

## W525\_The\_Prize\_of\_the\_High\_Calling\_3.mp3

[00:00:02] Issues of recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book and is dealing with the epistle to the Philippians with special reference to the prize of the high calling and the attaining unto some special resurrection. What are the ways in which we may learn and are very scriptural way is comparing spiritual things with spiritual something Standing quite by itself is not so easily explained as when it is compared with something else that belongs perhaps to the same category and school. And what are the things that I'm wanting to do this morning? And it will occupy, I think, all the time we have profitably, I trust is to compare. Ephesians with Philippians because they have an entirely different point of view. They belong to the same calling the same company the same people. The same writer. But in one case you can sum up Ephesians with the words the hope of his calling. And you can sum up Philippians with the words the prize of the high calling. Ephesians is a hope and Philippians is a prize. Now the emphasis in Ephesians is that God's purpose. That goes right back to before the foundation of the world. Whatever. We translate that for the moment, it's far enough. Back. Right back to the beginning, before the foundation of the world. He had a purpose. He planned that there should be a company who should constitute the body of Christ. They should be blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, far above all principality of power.

[00:01:54] And you can quite see that it would be utterly hopeless for the apostle Paul to write to anybody in Ephesians or any others. Now he says, See that God has planned that you should be far above all. And seeing that you are to be members of the body of Christ, you've got to do this. You've got to do that in order to get into the body, in order to get up there where Christ is. He doesn't tell you that at all. He says he's done it. He's put you in the position. So the basis of the Ephesians is glorious, wonderful.

Overcoming grace. But then you see we are not building stones. We are not made of wood, we are not timber, we're not metal. We are living creatures made in the image of our God. And that gives us a responsibility as well as being put in our place. That's one aspect of it. We are addressed and we are encouraged to stand, to witness, to fight the good fight, and as Philippians is to run the race that set before us. If anyone should ask me whether God, right before the foundation of the world, knew who was going to win the race, I should say it's beyond my ability to understand the far reaching heights and depths of the knowledge of God. But I do see this, that Ephesians, he did know without

the possibility of doubt who was going to be the members of the Body of Christ before the foundation of the world.

[00:03:27] But whether God did all his marvelous extent of knowledge knows infallibly who is going to win a prize, which has to do with whether you shirk it or whether you run or whether you do or whether you don't is a subject entirely outside of our scope. Let's look at it as it's addressed to us. And what I want to do this morning is to just ask you to compare these two epistles. And if we can get the comparison before us, right. According to the teaching, we shall have made another step in appreciating the peculiar emphasis there is on certain aspects of truth in Philippians. So first of all, in I won't give you chapter and verse or I will, but you need not turn because practically every verse I give you will be already known to you. I'll give you chapter and verse because some who listen to this tape recording later might be glad of the occasion. In Ephesians chapter 118 and Philippians chapter 314, we read these two words which seem to cover the whole story. In the Ephesians 118, we read these words, 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.

[00:04:54] And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe. That's the aspect of Ephesians that you may know what is the hope of his calling and these accompaniments. But when you look at Philippians chapter 314, you get the other word, which is occupying our attention. Chapter 314. He says in verse seven. I think perhaps we'll go back just to the verse 13 brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended. Uh, you don't win a prize in running a race till you get there. You don't say halfway through or I'm going to beat the other man. I'm all right now. That's generally asking for trouble, isn't it? It's all out to the last breath. So he says, Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended. But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Now it's very obvious that to have all that pressure and running with a prize in view that you haven't attained yet is very different from being instructed that before ever you knew Christ, you were what? Numbered among those who would be members of his body and blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. So the two points of view of these epistles is one is the solid basis of grace, and the other is what are you going to do with it when once you are put in that position? So let's be thankful.

[00:06:44] Although it brings responsibility, we are not looked upon by God as just movable pieces of granite or timber. We are made in his likeness and we have elements of responsibility as believers. So that's the first thing that we notice. Well, another feature is a stress in Ephesians. I'll give you the references chapter 110 and 23. Chapter one, ten and 23. That in the dispensation of the fulness. I'll stop there. I won't go further because of other things. Fullness Meet you very early in Ephesians or will you look again at chapter 319? And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Why that ye might be filled with awe up to all the fullness of God. You filled up to all the fullness of God. And then Fort Chapter 413. Till we all come in, the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature, of the fullness of the Christ. So you can't avoid that if you wish. There is this emphasis in Ephesians of the fullness, which is the goal before this people. Well, now you see, when you come to the Philippians, there is a word there which has exercised the minds of quite a number of scholars. Kenosis.

[00:08:31] A The basis of the word is to be vain or empty. And we find it comes in Philippians chapter three. Chapter two, verse seven. Sorry for that. Chapter two, verse seven. It says in verse six the contrast who being in the form of God. And don't forget, this is not to tell us only what he did, but that we should have a similar mind. What a demand to make upon any believer. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not a thing to be grasped at. To be equal with God. But what did he do? He made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man. He humbled himself and became obedient unto death. Even the death of the cross. See the cross is stressed in Ephesians or in Romans as the way that God dealt with our sin, canceling our sin, giving us the possibility of a glorious forgiveness. But here it's used for another point of view, contrasting the position which he had by right and humbling himself or emptying himself. He came down not merely to be a man on Earth. If we become like Nebuchadnezzar, he would have been a humility for the Son of God. But he came right down the path of all.

[00:10:08] And he died. The death of a robber or a thief. That's how he was crucified. There was nothing wonderful about it except the awful ignominy. And that's the position the Philippians let this mind be in you. Don't be so taken up with heavenly places that

you're no earthly good. Have you ever met anybody like that? Friends. Well, our savior wasn't. He was both heavenly minded. But right down here on the earth, walking as men, suffering as a man and showing us the two sides of our calling. And so we have this self-emptying. Another feature which meets us in Ephesians is the emphasis upon the word boldness. Chapter 312. Chapter 312. It says in verse 11, according to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus, our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him. The end. There is not so much to join two things together as a part of a figure of speech, which in our language would be boldness of access. The boldness is associated with the access. Now, when you come to get descriptions of the throne of God that the very angels veil their faces before him and dare not look upon that burning throne, Will you come to think of the contrast between those holy angels that have never sinned and you and me that have sinned in the past and will go on making many sideslips and mistakes in the future that we are going to not only have access into that holy presence.

[00:12:04] We're not going to be right at the door peeping in standing afar off. We are going to be where Christ sits at the right hand of God, far above all principality and power. So we have the word boldness of access, boldness. But when you come to Philippians, it's just the opposite. Philippians two, verse 12. Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. It doesn't say work for your salvation, that's hopeless. But having been given this glorious salvation, God expects you to do something about it. But as you do something about it, you're very conscious of your own waywardness, your own frailty, your own ignorance, the pressure of circumstances. And so it is with fear and trembling. No boldness that fear and trembling. So too the same people because they were the same class and the same calling. The Apostles stresses their boldness from one aspect and warns them on the other by using the words trembling. Or again, will you look at Ephesians chapter four, verse ten? Chapter four, verse ten. Speaking of Christ, he that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that he might fill all things. This stress in Ephesians is not so much the coming of Christ down, but the taking of his people up with him.

[00:13:53] Ascension is a great stress in the epistle to the Ephesians, but you know what I'm going to say. Of course, now when you come to Philippians in chapter two, it's

not emphasizing that he ascended up and sat down at the right hand of God. It says he was there by right at the beginning, but he left it behind and he came down instead. So we have the word humbled. Chapter two, verse five Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not a thing to be grasped at, to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion of a man. He humbled himself and became obedient unto death. Even the death of the cross. You see the steps that come down, down, down from the glory of the right hand to the hill called Calvary with all its consequences and with all its degradation. So the two epistles, written to the same company of people, stresses the infallibility of their calling as members of the Body of Christ and suggests to them to walk worthy of it. They've got to watch their step every way because of themselves and because of their neighbors and because of the attacks of the evil one in the world in which they live.

[00:15:24] You see, to be pushed on one side all the time makes you one sided. To be pushed on both sides, one to give you the confidence and the other to warn you that you mustn't have self-confidence means that you'll be more or less upright, more or less, said. Of course, even the Apostle Paul wouldn't claim, as he said, not as though I were already perfect. So don't go away from this chapel and say, you know, the only person that's perfect in that chapel is this one speaking at the pulpit. Oh, no. I'm very much like the Apostle Paul there. I say not as though I were already perfect all by a long shot. But I can sympathize with the struggle that goes on and realize how pleasing it must be to God to see the slightest movement on our part, to seek to follow in the steps of this beloved savior while we have the opportunity here in this life. So we've looked at the two different things the hope of the calling and the prize of the calling. We've seen an emphasis upon the fulness and we've seen an emphasis upon the Kenosis or the Self-emptying. We've seen the boldness and we've listened to the word trembling. We've seen the ascension and we've seen that he humbled himself and stoop right down, down, down to the depth of the cross.

[00:16:42] Now, it says in Ephesians chapter two, verse 12, these words, chapter two, verse 12. Uh, where are we? Oh, verse 11. Wherefore remember. He says to them, Remember? But some things he says you must forget. It's good to have a good memory. But according to the scriptures, it's good to have a good forgettery. Don't take the whole lot with you. Some things have got to be forgotten and left behind as you

press on your pilgrimage. So let's see the other not really remember, but forget in Philippians 3:13. Philippians 3:13. Brethren I count not myself to have apprehended. But this one thing I do. So he's shutting you up to one thing. One thing I do. And what is that, Paul? I'm forgetting. I'm letting it go because it's only a hindrance. You imagine a person entering into a race and taking with him all the bits and pieces that he's got about the house that he values, what he's asking for trouble. He never gets through, would he? He said, you lay aside every weight. And run with patience. The race set before us. So he says here I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

[00:18:32] So he tells you he's got a purpose. He's willing to give up, not because he's one of those miserable people who always and only happy when they're miserable. He says, I'm doing it. I know what I'm out for. I'm out for this prize of the high calling. I want to glorify my savior by one day, putting a crown at his feet. You are die regarded be presented in that day. But suppose you we go empty handed and we see others are able to put even the smallest coronet at the feet of our savior. Won't we be sorry that we didn't enter into this a bit more intimately? Won't we be sorry that somebody in the Chapel of the Open book was everlastingly telling us of our high calling and never warned us about the other side of the story which we get in Philippians. That's what we're doing this morning, trying to get a balance the two sides. So let's go another stage further. I mustn't forget the time, of course. In chapter three, verse nine of Ephesians, they are reminded that their salvation of their position is not of works. Chapter three, verse nine. Uh, to make all men see. What is the fellowship of the mystery? Where is it? Here. I've got the word. Of lost be petted somewhere, but you know that it is not of works, lest any man should boast. What was it? 290. That's. Thank you.

[00:20:05] I was looking at the the wrong button. I'll read that again then. Oh, I did that just to show you that I wasn't already perfect. But you may say you needn't do that. We know that without. All right. Yes. Verse eight, for by grace are ye saved through faith. And that not of yourselves. It's a gift of God. So you're out of it altogether, you see. Not of yourself, not of works, lest any man should boast. We are his workmanship. We are in his hands as plastic. And so you may say, well, that's a lovely hymn. Oh, to be nothing. Nothing. I've heard people sing it that God says he's enough to be nothing.

Nothing. But I'd like you to be something. Something for my glory to positive side as well. So it's not a works. But when you come to Philippians chapter two, we've looked at that before. It says in verse 12 and 13. Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. So it's not a works. It's works in entirely in the hands of God. So far as the initial salvation and position in Christ is concerned. And when you're there, he says, now is the time to begin to work.

[00:21:39] You're there. Now let's see that you work out your own salvation, that you manifest, that you do belong to such a savior and are in such a high and wonderful calling. The key seems to be provided for us in Ephesians chapter three, verses 10 to 14, and then I think our time will be up. Chapter three, 10 to 14. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church. He is something. Friends. We are conscious that we're a very small company in our chapel this morning. But we might have unseen attendance here, of which we've only got the slightest hint. We got it here. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God. According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus, our Lord. In whom we have boldness of access with confidence by the faith of him and so on and so on. Well, I've accomplished what I set out to do, I hope. And that is this to show you that the epistles that belong to our peculiar calling do not only stress the wonder of the gift of grace, but also asks you, and what are you doing with it? So there's a need that if God has planted us, there is a need for us to remember that He comes looking one day to see if there's fruit and what a joy it will be if we can produce that to his glory.

[00:23:31] Now before us lies 1 or 2 other inquiries. I want to go into the question of how it was. The Apostle uses the word that I may attain unto the resurrection. We don't usually speak about attaining to the resurrection. We say beyond our ability. If God doesn't work, we can do nothing, but it's there. So that's one thing. And then there is a great series of parallel passages in another epistle, and I'm sure that we are not acting as we should if we ignore the fact that it's been written all over again from another point of view so that we may get a double witness, somebody says you go to the door quicker when there's a double knock, well, there's a double knock, and then we'll have to discover that the word the resurrection in Philippians is a special one. It is called the

Anastomosis, the out resurrection out from among the dead, something that is special and needs to be kept in its right place. So if it's possible for you not only to get this morning's analysis that you can meet together in this chapel for a series, it might be good for me and for you and for the chapel and for all our witness that we see these parallels and examine these rather problematic passages.