

THE KINGDOM OF GOD: A HIGHER PLACE

“The Kingdom of God: A Higher Place Beyond the Reach of the Enemy”

(Ephesians 2:4-7; Colossians 3:1-4; James 4:6-10; Proverbs 4:23-27; 3:5-7; Hebrews 4, 10)

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved - 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 2:4-7)

We must embrace and abide in this word found in Ephesians. We must also acknowledge Colossians 3:1-4, which says,

“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. 5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which are idolatry. 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming. 7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. 11 Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.” (Colossians 3:1-11)

This passage challenges us with the word ‘IF’. If you have been raised with Christ. This is a challenge to what we actually believe and embrace.

Seek the Things that are Above, and Set Your Minds on Things that are Above!

So what is this place above? Where are we to live our lives in the spirit while existing in these mortal bodies? The first thing I want you to see is that it is ...

❖ **A Place of Purity - Where Humility, Honor and Holiness are Sought**

“But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.”
(James 4:6-10)

The path to the high place of purity and out of the reach of the enemy is found in Proverbs. First, let's look at Proverbs 4:23-25 where it tells you to ...

- Guard Your Heart (Proverbs 4:23-25)
- Resist the Enemy (Proverbs 4:26-27)
- Acknowledge the Lord (Proverbs 3:5-7)
- Commune with the Father
- Endure Hardship

These five steps to a higher place, out of the reach of the enemy, spell out and define the concept of GRACE. **G**uard Your Heart, **R**esist the Enemy, **A**cknowledge the Lord, **C**ommune with the Father, and **E**ndure Hardship. These five steps will take you HIGHER, into a Place of Purity, and out of the reach of the enemy!

❖ **A Place of Peace - Where Rest, Refreshing, and Resilience are Secured**

Too often, we think that peace is the absence of conflict. But this is not true! The peace the God gives may very well come with great trial and tribulation.

"For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." (Colossians 3:3-4)

It means that we are ABIDING in Him! And when we abide in Him, we are out of reach of the enemy!

- Received (Hebrews 4:1; 3; 10)

"Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear ... 3 For we who have believed enter that rest, ... 10 for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from His."

The peace of God, His rest is something that is simply to be received by faith.

- Established (Hebrews 4:11-13)

We are to establish our peace and rest upon the Word of God lest we fall away into unbelief. In other words, we are to STRIVE! Listen to Hebrews 4:11-13,

“Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. 12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

- Secured (Hebrews 4:14-15)

But again, we have responsibility! Our peace is secured as we do something!

“Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:14-15)

The writer of Hebrews goes on to say in verse 16 that we are to do something else. What does he say,

“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

- Tested (Hebrews 4:15-16)

Verse 15-16 tells us that there will be challenges and obstacles that aim to keep us from living in this higher place.

❖ A Place of Power - Where Confidence, Courage and Creativity are Served

Let us consider what Hebrews teaches us. Let us read Hebrews 10:19-25. It says,

*“Therefore, brothers, since we have **confidence** to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance (**courage**) of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works (**creativity**), ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:19-25)*

This is how we walk with CONFIDENCE, COURAGE and CREATIVITY!

▸ Since We Have Confidence

*“Therefore, brothers, **since** we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,” (10:19-20)*

He presented the same truth in 4:16,

“Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace....”

*"a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh."
(Hebrews 10:20)*

- ▶ Since We Have a High Priest, We Have Courage

We are to draw near to God *"in full assurance of faith."* The author of Hebrews says, *"Without faith it is impossible to please [God]"* (11:6).

- ▶ Confidence and Courage Empowers Creativity

"Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds."(10:24-25)