

Beginning from Rest

SIT, WALK, STAND Part 1

FINDING THE VICTORIOUS LIFE IN EPHESIANS

“[Ephesians] abounds with spiritual riches, and yet at the same time it is intensely practical. The first half of the letter reveals our life in Christ to be one of union with him in the highest heavens. The second half shows us in very practical terms how such a heavenly life is to be lived by us down here on the earth. We do not here propose to study the letter in detail. We shall, however, touch on a few principles lying at its heart. For this purpose we shall select one keyword in each of the above three sections to express what we believe to be its central or governing idea.

In the first section of the letter we note the word *sit* (2:6), which is the key to that section and the secret of a true Christian experience. God has made us to sit with Christ in the heavenly places, and every Christian must begin his spiritual life from that place of rest. In the second part we select the word *walk* (4:1) as expressive of our life in the world, which is its subject. We are challenged there to display in our Christian walk conduct that is in keeping with our high calling. And finally, in the third part we find the key to our attitude towards the enemy contained in the one word *stand* (6:11), expressive of our place of triumph at the end. Thus we have

Key Words in Ephesians

1. *Our Position in Christ*—“SIT” (2:6)
2. *Our Life in the World*—“WALK” (4:1)
3. *Our Attitude to the Enemy*—“STAND” (6:11)

The life of the believer always presents these three aspects—to God, to man, and to the Satanic powers. To be useful in God’s hand a man must be properly adjusted in respect of all three: his position, his life, and his warfare. He falls short of God’s requirements if he underestimates the importance of any one of them, for each is a sphere in which God would express “the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved” (1:6). We will take, then, these three words—“Sit,” “Walk,” “Stand”—as guides to the teaching of the epistle, and as the text for its present message to our hearts. We shall find it most instructive to note both the order and the connection in which they come. (p x-xii)

Ephesians Overview.

- A. Doctrinal (Chapters 1-3)
 - a. **SIT** - Our position in Christ (1:1-3:21)
The great facts of the redemption God has wrought for us in Christ.
- B. Practical (Chapters 4-6)
 - a. **WALK** - Our life in the world (4:1-6:9)
Living a life worthy of Christ in the midst of the world.
 - b. **STAND** - Our attitude toward the enemy (6:10-24)
Conflict with the devil and the powers of darkness.

Sit Like Jesus Sits

Ephesians 1:20-21 ...[God] raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

Ephesians 2:6-7 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Most Christians make the mistake of trying to walk in order to be able to sit, but that is a reversal of the true order. Our natural reason says, If we do not walk, how can we ever reach the goal? What can we attain without effort? How can we ever get anywhere if we do not move? But Christianity is a [strange] business! If at the outset we try to do anything, we get nothing; if we seek to attain something, we miss everything. For Christianity begins not with a big DO, but with a big DONE. Thus Ephesians opens with the statement that God has “blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (1:3) and we are invited at the very outset to sit down and enjoy what God has done for us; not to set out to try and attain it for ourselves. (p2)

We did nothing whatever to save ourselves; we simply laid upon him the burden of our sin-sick souls. We began our Christian life by depending not upon our own doing but upon what he had done. Until a man does this he is no Christian; for to say, “I can do nothing to save myself; but by his grace God *has done* everything for me in Christ” is to take the first step in the life of faith. The Christian life from start to finish is based upon this principle of utter dependence upon the Lord Jesus. There is no limit to the grace God is willing to bestow upon us. He will give us everything, but we can receive none of it except as we rest in him. “Sitting” is an attitude of rest. Something has been finished, work stops, and we sit. It is paradoxical, but true, that we only advance in the Christian life as we learn first of all to sit down. (p3)

We sit before we walk

Adam’s life began on the Sabbath

Whereas God worked six days and then enjoyed his Sabbath rest, Adam began his life with the Sabbath; for God works before he rests, while man must first enter into God’s rest, and then alone can he work. (p4)

The Biblical day begins at evening

“The Hebrew evening/morning sequence conditions us to the rhythms of grace. We go to sleep, and God begins his work. As we sleep he develops his covenant. We wake and are called out to participate in God's creative action. We respond in faith, in work. But always grace is previous. Grace is primary. We wake into a world we didn't make, into a salvation we didn't earn. Evening: God begins, without our help, his creative day. Morning: God calls us to enjoy and share and develop the work he initiated. Creation and covenant are sheer grace and there to greet us every morning.” Eugene Peterson, *Working the Angles* p68

Jesus invites us to come to him to get rest

Matthew 11:28-30 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Stop trying to earn from God what He has already given you. Receive it. Sit down.

- The order is extremely important.
- My walk becomes an expression of what I have received, not an attempt to prove myself or earn a place with God.
- I am given worth, love, security, acceptance, goodness, significance, peace. I can rest in these.
- And from these my effort, my work, flows.
- Beginning in Rest/ acceptance/ significance/ worth/ being fully loved
Allows my work to proceed with joy; mistakes become tools not defeats.

Psalms 62:1-2 Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.