

Sermon #78¹ — Ephesians Sermons

Title: **“HEAVENLY PLACES”**

Text: Ephesians 6:10-12

Subject: *The Believer’s Union with Christ*

Introduction:

My subject is — **“HEAVENLY PLACES.”** —

God the Holy Ghost always focuses the hearts and minds of saved sinners on Christ, on heaven, and upon heavenly things. He always draws our attention away from self to Christ, away from earth to heaven, away from time to eternity. Anything that focuses your mind on anything less is not of God (Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:1-3; 2 Corinthians 4:17-18). **Hear the Scriptures...**

(Philippians 4:8). “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true **(That’s Christ!)**, whatsoever things *are* honest **(That’s the gospel!)**, whatsoever things *are* just **(That’s God’s salvation!)**, whatsoever things *are* pure **(That’s the love of God!)**, whatsoever things *are* lovely **(That’s the altogether lovely One!)**, whatsoever things *are* of good report **(That’s the person and work of Christ!)**; if *there be*

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

any virtue (**That’s our Redeemer!**), and if *there be* any praise (**That’s the Triune Jehovah, his mercy, his love, his grace, his purpose, his providence, his work!**), think on these things.”

(Colossians 3:1-3) “If ye then be risen with Christ, **seek those things which are above**, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. (2) **Set your affection on things above**, not on things on the earth. (3) For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

(2 Corinthians 4:17-18) “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; (18) While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal (**They just don’t matter!**); but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.” (**They matter!**)

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

So, as God the Holy Ghost will enable me, I want to talk to you about heavenly things. — **“HEAVENLY PLACES.”**

Let’s begin in **Ephesians 6.** — **The whole Book of Ephesians is about our union with Christ.**

Throughout this Epistle, God the Holy Ghost is addressing God’s saints. He is telling saved sinners about their union with Christ in eternal grace, in the experience of grace, in the life of grace, and now in the warfare of grace.

Proposition: The believer’s life is a life union with the Lord Jesus Christ “*in heavenly places.*”

As he draws his Epistle to its conclusion, Paul urges us to be strong in the Lord (v. 10).

(Ephesians 6:10) “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

If we would live for God, if we would honor God, if we would serve the cause of God, his glory, his gospel, and his people, **we must get our strength from him**, from “*the power of his might*,” in the vigor of his force.

Do not dismiss this admonition hastily. **If God the Holy Spirit has regenerated you, if he has given you faith in Christ, you cannot be a stranger to this holy warfare.** And, if we would wage a good warfare, we must know where our strength lies.

- Not in tears,
- not in brokenness of heart,
- not in repentance,
- not in resolutions,
- not in our skills and abilities,
- not in anything of our own,
- but in Christ alone!

“When I am weak, then am I strong!” — But when I foolishly imagine that I am strong, I am utter weakness. Christ alone is our Strength! His grace is sufficient; but we have no sufficiency in ourselves!

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

Our strength is his righteousness, his blood, his grace, his intercession.

(Psalm 27:1) “The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

(Psalm 37:39) “But the salvation of the righteous *is* of the LORD: *he is* their strength in the time of trouble.”

(Psalm 62:7) “In God *is* my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God.”

(Psalm 71:16) “I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, *even* of thine only.”

Next, the apostle tells us that we must “put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (v. 11). Being in a state of war, we must always be ready for battle. **In**

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

this specific place, Paul is not talking about God’s church assaulting the gates of hell with the gospel. Here he is telling us to always be prepared to withstand the “wiles” (the crafty, subtle, deceitful, serpent-like ways) of the devil. — *“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive”* (Ephesians 4:14).

Then, in verse 12, Paul tells us with whom we do battle and where.

(Ephesians 6:12) “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.”

Our enemies are not frail, mortal men, “*flesh and blood*.” Our warfare is “*principalities and powers*,” not civil, political principalities and powers, but against hellish, satanic influence. **Our warfare is to**

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

be and must be waged “against the rulers of the darkness of this world,” Satan, the demons of hell, and all Satan’s messengers who transform themselves into angels of light that they might turn us away from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Our warfare is “*against spiritual wickedness in high places.*”

FIVE TIMES

Those words, “*in high places,*” are used five times in the Book of God. But they are, by divine inspiration, used only by the apostle Paul and only in the Book of Ephesians. In all four of the other places the words are translated “*in heavenly places.*” — **Remember,** Paul is telling us, in this blessed Epistle, about our union with Christ. And five times in these six chapters it is described as a union with Christ “*in heavenly places.*”

EPHESIANS 1:3

ETERNAL UNION

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

1st — In Ephesians 1:3, the Spirit of God tells us that **our union with Christ is an eternal union of blessedness, love, acceptance, complacence, and delight, a union, a blessedness, a love, an acceptance, complacence, and a delight that nothing in time can change.**

(Ephesians 1:3-12) “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who **hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:** (4) **According as** he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him **in love:** (5) Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, **according to the good pleasure of his will,** (6) **To the praise of the glory of his grace,** wherein **he hath made us accepted in the beloved.** (7) In whom we have **redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;** (8) Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; (9) Having made known

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: (10) That in the dispensation of the fulness 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: (11) In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: (12) **That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.**”

EPHESIANS 1:20

RESURRECTION UNION

2nd — **In verse 20, we are that our union with our blessed Savior is a resurrection union with him.**

(Ephesians 1:13-23) “**In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the gospel of your salvation:** in whom also after that ye believed, ye were **sealed** with that holy

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

Spirit of promise, (14) Which is **the earnest** of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. (15) **Wherefore** I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, (16) Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; (17) That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: (18) The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; **that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,** (19) And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, (20) Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and **set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,** (21) Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: (22) And hath put all *things*

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, (23) Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

EPHESIANS 2:6

EXPERIMENTAL UNION

3rd — **In Ephesians 2:6, the apostle tells us that we have a blessed, experimental union with our Lord Jesus Christ.**

(Ephesians 2:1-10) “And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; (2) Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: (3) Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (4) **But God**, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, (5) Even when we were

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

dead in sins, **hath quickened us together with Christ**, (**by grace ye are saved**;) (6) And hath **raised us up together**, and **made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus**: (7) **That** in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (8) **For** by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: (9) Not of works, lest any man should boast. (10) **For** we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

EPHESIANS 3:10**DISPLAYING UNION**

4th — **In Ephesians 3:10, God the Holy Ghost tells us that our union with Christ is a displaying union, a union of grace by which and in which the Triune God displays his manifold wisdom to angels and devils by saving such things as we are!**

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

(Ephesians 3:1-21) “For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, (2) If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: (3) How that by revelation **he made known unto me the mystery**; (as I wrote afore in few words, (4) Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in **the mystery of Christ**) (5) 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; (6) That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: (7) Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. (8) Unto 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**; (9) And to make all *men* 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: (10) **To**

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, (11) **According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:** (12) **In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.** (13) Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. (14) For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (15) Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, (16) That he would grant you, **according to the riches of his glory,** to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; (17) **That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,** (18) May be able to comprehend with all saints what is **the breadth,** and **length,** and **depth,** and **height;** (19) And **to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,** that ye might be **filled with all the fulness of God.** (20) Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

or think, according to the power that worketh in us, (21) **Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.**”

EPHESIANS 6:12

A WARFARE UNION

5th — **Then, here in Ephesians 6:12, the inspired apostle tells us that our union with Christ is a warfare union, a union that constantly engages us in a war, a war in which we must always be ready for battle, always ready for Satan’s hellish, subtle, deceitful, serpent-like assaults.**

(Ephesians 6:10-12) “Finally, my brethren, **be strong in the Lord**, and **in the power of his might**. (11) Put on **the whole armour of God**, **that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil**. (12) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

of this world, against **spiritual wickedness** in high *places*.

- This is a warfare **against spiritual wickedness**.
- It is a warfare **against our own proud, stubborn flesh** (Romans 7; Galatians 5).
- This is a warfare **against the rulers of the darkness of this world**, the prince of darkness and his messengers of darkness, men who spew darkness while trying to convince you that it is light (2 Corinthians 11:1-4).

(2 Corinthians 11:1-4) “Would to God ye could bear with me a little in *my* folly: and indeed bear with me. (2) For **I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.** (3) **But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.** (4) For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if*

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*.”

(2 Corinthians 11:13-15) “For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. (14) And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. (15) Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

- This is a warfare that has already been won and a warfare that we shall most assuredly win. —

Failure here is not even a possibility!

Soon the Canaanite shall be completely driven out of Zion, and holiness shall triumph in us and (yes) by us in union with Christ, the Captain of our Salvation (Zechariah 14:20-21).

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

(Zechariah 14:20-21) “In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD’S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. (21) Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.”

In heaven’s everlasting glory, when the present heaven and present earth are no more, when God our Savior makes all things new, the blessedness of the righteous will consist of...

- the possession of “*life everlasting*,” “*an eternal weight of glory*” (2 Corinthians 4:17),
- an exemption from all sufferings forever and a deliverance from all evil (2 Corinthians 5:2),
- complete deliverance from the society of the wicked (2 Timothy 4:18),
- bliss without termination and the “*fulness of joy*” forever (Luke 20:36; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 1

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

Peter 1:4; 5:10; 1 John 3:2).

The believer’s heaven is not only a state of everlasting blessedness, but also...

- a “*place*,” a place “*prepared*” for us by Christ himself in union with us (John 14:1-3),
- a place we have already entered in union with him (Hebrews 6:20),
- an inheritance we have already obtained in union with Christ (Ephesians 1:11).

Oh, my soul, what shall the “heavenly places” awaiting us in union with Christ be? Eye hath not seen nor ear heard; but God has revealed more than my heart and mind can imagine (Revelation 21:1-7; 22:1-7).

(Revelation 21:1-7) “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. (2) And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (3) And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. (4) And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (5) And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. (6) And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. (7) He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”

(Revelation 22:1-7) “And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. (2) In

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. (3) And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: (4) And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads. (5) And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. (6) And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. (7) Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.”

Amen.

“HEAVENLY PLACES”

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