview. Is the term familiar to you? A worldview is blanket understanding that we as individuals or a society throw over everything we think we know about the world. People used to think that the world was flat and the earth was the

centre of creation to such a point that they would kill scientists who dared suggest anything different.

Each one of us has a worldview, a frame of reference that enables us to make sense of what we experience and Paul starts off by pointing that formerly we were dead in our transgressions and sins, dead in our mistakes and dead in the place where we were not hitting the target for which we have been created, or the word that is used in Scriptures, sin. We were once under the influence of the kingdom of the air, the devil when we lived in disobedience.

Here is the worldview: when we think that the world revolves around self we think that our desires and happiness are the most important things and then we live life to make ourselves happy. This worldview, which many live with, will definitely lead to trouble. If your worldview does not include the truth that one day you will stand before the judgment seat of God and that you are in control of your life then a natural effect thereof will be that you will live life based on your desires and whatever you think of. Living life on your own terms without regard for God destines you to, for all eternity, continue on that road and the end of that is hell. We were all there, living life on our own terms with God totally being ignored and destined to suffer the consequences of our choices.

But here Paul introduces a new worldview. He starts by describing God and note what he says. Our God is love. Because of His great love for who? For Us! God is rich in mercy. He brought us to life when we were still dead in our mistakes or missteps. Does this sound like the God that most of us believe in? We have been taught that He is holy to such an extent that He has to turn His back on sin and if you sin, He will turn away from you. Yet Paul says this God, our God is merciful, He loves and He reaches into the darkness of our sin filled lives and bring us to life. Why? So that for generations His grace and kindness can be expressed.

This knowledge of God is the key to our new worldview. God raised us up with Christ and seated us in heavenly places in Christ. So where are you seated now if you are in Christ? Do we have this position because we have done everything right, or because we are morally superior? No, we have this position by faith and even the faith that we have is a gift from God. It is from this place that the grace and kindness of God will be displayed to generations to come as we have been prepared by God for good works.

This worldview challenges our prayer lives dramatically in three ways. Firstly your perspective and anticipation of an answer to your prayer will be determined by the kingdom you are most aware of. If you are more aware of this world, your prayers will easily feel like they are bouncing off the ceilings and that you are to "cry out more to God" because He does not hear. If you are more aware of the kingdom of heaven then you will not pray for victory, but from victory, having a view from the top. Secondly this means that prayer is not about pleading, but it is about coming before the Most High and listening to Him and from heaven to address the problem that we are facing. Lastly prayer then stops me from bringing my list of petitions to God, it becomes the process of entering His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise and pressing in until I connect with Him. Once I have connected with Him I listen to what He says and turn to speak to the mountain as He has commanded me.

Therefore, if you are seated with Christ in heavenly places focus on praise and thanksgiving, have a listening posture and whatever you hear He says about your problem, turn to it and proclaim the word of God to it. The word of God will not return to Him with effect, but it will accomplish the purpose for which God spoke it. Our call is to stop praying from earth to heaven, but to declare heaven over earth and in that process we will see answers to our prayer and experience peace that surpasses understanding.