

Above the Clouds

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- [0 : 00] Well, some sad news indeed earlier on. We're not unaware of these things, things like it. I think it's good and right to celebrate Mother's Day. It took me the best part of 30-odd years to realise what Mother's Day was about when I had a child of my own. Finally realised what I put my mum through. And you never know. As David said, you never know. You never know when the day someone you love is taken away from you. If you know of a mother, a grandmother, if you have a mother, if you know of people that you ought to speak kindly to and give thanks to, please do so today. I've always thought at funerals, it's sad that we spend our best words when people can't hear them. But we're not unaware of these things.
- [1 : 06] Which is why today I thought it'd be good to take a break from our series on Exodus. We're going to pick it back up after Easter. But I thought it'd be good today to take a break from it. Today, to give you a, hopefully, I hope, a short word of encouragement. I'm not going to spend long on this, but I feel like we all need encouraged. If you are trusting in Jesus, if you know Jesus, then please be encouraged by this. And if you don't, then please put your trust in Him so that you can have this hope and this encouragement for yourself. It says in Colossians chapter 3, Paul, who was once a persecutor, hunted Christians down, put them in prison, put them to death, yet himself was transformed by the risen Jesus. And he said this, 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 : 21] Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died. Those who are trusting in Christ, you have died. And your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, and He will appear, then you also will appear with Him in glory. What wonderful news that is. If you've ever traveled on an airplane, some of you have had the privilege of that, or the terror, depending on how you feel about that. If you've ever traveled on an airplane, I wonder if you've ever taken off when it's raining, or if you've ever taken off when it's been overcast, which is kind of a guarantee in Scotland. And if you have, then you know that despite appearances and experiences on the ground, you know that the sun is still shining above the clouds.
- [3 : 31] It doesn't matter where you are on earth. As soon as you punch through the clouds, there is the sun, faithful as always, shining as it always has, with full strength. You know that? These words from Colossians is a call to remember a more fixed reality above in the midst of the changing weather below.

Jesus said to his disciples shortly before these dark clouds descended on him, Jesus said to his friends, that in the world, you will have tribulation.

He said that to them. Let's be honest. This is true. As long as we are in the world, this world, we will not be free from the effects of the weather of this dark and fallen world.

We feel it, don't we? We feel it in our bodies. We feel it in our minds. We feel it in our emotions. We feel it physically.

[4 : 43] We feel it mentally. We feel it spiritually. Sometimes these clouds can cloud our vision to remember the reality above.

The reality that Jesus goes on to say to his friends, take heart, for I have overcome the world. Yes, this world has its tribulations, and we will not be free from them as long as we are in this world.

But Jesus says, take heart, for I have overcome the world. And so, in this short message, I want to remind you of Jesus' victory in this world.

Okay? Firstly, truths of the Scripture. This world would not exist without Jesus. Let's remember that.

Okay? Whatever we face in this life, in this world, remember that everything, every single thing, physical, mental, spiritual, whatever you feel, experience in this world, would not exist without Jesus.

[6 : 00] John chapter 1 says that in the beginning was the Word. The Word was in the beginning, it was with God, and the Word was God.

John says that all things were made through him, and there wasn't anything that was made that was made without him. So firstly, remember that this world that we live in wouldn't even exist without Jesus.

Jesus has victory over this world because he made it. Therefore, secondly, he is more powerful than this world. Jesus, by proxy of being the creator of all things, in Colossians chapter 1 it says that all things were made through him, whether invisible or visible, whether thrones, rulers, dominions, authorities, everything, everything in existence comes from him, was made through him, was made by him, is held together in him.

Therefore, he is more powerful than the world. There is nothing in this world that can overpower Christ. So you think about this person that you know about in history as really the word who was God in the beginning came, assumed flesh, taken on flesh, become a man so that he can reveal himself to us in ways that we would understand, so that he can redeem humanity by taking on flesh.

But Jesus, the man, is God, the Son. The one who created all things. He is more powerful than the world. Nothing in this world can overcome him.

[7 : 46] Thirdly, the creation may be subjected now to corruption, but Jesus is not. Remember that. Yeah, he came into the world, but he is not corrupted by it.

Fourthly, the world may be in darkness, but he is not. He's not in darkness about anything. He sees everything clearly.

He knows the way because he is the way. There's not a thing that happens on earth that he does not know about, not a thing that you experience that he does not know about, not a thing that you can think or an anxious thought in your mind that he is not aware of and that he did not give his life for.

He is pure light and there is no darkness in him whatsoever. The world may be in darkness, but he is not. He is light. He is the light of the world.

He, the light, the true light, came into the world, came into the world of darkness, yet darkness could not overcome him.

[8 : 57] Sixthly, came into a world of sin, yet sin could not corrupt him. Seventhly, was obedient to death, yet death could not hold him. This is our king, Jesus.

Remember the victory that he has over the world. He is pure light, came into a world of darkness, yet darkness could not overcome him. We know darkness, we see it, we hear about it, we've heard about it this morning.

Every form of evil and darkness, yet darkness could not overcome him. Every form of sin which we are aware of, we see and hear about every day and we know even in our own hearts he became man, came into a sinful world, yet sin could not corrupt him like it has to everything else.

He is pure and perfect. Finally, obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. We are all subject to death. By virtue of taking on a body, he became obedient and subjected himself to death, yet death could not hold him, says Acts chapter 2.

Death could not hold him. So take heart. He has overcome this world in so many more ways than we can possibly realize. Everything in this world was overcome by him and it is still being overcome by him.

[10 : 23] Consider 2,000 years later why we are even in this building. All the lives on earth, all the tribes, nations, and tongues that have been overturned and rescued out of darkness by his light.

Think about what the world would be like if he had not entered the world and done what he did. He has overcome the world and he still is overcoming the world.

In every nook and cranny of the world there are people being rescued out of darkness into his light. And he stands with us. The call to everyone else, come to the light.

Be rescued by Christ. Be rescued by the one who overcame the world. And so, if you are trusting in Christ, I want to look at the victory of Jesus in you.

I want to ask you, why are you here today? What brought you here? Why do you even believe? And I don't mean that as a challenge.

[11 : 33] I mean that to state a fact of something of his victory in your life. Because, according to the Bible, it says, you were once dead.

You were once hostile. You were once alienated. You were once guilty. You were once condemned. And you were once trapped in darkness. And so, the darkness that we hear of that's going on in the world was a darkness that we have all belonged to.

The guilt of sin that we hear of in others who commit atrocities to varying degrees, we have all been guilty. We have all stood condemned.

Yet, if you're trusting in Christ, here's the victory that he has. There is, therefore, no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Why? Because he's forgiven you of your sin.

He has removed your sin as far as the east is from the west. You are no longer guilty. You are no longer weighed down by the burdens of that. You are no longer entangled by the darkness that once held you.

[12 : 45] You are no longer under the power of Satan who rules this world. But you've been rescued. It says in chapter 2, verse 13, it says, you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Christ, having forgiven us all our trespasses by cancelling the debt of record that stood against us with its legal demands.

This he set aside. How did he do this? By nailing it to the cross. And in doing so, he disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in Christ.

Think about that for a moment. Think about the victory of Christ in your life that he has forgiven your sin. He has cancelled the debt that stood against you by nailing it to the cross and thus by doing so, putting these rulers and authorities to open shame and his victory over them.

The fact that you are here today, the fact that you are trusting in Christ is a huge victory of which you are probably quite unaware of. And I can say the same about myself.

We don't realise what Christ has done in us. We don't realise the full extent of what he has done in our lives. You see, it says, if you have been raised with Christ.

[14 : 23] Because if you have received Christ, if you have believed in his name, then you've died with him. And if you have died with him, you've been buried with him. And if you've been buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God who raised him from the dead.

And so, if you have been raised with Christ, then firstly, give thanks to Christ. That's a miracle. Then seek the things that are above where he is.

Christ isn't here. Now, why is Jesus not here? Some people might ask, yeah, if Jesus rose from the dead, why is he not here? Let me tell you why he's not here. Because he ascended to his rightful place in the heavens over all things.

Because his body that is now a body not belonging to this world, but the next. His body, incorruptible, imperishable, perfect, risen to a new humanity, doesn't belong to this world.

So why would he hang about this place? And if you are in Christ, then though your body does belong to this world, you do not. You belong to a different place.

[15 : 37] So take your minds off of the things of this earth and set them in things above where Christ is. It's amazing. It's amazing. And so, now your life is hidden with Christ and God.

His victory in you means that your life is with him above these dark clouds. It might not always feel like it, it might not always seem like it, but that is just our bodily experience here.

And so I want to draw your attention to another letter that Paul wrote called Ephesians. In Ephesians, Paul says this, let me open it up.

Paul says this, we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, folks, we don't. It might seem like it at times, we feel the pain and heartache of things that flesh and blood might do, but behind that flesh and blood is a whole other level of darkness.

Behind every evil deed and evil act is a world of darkness for which Paul draws our attention to. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places, against Satan, against his kingdom of darkness, against rulers and authorities.

[17 : 17] That is where the fight is, that's where the war is, but let me encourage you, and this is why we ought to set our minds on things above to where Christ is, because in Ephesians 1, it says this, it says, that Christ has been raised from the dead and seated at the right hand in the heavenly places far above all rule and authority and power and dominion.

So just remember, these things that we wrestle against, set your minds on things above where Christ is, because he is far above these things, these things that seem like they are so powerful and so victorious, are nothing to Christ.

He has been raised far above all rule, authority, power and dominion and above every name that is named, not only in this age but in the one to come. And he puts under his feet all things, all things.

it says in chapter 2, verse 10, that we are his workmanship. It says in chapter 4, verse 10, that he who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.

That's why he's there and not here. It says in Colossians chapter 1, verse 16, that he being Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

[18 : 56] For by him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through him and for him and he is before all things and in him all things hold together.

So even these rulers and authorities thrones, dominions were created by him and he ascended far above all of them and so that is why we ought to set our minds on things that are above.

Folks, put your mind on Christ and realize that he is above all of these things and he is putting all of these things under his feet. And so, finally, let me just give you four quick reasons, okay?

Four quick reasons to set your minds on things above. Number one, because that is where our king is, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Set your mind on things above where Christ is because that is where our king is. Let me tell you about our king.

[20 : 02] He's the one who walked on water. He is the one who calmed the sea and he is the one who bears a hundred thousand sins for you and me.

He is our life. In him is life, says John. All life comes from him and he is our life. He is the eternal king.

Unlike the kings of the earth, his reign will last forever. Unlike the kings of this earth, he came to serve. Unlike the kings of this earth, he gave his life for his people.

Unlike the kings of this earth, sin could not touch him. Unlike the kings of this earth, he is pure light and in him there's no darkness at all. Unlike the kings of this earth, he welcomes anyone into his kingdom.

Unlike the kings of this earth, he has overcome death. And therefore, he will never die. He reigns forever. He defeats every enemy, even death.

[21 : 12] The world is his heritage. He is the coming king and he will take for himself the entire earth. And he is judge of everyone and everything.

Everyone will stand before him. And so set your minds on things above because that is where our king is. Secondly, set your mind on things above because his kingdom is a kingdom of light and his kingdom is unshakable.

Let me draw your attention to Isaiah chapter 9. Unto us a child is born, to us a son is given. The government shall be upon his shoulders and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of his peace, unlike every other kingdom on earth, there will be no end. Don't you long for peace?

Well, he will bring a peace of which there will be no end. And on the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with, oh, we've been longing for justice.

[22 : 35] With justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Do we not feel the pain of injustice?

In his kingdom, perfect justice without any hint of injustice forever.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. It says in Hebrews 12 that his kingdom is unshakable. We do not go into a kingdom that is shaken like any of the kingdoms.

I mean, look at the empires of the past. things that people thought this, this is it. Nothing will ever stop this kingdom yet they can be so easily shaken.

His kingdom cannot be shaken. Let me just give you a little glimpse, okay, and if you want to flip in your Bible you can, but you don't need to to the end of your Bible to Revelation.

[23 : 35] Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God. He, this is his kingdom, he will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more.

Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away. And he who was seated on the throne said, behold, I am making all things new.

He said, it is done, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage and I will be his God and he will be my son. As for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for the murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, or liars, their portion will be in the lake of fire that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.

[24 : 57] There will be no injustice that won't be dealt with. There is a city, there is a city, the radiance like a most rare jewel like jasper, clear as crystal, great high walls with twelve gates and at the gates twelve angels and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel on the east three and the north three on the south three and on the west and the wall of the city had twelve foundations and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb and the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and its walls and the city lies four square, its length the same as its width and he measured the city twelve thousand stadia, its length and width and height are equal.

That's one thousand five hundred miles, a cube, great city, hundred and forty-four cubits was its walls over two hundred foot. The wall was built of jasper, the city was pure gold like clear glass, foundations of the walls of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel.

Amazing! Streets of the city pure gold like transparent glass and in the city no temple in the city for the temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb and the city doesn't have any need for sun or moon to shine on it for the glory of God gives it its light and its lamp is the Lamb by its light will all the nations walk and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it and the gates will never be shut by day and there will be no need for night they will bring into it the glory and the honour of the nations and here's the greatest part for nothing unclean will ever enter it nor anyone who does what is detestable or false only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life we'll hear about that city in a wee moment but his kingdom don't you want to be there is that not the world and the kingdom and the kind of place that we all long for it's coming and so set your mind on things above for that city is there and it will descend from heaven does he not say

Bell's Hill it's not Scotland it's not Great Britain it's not the United Kingdom our life is hidden with him and God he is our life our life doesn't belong here we walk by faith and not by sight if your life is not hidden with Christ put your faith in him put your faith in him and fourthly set your mind on things that are above because your inheritance there is imperishable I want to read to you if you want any incentive to trust in Christ he will forgive your sins he will lift that condemnation from you he will cancel the record of debt that stands against you because he nailed it to the cross he will reconcile you with God and with others he will give you a hope that is unshakable and a home that is imperishable this is what is true of those who trust in Christ that according to his great mercy he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and born again to an inheritance that is imperishable undefiled and unfading kept in heaven for you who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed at the last time folks

Lord our God help us to lift our minds from the things of this earth the things that trouble us so much the things that affect our body and our minds and our souls and our hearts the things that have grieved us with many trials the things that press in the darkness that presses in help us to set our minds away from these things and above trusting in Christ who has overcome all of these things and who is doing away with all of these things and who is making all things new help us to set our minds on Christ who is above and in doing so have the hope that will not disappoint for he who promised is faithful we pray in Jesus name Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen

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