
There are times, in my review and self-critic of my own preaching and exposition of a passage of scripture, that I realize that there was more to say about it; or that I only explicated one aspect of a text while missing something major and very important:

Tonight before we move on, I have more to say from (Ephesians 4), regarding Christ leading captivity captive. What triggered this was a reconsideration of the passage after a conversation I had this past Sunday, BUT primarily in the words “He led” captivity captive.

These “captives” are depicted to us as being willingly “led” by Christ after His battle and great victory, (in contrast to His enemies bound in chains).

Now let me just say at the outset that I DO believe the Lord Jesus conquered His foes in open triumph as written in Colossians 2:15:

“And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it”:

The Lord Jesus Christ (on His cross, in His death and resurrection from the grave) DID CONQUER His enemies WHO ARE STILL His enemies! He conquered sin, Satan, (the god of this world along with all of his principalities), and He conquered the last enemy that shall be destroyed, DEATH! And He did triumph over them and make a show of them openly!

But in focusing on His triumphant victory and overthrow of sin, Satan, the world, and the last enemy, death; and His defeated foes (WHO ARE STILL HIS FOES):

I MISSED the captives who WERE HIS ENEMIES, but who are now His friends!

Captives whom He freed and rescued, who serve Him and whom He now leads.

If you're in Christ this evening, you WERE captives of the wicked one, but now you are Christ's captives! You were blind captives of Satan, but now you are LED by Christ as CONQUERED willing CAPTIVES and SERVANTS of Christ!

You see, this VICTORY of Christ was more than just subduing and chaining up those that remain His enemies, the greater aspect of the Lord Jesus' victory was in His rescuing of captive sinners from their sins and delivering them from the kingdom of darkness, and from the captivity and bondage of the wicked one.

Mark 3:27, Isaiah 61:1, Luke 4:18, Colossians 1:13

Psalms 68:18, (for those who are no longer rebels)

In Revelation 6, the Apostle John depicts a Conquering and Victorious Rider on a white horse. (*Revelation 6:1-2*)

The Lord Jesus, as Victorious and Ascended King, IS the Rider of the white horse conquering His enemies' hearts with the gospel! *Revelation 19:11-16*

Ephesians 4:9-10: Now, Christ has ascended; "what is it that He first descended into the lower parts of the earth?"

Prior to His incarnation, Christ had not yet ascended as the Victorious King. Now, Christ HAS victoriously ascended; He is “NOW SEATED” at the right hand of the throne of Father on high.

When Paul speaks of Christ “descending into the lower parts of the earth”, he is speaking of every aspect of His incarnation and humiliation, when He laid aside His Excellent Glory Majesty and Divinity, and “Robed” Himself in the likeness of sinful flesh and took upon Him the form of a servant. This descending into the lower parts of the earth includes His sufferings and death. But also, the wrath of God and torments of hell, which He suffered for the sins of the world.

Philippians 2:3-8, Psalm 63:9, 139:13-15, Isaiah 44:23, John 3:13, 8:21-23
"He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things".

Ephesians 4:11-12: (READ): What were these "gifts or these gifted men" given to the church to do: "For the perfecting of the saints"

They were given to the church to strengthen and equip the church! For the benefit of the "saints" and to "minister" to the "body of Christ".

"Perfecting": Means to mend, repair, and bind; prepare for use; but also to unite, join-together, and make fully grown, mature, complete.

Matthew 4:18-22, Luke 6:40, 1 Corinthians 1:10, Galatians 6:11, 1 Thessalonians 3:10, Hebrews 13:20-21.

Child of God, YOU ARE the church; YOU NEED the church! Without the church, (coupled with your HEARTY DEVOTION to it), you will NOT be strengthened in your soul, and you will NOT excel and mature in the faith!

If you are NOT devoted to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be like SO MANY "professing Christians" who walk on the outer edge and periphery of the camp and fellowship of the saints.

You will be an "Outer Court Christian" ☹ who does not love the church! Can you be a Christian and NOT love the church of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Next: These gifted men are called to do "The work of the ministry": 1 Timothy 3:1, 2:15

The ministry is WORK; it is serving Christ, it is tending to His flock and to their spiritual needs. It is what Paul told Timothy: 2 Timothy 4:1-5

These gifted men are to "EDIFY: the body of Christ": Edify/Edifying is an architectural metaphor or term. The primary idea is something "being built" or "being built up" or "under construction".

Christian, you are always a "work in progress". The primary responsibility for perfecting the saints, the work of the ministry, and the edification of the body of Christ is given to Pastors called to preach the Word of God and to (under) shepherd the flock of God.

This is why it is so important for YOU to be PRESENT when the doors of the church are open; when the saints meet; it is in the midst of the saints, under your Pastors and Teachers that you will be strengthened. Edification and strengthening to the people of God come through the preaching of the Word.

Acts 20:32, 1 Corinthians 3:9, (Building = Structure), 14:1-3, Ephesians 2:21, 20:32, Romans 14:19

We were once captives of sin and Satan and the world, but now Christ has conquered our hearts. Now we, who were once His enemies and rebels against Him are, led by Him as willing captives and servants.

He that descended is now ascended and victorious.

Ephesians 4:8-12