

Elevator – Sunday 19th October, 2014

***“Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³ Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”* Philippians 3:12-14**

Beloved in The Lord,

We are all familiar with elevators or lifts. You get in on one level, push the appropriate button and you are transported to the corresponding level, and you get out again. Often the level that you boarded the lift on is so very different to the one you arrive at. For example, if you park in the basement of a fancy Hotel, the level that you board the lift is usually a dull, grey concrete car park. You go up to the lobby level, the doors open and you have a very different scene before your eyes.

Let us carry this illustration over to the subject of death. We can say that death is like an elevator that takes us from this level of life to God’s level, if we belong to Him. Here, we close our eyes in death, and we are transported away from this life. When our eyes open again we see something so completely different. If we are in Christ Jesus The Lord, then we can be absolutely sure that the vista that will appear before us will be indescribably magnificent. Paul put it this way when he quoted the prophet Isaiah:

“but just as it is written,

***“Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard,
And which have not entered the heart of man,
All that God has prepared for those who love Him” (1.Cor.2:9).***

The beauty of Heaven will be so unlike anything that we have ever seen with our eyes. We have never heard with our ears sounds so wonderful as the sound of praise in Heaven. We cannot even begin to imagine the glories of Heaven. We can call to mind the most beautiful scene that we have ever seen and that will fade in comparison to Heaven. Nothing in this world that we can see or experience comes close to the beauty of Heaven and God Himself.

Out of His tremendous grace and love, God has prepared a beautiful home for us in eternity. There is room for each one of us, if we accept it from Jesus in faith. He Himself said:

“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way where I am going.” ⁵ Thomas *said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus *said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (John 14:1-6).

There are a few things in this teaching of Jesus that we need to consider today. Firstly, Jesus encourages us to not be troubled or afraid. Many people are afraid of lifts, because they either have claustrophobia or are scared of being trapped halfway between floors. There are very many people who are troubled by or afraid of the thought of death. Some even try to resist death when it is inevitable. They fight and fight against it. This is because they do not know Jesus. If you know Jesus and have accepted Him as your personal Saviour, then you have nothing to fear as far as death is concerned. Death will be the vehicle that will take you straight into His waiting arms. The Christian does not live in fear of death, but in quiet assurance because he knows the truth. This knowledge comes when we trust in Jesus. This knowledge is based upon The Word of God.

Paul wrote:

“For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor.5:1).

The Christian knows and is not afraid of death. Jesus tells us to believe in God and to believe in Him. To believe is to trust, to surrender, to rely fully upon. As we do, the fear of death subsides and the heart is filled with peace, and when it comes time for you to board the elevator of death, you will do so with peace and joy in your heart.

The next thing that Jesus tells us is that there is plenty of room in The Father’s House. There is room for all who would come. There is room for you and room for me. Our room has been paid for with the precious blood of Jesus.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

For God so loved each one of us, He provided a Saviour for us. Jesus shed His own blood to pay the ransom for our sin. The Bible tells us: ***“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).***

All of us have sinned and we all deserve eternal death, a place in the eternal lake of fire. But God does not desire that for us, because He loves us. Therefore, He gave us His Son Jesus.

It is vital that we understand that for the elevator to go up we need Jesus. Without Him in our heart the elevator will go down and there is no return.

Jesus clearly said: ***“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (John 14:6)***

There are no exceptions. We all need Jesus Christ, because only His blood can pay our sin debt and make us right before God who is Holy. Please understand this.

None of us knows when our time will come to step into the elevator. This is why it is important that we are ready to go at anytime. Some have warning that the elevator is coming, others do not. This is why it is important that we are absolutely sure that our life is in order before Almighty God, and that we are ready to depart at any time. If we have confessed our sin and accepted Jesus into our heart as Lord and Saviour then we are ready to go.

If we have not, we should not delay. Once you are in the elevator, you will not be able to change direction. Today is the day.

God does not desire for any of us to be lost, and that is why He has given this message to us today.

We read in God's Word: ***"Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts" (Hebrews 3:15).***

In Revelation we read Jesus saying: ***"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me" (Rev.3:20).***

If you are not yet ready to go into the lift, then listen carefully and you will hear Jesus knocking at the door of your heart. Open it today.

If you already have, then may today's message empower you, comfort you, give you assurance, fill your heart with faith and hope and peace.

Live each and every day with the knowledge that the elevator door may open for you today. That will be a glorious moment because you will have finished the race of life.

Paul, knowing that he would soon be executed wrote:

"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸ in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2.Timothy 4:6-8).

In order for us to finish well, we need to fight the good fight of faith right up until the lift arrives.

May God help us to do so.

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.