

UNDERSTANDING OUR PLACE IN HIM



In this series of lessons (other titles are: Understanding The New Birth, Understanding Righteousness, Understanding Our Legal Right to the Name of Jesus, Understanding How To Act On God's Word, and Understanding Confession) we are looking at vital subjects where a lack of understanding can hinder your faith.

Our text for the series is:

Fight the good fight of faith....

-I Timothy 6:12

As we have pointed out, if there is a "fight" to faith, then there are "enemies" to faith; "hindrances" to faith.

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

-Romans 10:17

A lack of knowledge of God's Word is the greatest hindrance to faith. Naturally if faith comes by hearing the Word of God as Romans 10:17 says, then it follows that a lack of understanding God's Word produces a lack of faith.

We sometimes hear Christians praying for faith and actually they are not dealing with the problem correctly. Because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. It is knowledge that we need; a knowledge of the Word of God. If we receive knowledge, we will have faith. And if we don't receive knowledge, we won't ever have faith; for faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Our faith grows with our understanding of the Word of God.

REVIEWING THE NEW BIRTH

We have already seen how a lack of understanding of what the new birth means hinders faith. Here is what God's Word says about it:

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

-II Corinthians 5:17

In our lesson "Understanding the New Birth" we gave instances of how many people don't have faith for receiving healing or other provisions

God has made because as they say, "I lived a terrible life before I was saved." But we know the Word of God teaches that we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus and that old things have passed away and that the sinner receives remission of sins. God looks upon the sinner when he comes and is born again and made a new creature in Christ as though he had never done anything wrong. As God said:

I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

-Isaiah 43:25

With God, not only is the sinner's past remitted and blotted out, but all that the sinner ever was is gone--blotted out in the sight of God. And in God's sight he is a new creature, a new creation. And that is how the believer needs to look at it too.

As I drove along one Sunday night after the service, I heard a radio broadcast. The speaker, who was the pastor of a Chicago church, used this illustration in his message.

He said that his church maintained a mission down on "Skid Row," and had included several thousand dollars a year in their budget to maintain it. Because some couldn't quite see the necessity of spending this money, one Sunday night he brought one of the men from the mission who had been saved, gloriously born again, a new creature in Christ, into the congregation to give his testimony. He wanted the church to see one example of what was happening much in their mission.

This gentleman had been saved only three years. In his testimony he related that he was educated as a lawyer and that at 30 years of age he had had a fine home. He had lovely automobiles to drive. In fact, he drove Cadillacs. He just had everything fine and lovely.

But he began to drink a little bit socially. He was just certain he could handle it. However, he kept drinking more and more until it was apparent he was an alcoholic. He lost here and there and finally he simply wasn't able to carry on in his business. His law partners became disgusted

and disassociated themselves from him. His wife couldn't live with him and she left taking their only child, a 12 year old daughter.

At 34 years of age he had lost everything and he spent the next 30 years of his life as a destitute alcoholic.

Then at 64, in this mission, he went to the altar and received salvation; and God delivered him from alcoholism. Since then he had lived and worked at the mission where he had been instrumental in leading other alcoholics to the Lord.

The pastor said to him, "Now I want you to go into a little detail about some things that have happened in your life; how you have lived these thirty years. These people don't get out into the world you have been living in and as far as you can in a mixed congregation, go even into some of the sordid areas of that life." And he did go into detail of a few things that really shocked the people. But with tears he said, "Now I'm not telling this because I am proud of it, because I am not. I am merely saying this to show you how God can deliver a person no matter how deeply into sin he may have gone."

The minister in relating this told that on the front seat, before the pulpit, sat a young 13 year old girl. Her mother and father were Christians but this young blue-eyed, blond-haired girl had never made any commitment to Christ.

The pastor said this 67 year old gentleman suddenly stopped in his testimony and pointed to this little girl saying, "I regret all of this. I would give anything in the world if I were as clean as she is." The pastor spoke up and said, "You are cleaner if she has never been born again."

Did you ever stop to think about that? He spoke a truth. You see, we look at things many times from the "natural" standpoint, but God doesn't look at things from the "natural." God looks at things from the "spiritual" standpoint. And, in the sight of God, spiritual sins are worse than physical sins.

We, however, cannot see spiritual sins. We see people do things outwardly and we say, "That's terrible." And it may well be, yet, on the other hand people can have things on the inside of them far worse in the sight of God.

As Christians we know that practicing witchcraft and such things are wrong and of the devil. We know that evil spirits are involved. And the Bible says, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft...." (I Samuel 15:23). Even Christians rebel sometimes. They rebel against God's plan; against God's Word. Well, we can't see rebellion, yet the Bible says it is as witchcraft.

When I pastored, there was a certain person in

the congregation who was used mightily in spiritual manifestations. That is, the gifts of the Spirit were manifested through him and some great things happened in the service. But I had seen something out of that person (and for me to have seen it, it had to have been a physical manifestation) that I didn't think was too Christ-like and according to the Bible it wasn't. So I said to the Lord, "Now, Lord, I don't know how many people know this about that man, but why couldn't you have used...?" (And I mentioned a dear old saint, a lady who had been in the congregation many years and whom everyone considered a real saint of God.) "You know it looks to me like it would have been a whole lot better if the manifestation had come through her. I mean maybe some folks would have had more faith and confidence in it because she is a stalwart, separated, dedicated Christian."

The Lord said to me, "I don't look on the outward appearance. You saw something on the outside of that man which was not right. But you don't know this, because you only saw the physical action out of him. The very minute he saw that he had gotten into this thing (and he didn't get into it because he wanted to but on the spur of the moment) he said, "Dear God, I have missed it. I have failed You. Forgive me and cleanse me." I did and he is walking with me.

"You also don't know this. That woman has been rebellious in her spirit for over 40 years. I see that rebellion. It comes up before me dark, and black, and mean, and ugly. Outside she is as those Jesus spoke to saying, 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones....'" (Matthew 23:27.)

That is why the Bible says, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1). We cannot judge righteous judgment.

The minister understood this when he said to the redeemed alcoholic, "In the sight of God you are cleaner, and purer, and more innocent than that young girl is if she hasn't been born again."

"...if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Notice that, "ALL things have become new." There are no sin scars left on the Christian. Now I didn't say there may not be sin scars left on the body--but the body is not you.

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.
-I Corinthians 9:27

Paul said, "I keep my body under, I bring it...." He calls his body "it". The body is the house you live in. Now because of sins of the past, there may be sin scars left on your body, but there are no sin scars left on you. God is looking at that new man in Christ when He looks at you. And you know, we just look a whole lot better in Christ than we do out of Him. We can't see each other in Christ. We look at each other from the natural standpoint, but God looks at us in Him!

OUR PLACE IN HIM - HIS PLACE IN US

A lack of understanding "our place in Him" and "His place in our lives" often hinders us, keeps us from success, throttles faith and is the reason for unbelief.

People often ask me about studying the Bible. Although I have many suggestions, here is one above all others I want to present to you. I present this everywhere I go. As a believer and as a Christian, may I suggest you follow this method as you go through the New Testament, primarily the Epistles. You see the Epistles are the letters that are written to you, the believer.

No one could ever be a successful Christian and live in the four Gospels. If you only read the four Gospels and just lived in them, you wouldn't even know why Jesus died. Now you may think you would, because you have already read some of the Epistles, but do you think you would know more than the Apostles did? They were right with Him every day for over three years and they didn't know why He died. Remember them asking, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

Remember how John wrote that he and Peter ran out to the tomb after Mary told them Jesus was not there. John being the smaller of the two outran Peter a bigger more lumbering type. But John with his finer more sensitive nature, because the dead and the tombs were very sacred with the Jews, didn't go in. He stopped. But Peter, an impulsive fellow, just ducked his head and went right on in through the opening of the tomb. John followed him.

And John writes, "Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead" (John 20:8-9). They didn't know it!

However, the thing that convinced them was this. According to John 19:39-40 Jesus was embalmed after the manner of the Jews. The Jews had learned this from the Egyptians when they were in captivity in Egypt. They made a sticky tar-like substance from the hundred

pound weight mixture of myrrh and aloes. Thin strips of cloth were smeared with this substance and the body was wrapped in them. This made a sort of cocoon. Each toe and finger was individually wrapped.

One reason Mary was going out to the tomb on the first day of the week after the Jewish sabbath was to finish the embalming. The face had not been finished. They had left open the opening of the face and had laid a napkin over it.

From all historical evidence, Jesus was about 5'11" tall and weighed around 180 pounds. In that warm country He would probably have shrunk in His death by about 20 pounds. The hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes, plus the grave cloth probably weighed 120 pounds. That would make the cocoon weigh 280 pounds.

Now Jesus just came out the opening of the face and the cocoon was lying there. The napkin which had covered the face was folded--it wasn't flung to one side. When Peter and John saw this cocoon lying there but the napkin folded and laid to itself, they were convinced that nobody had carried him away. How would you get Him out of that thing?

So you can see that by just reading the four Gospels you wouldn't really understand why Jesus died if they walked with Him and didn't know it. The four Gospels have to do with His life, death, burial, and resurrection. But it is the letters written to the Church that tell you exactly why He died. It is in the Epistles that Paul wrote, "...the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11-12).

In the four Gospels you see Him on the cross dying, buried, and raised again. But in the Epistles you find out what happened to Him the moment He died...where He went...what He did.

You also find out what happened to Him after He was raised from the dead; the first thing He ever did before He permitted folks to touch Him. Mary, you remember, saw Him at the tomb and He said to her, "Touch me not." Yet when He appeared to the disciples and they were frightened and supposed they were seeing a ghost, He said to them, "Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39).

Now why would He say to the first person He saw, "Don't touch me" and then just a little bit later say to the disciples, "Handle me, touch me, so that you can see I am flesh and bone"? It is in the Epistles that we get the inside on what really happened between the time He told Mary, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended

to my Father..." and his second appearance later to the disciples. It is in the Epistles written to believers, where Paul tells us in the book of Hebrews that between those appearances Jesus entered into the heavenly holy place, with His own blood to obtain an eternal redemption for us. Praise God forever more!

I just wanted to make a small point to encourage you as a Christian, as a believer, to spend most of your time in the Epistles. I didn't say not to read elsewhere for we must. Study the Old Testament, but don't spend most of your time in the Old Testament. Spend most of your time in the New Testament because we are not living under the old covenant, we are living under the new!

Now then, in these Epistles which are written to the Church, read through them and with a red pencil underline expressions such as these: "in Christ," "by Christ," "in Whom," "in Him." You will find over 140 all together, however some of them don't exactly tell you something you have in Christ. For instance, Paul writing a letter said, "I greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Well, that has the expression "in Christ" but it doesn't tell you anything that is yours because you are in Christ. But there are close to 130 of these expressions throughout the Epistles which do tell you something that you have, or what you are, because you are "in Him," "in whom," "in Christ," etc.

For instance the verse we have just been looking at (II Corinthians 5:17) is an "in Christ" scripture. "Therefore if any man be in Christ... (Now, what does he have or what is he because he is in Christ?)...he is a new creature."

So find these scriptures. Now when you find them, write them down. Then meditate on them. Begin to confess them. In other words, begin to say with your mouth, "This is who I am and this is what I am and this is what I have in Christ." For you see, faith's confessions create reality.

As far as God is concerned everything you have or are in Christ is so. He has done it. However, it is your believing and your confession that will make it real to you.

People have said to me, "Brother Hagin, I read the scripture. I know I am saved. I am born again, filled with the Spirit and speak with other tongues. And yet the Word of God says here... (they tell me some Bible scripture)...but that doesn't seem real to me."

There are some folks who just want you to accept these things as a faith project and by faith it is always so. Well, you do have to accept it by faith all right. But, if it never becomes real to you, it won't do you any good.

I can believe that there is such a thing as

a thousand dollar bill. But just to believe that there is such a thing doesn't do me personally any good. I don't possess anything just because I believe it with that kind of faith. And there are folks who misinterpret along the lines of faith and they just want you to accept this as a sort of blank check. But you don't enjoy the reality of any of it. God wants us to enjoy and know the reality of what He has provided for us.

IN HIM WE HAVE REDEMPTION

For instance, we see that God has provided the new birth, salvation, for us. And we see the way that salvation becomes real to us. Although sometimes we talk like this, "So-And-So got saved last night. God saved So-And-So last night." But really, looking at it from God's viewpoint, He didn't just save that person last night. He saved him when Jesus was raised from the dead. The man just accepted his salvation last night. The provided redemption became real to him.

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he (Jesus) entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. -Hebrews 9:12

Jesus doesn't ever do that again. He has already done it! But Romans 10:10 tells us how we obtain the reality of salvation.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. -Romans 10:10

It is always with the heart man believeth--and with the mouth that confession is made unto. When you believe a thing with your heart and confess it with your mouth--then it becomes real to you. Faith's confessions create realities.

As you read some of the "in Christ," "in whom," and "in Him" scriptures, they won't seem real to you. It may not seem like you really have what these scriptures say you have in Him. But, if you will begin to confess (because you do believe God's Word in your heart), "This is mine. This is who I am. This is what I have."--then it will become real to you. It is already real in the spirit realm. But we want it to become real in this physical realm, in this realm where we are living, in the flesh.

Someone led a blind lady into the healing line one night. We learned later she had been totally blind for three full years. The minute hands were laid on her, the power of God came upon her and she fell flat on her back on the floor. She lay still for a few minutes and when she began to get up you didn't have to ask her whether or not she could see. Her face was lit up like a neon sign. Her eyes were instantly opened and she could see!

Someone said, "God healed that blind woman last night."

Well no, He didn't. He really didn't heal her just last night. He laid her infirmities and disease on Jesus nearly two thousand years ago and Jesus bore it for her then. She just accepted and received her healing the previous night. As far as God was concerned, she was already healed. As far as God was concerned, she was healed every day that she was blind. That healing was provided for her in Christ.

...Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.
-Matthew 8:17

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.
-I Peter 2:24

Getting folks to believe that in their hearts and confess it with their mouths is the simplest way to get people healed. It will work when nothing else will. Special things will work at times, but God's Word always works.

Several years ago a lady was physically carried into the service for prayer. She had not walked in four years and the best doctors in the state said she would never walk again.

Most of the time I minister under the tangible anointing of God's healing power, but when you get tired, it is difficult to yield to the anointing and it will wane; or you will not be conscious of it. By the time I came to this lady in the healing line, this was the case. They had brought her from a distance and I knew it would be very difficult for them to bring her back.

Now what are you going to do? Well, thank God, we always have His Word and His Word never fails! So I just had them set her down on the altar. I sat down beside her and laid my opened Bible on her lap, and said, "Sister, would you read that verse out loud."

She read aloud I Peter 2:24, ending with that last clause, "...by whose stripes ye were healed."

I then asked her, "Is were past tense, future tense, or present tense?"

I will never forget her reaction. She accepted God's Word the way we must; with the enthusiasm and simplicity of a little child. Her eyes got big as she looked at me and said, "Were is past tense! If we were healed, then I was!"

And that is how God records it. God says that you were healed, back there then, by His stripes. This is something we have "in Christ." It belongs to us because we are His!

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. -Ephesians 1:6-7

"In whom we have redemption..." Did you ever ask yourself, "From whom are we redeemed?" Some say, "We are redeemed from sin." And that is a part of the story, but it is not the whole story at all. Thank God, we are redeemed from the hand of the enemy. We are redeemed from the authority of Satan, the devil. But not only that, we are redeemed from the curse of the law!

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:
-Galatians 3:13

Christ has redeemed us. From what? From the curse of the law. What is the curse of the law? There is only one way to find out. Go back to the law and see what the law says the curse is. Read the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy. You will find that the law specifies eleven diseases as being a curse of the law. Then verse 61 encompasses all sickness and disease as a curse of the law by saying:

Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law,
-Deuteronomy 28:61

So the Bible says that all sickness and all disease is a curse of the law. And the Bible says that we are redeemed from the curse of the law. Not "going to be redeemed," but "are redeemed."

Peter looking back to the sacrifice at Calvary said, "...by whose stripes ye were healed." Not "going to be," but "were." God remembers when He laid on Jesus not only the iniquities and sins of us all, but also our sicknesses and our diseases. Jesus remembers that He bore them for us. Therefore, the Holy Spirit inspired Peter to write, "...by whose stripes ye were healed." As God sees it, we are already healed.

One lady asked, "Brother Hagin, why don't I get healed? I know healing belongs to me. I know God has promised to heal me." (I could see her problem and I tried to help her.)

I said, "No ma'am, God hasn't promised to heal you any more than He has promised to save the lost. He doesn't have us go tell the lost, 'God has promised to save you.' No. He has us tell them, 'God has already done something about your salvation. He laid your sins and your iniquities on Jesus.'"

We miss the complete picture of redemption to a great extent.

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.
18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.
-II Corinthians 5:17-18

He hath reconciled us to Himself by Christ. He has already done it. And He hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. What is this

ministry of reconciliation that we should have? Verse 19 tells us and let's read it in the Amplified translation:

19 It was God (personally present) in Christ, reconciling and restoring the world to favor with Himself, not counting up and holding against (men) their trespasses (but cancelling them); and committing to us the message of reconciliation--of the restoration to favor. -II Corinthians 5:19 - ANT

God was personally present in Jesus Christ, reconciling or restoring the world to favor with Himself. He is not imputing (counting up) or holding against men their trespasses. He's not doing that any more!

"Well," someone said, "we'll all be saved then, won't we?"

No. People must lay hold of that reconciliation. We must be born again because we are by nature children of the devil. As Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Ye are of your father the devil..." (John 8:44). But you can see how terrible it is for a man to be lost when his debt is already paid.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. -Romans 6:23

The gift! The gift of God is eternal life! All a man has to do is to come and accept the gift. That is the Good News! It belongs to us in Christ Jesus.

One fellow said that I Peter 2:24 meant spiritual healing. It includes spiritual healing but it means more than that.

The Greek word translated "healing" in I Peter 2:24 is identically the same Greek word used in Mark 5:34 as "whole" where Jesus said to the woman with the issue of blood, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." That was a physical healing and the same Greek word is used in both scriptures.

Of course, spiritual healing belongs to us too, but really the Bible doesn't speak of spiritual healing. No where does it speak of a man's spirit being "healed." A man's spirit is "born again." A man's body isn't born again; it is healed. Healing is a renewal of the body from a diseased condition. A man's spirit isn't renewed. He is born again, born of God. He becomes a new something; a new creation in Christ Jesus.

Now back to the crippled woman whom doctors said would never walk. As she sat on the altar she said, "If we were healed, then I was!"

"Will you do what I tell you?" I asked. "I will if it is easy."

"It is the easiest thing you ever did. Just lift both your hands and begin to praise God. Begin to say, 'I am healed because the Word says it.'"

Although she hadn't walked a step, as simply

as a child that dear lady lifted her hands and her face lit up as she said, "Praise the Lord! Lord, I am so glad I am healed. Lord, I am so glad I can walk again. (She hadn't walked a step.) I am so glad my knees and my limbs are healed. (From all physical evidence they weren't.) I am so glad I can wait on myself. I have been helpless for four years, Lord, and I am glad I am not helpless any more. I am so glad I don't have to be waited on anymore. You know, Lord, how I sat around those four years." She was speaking as though it was just a thing of the past.

I said to her, "Rise and walk."

Instantly, she leaped to her feet!

She was healed! But remember the other lady I was telling you about who said, "I know God promised to heal me. Why don't I get it? Why doesn't He do what He promised?"

"No ma'am, He didn't promise to heal you," I told her.

"Why, Brother Hagin, it says right there in I Peter 2:24, 'by whose stripes ye were healed.' Doesn't that promise me healing?"

"No. That doesn't promise you healing at all. That isn't a promise. That is a statement of fact. That promises you nothing. It tells you something that has happened. He took your infirmities. He bare your sicknesses. By whose stripes ye were healed. That tells you that you are already healed."


But, she didn't get it. With tears she said, "I know He promised to heal me and I'm going to keep on praying. I hope He heals me some day--somewhere--somehow."

I saw her 10 years later and she was still hoping. But the crippled woman, instantly, when she acted on God's Word was able to walk!

IN HIM WE ARE BLESSED

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: -Ephesians 1:3

Notice that He didn't say He was "going to" bless us with anything; but that He already has. That means that in Christ Jesus, from the time you are born again until you step off into eternity, He has already made provision for you. Everything you need, He has blessed you with. It is yours. In the mind of God it is yours.

Find out what belongs to you in Christ. Find out what your rights and privileges are in Christ. And then begin to confess, "That's mine. That's me. That's mine--I have it now." 

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