

Series: John

Title: Greater Things Hereafter

Text: John 1: 50-51

Date: Dec 6, 2020

Place: SGBC,NJ

John 1: 47: Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! 48: Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. 49: Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

Christ spoke to Nathaniel—*“faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.”* This is the word of God, God the Son, speaking his word.

Christ’s word did what Peter described—*John 6: 68: Peter answered...thou hast the words of eternal life.* Christ’s words create eternal life within. *John 6: 69: And we believe.* Christ’s word made Nathaniel believe on him. *John 6:69...and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.* Christ’s word persuaded Nathaniel with full assurance that this was the Christ, the Son of the living God.

This is why God said it pleased him to save through the foolishness of preaching. Christ gets all the glory. This is why David said the gospel is more necessary than the food on our table. The gospel of Christ is milk for babes and meat for the mature. He makes it so.

What was revealed to Nathaniel by the word of God? Nathaniel beheld the greatest thing any sinner shall ever see, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus revealed himself to Nathaniel. The first attribute the Lord revealed to Nathaniel is Lord’s omniscience. Christ is all-knowing God. Before him, all things are naked and open. He knows the thoughts and intents of the heart. He knows every heart without guile and every heart full of guile.

Beholding the Lord Jesus and his omniscience, Nathaniel was given the unction of the Spirit and knew all things. Does that mean he knew all things perfectly? No. He knew Christ was all his salvation. Knowing Christ is all is knowing all things. He was persuaded this was the Christ and he confessed him.

Confessing *“Rabbi”* he owned Christ to be his Wisdom, his Master, his Prophet, his Teacher. Confessing *“Thou art the Son of God”*, Nathaniel owned Christ to be God in human flesh: the GodMan, Mediator, the Christ, the Substitute, his Savior. Confessing *“Thou art the King of Israel”* he owned Christ to be his sovereign Lord, his Sovereign Head.

By faith, Nathaniel saw the greatest thing any sinner can see. But Christ said,

John 1: 50:...Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

Did the Lord mean Nathaniel would see greater things than Christ? There is none greater! He would see with greater clarity, with greater understanding. It is all in Christ as our Mediator. He said, Nathaniel, you marvel that you saw *your heart* opened to me:

John 1: 51: And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

Christ is the Ladder Jacob beheld in his vision. Our Mediator unites God our Father above and the hearts of his people below. The angels ascending and descending portray the communion between God our Father above and his saints below through Christ our Mediator. By his blood putting away our sins Christ united God the Father and his people forever. He opened heaven giving us boldness to ascend into the holiest of holies through him, while through him, all blessings descend to us from God our Father through Christ our Mediator.

But what are these greater things we shall hereafter?

Subject: Greater Things Hereafter

The first moment we behold Christ our Mediator by faith, Christ reveals the greatest thing we ever know: *himself*. But this is his promise to us—*hereafter (from this moment on) you shall behold greater things than these*. Christ continually brings us to behold him with greater understanding.

Proposition: At any given time that he reveals himself to us, as we marvel at his greatness, *he promises hereafter thou shalt behold greater things than these*.

This was Christ's first promise to a believer and what a promise it is to each of us!

FAITH BUT NOT EXPERIENCE

When we first behold Christ by the gift of faith we are amazed at his greatness. Knowing Christ we know all things because Christ is All. But we do not know much by experience at first.

From the beginning that God gives us faith we believe the things which are not seen and faith sees him who is invisible. We rest in Christ from all our works knowing Christ is our only righteousness and only holiness before God. But we do not know our Redeemer's greatness as we shall hereafter. We do not know how fully he is all until we grow in grace and knowledge of Christ by experience.

We begin seeing like the blindman that our Lord healed. At first he saw men as trees walking. "After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly." (Mk 8: 24-25).

Our Lord waited two whole days to go to Lazarus' tomb—why? He loved Lazarus and Mary and Martha and he purposed to increase their faith. At first we are like our dear sister, Martha. She knew it all, so she thought. She said, "Lord if you would have been here our brother would not have died." The Lord said, "Thy brother shall rise again." Again she was quick to tell what she knew. She said, "I know he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." He said, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die? Believest thou this?" At last when he came to the tomb, again, she said, "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days." Our Lord answered, "Did I not say to you, that if you would believe you should see the glory of God?" When he raised Lazarus, the Lord made her not only believe, but made her know by experience that he is the resurrection and the life. (Jn 11: 21-45).

He makes our faith simple, childlike, without guile, without malice by making us experience his greatness. We must not become too familiar but reverence and believe on him. Remember, in his hometown amongst his family, they said we know him. He said, “A prophet is not without honor save in his own house and his own country. He could not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief?” (Mt 13: 57-58) Faith’s strength is not itself. It is the object, Christ Jesus. So he has to show us greater things to grow us to trust him more and ourselves less

FROM CARNAL TO SPIRITUAL

At first we are far too focused on the carnal, the outward, the form. Remember the Lord said, "In the last days it shall come to pass." Not it may but "it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it" (Is 2:1-2) He declares his worship is spiritual. The Spirit comes down to us from heavenly Mt Zion, heavenly Jerusalem in the new spirit he has given us.

Galatians 4:26: But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

You have not come to the Mt that might be touched—not to Sinai:

Hebrews 12: 22: But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23: To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24: And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

But it takes him teaching us by experience that true worship is spiritual. It is between the heart of Christ and the new heart he is created within us.

Scripture says, “As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man” (Pro 27:19). Our Lord spoke from his pure heart to Nathaniel’s pure heart, in Spirit, saying, “Nathaniel, you are an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile.” It produced an answer from Nathaniel’s pure heart back to Christ’s pure heart, “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, the King of Israel.”

We can be in the midst of trouble and tossed. But Christ speaks into our heart in Spirit, “I am the Good Shepherd.” And from the new heart, in spirit, he draws forth the reply from us, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want” (Ps 23: 1). Worship is in spirit and in truth.

But in the beginning we think it is strong faith to observe days and abstain from days and meats and drink. We look far too much on the carnal. Our feelings matter far too much. Our frame of mind. What we do or do not do. Scripture speaks of those things as weak faith (Rom 14).

So once Christ creates true faith within us, “hereafter”, Christ makes us experience true worship in the heart. He makes you hear Christ and be constrained and moved by the gospel in the heart more than the outward form. Christ makes us experience the power thereof—he is that Power! (2 Tim 3:5; Heb 1: 3; 1 Pet 1: 5; 1 Cor 1: 24).

Hebrews 1: 1: God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son...

Christ reveals Himself and Christ is the Power that makes us obey him. True religion is not by dead forms and carnal ordinances but by a living, reigning, and all-glorious Person, Christ Jesus the Power of God.

GREATER PEACE

As time goes by Christ makes us know that he is our peace—he makes us know it in greater clarity. For every believer "He is our Peace" (Eph 2:14).

Colossians 1: 20:...Having made peace through the blood of His cross...

Isaiah 32: 17: And the work of righteousness is peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever...

But to teach us that he alone is our peace, Christ will send us trouble so that we are full of unrest. He sends sin trouble, soul trouble, worldly trouble. Then we find out we sought peace in things where there was no peace. But he comes again and speaks in power in the heart and gives us his peace, reminding us,

John 16: 63...In the world ye shall have tribulation but be of good cheer I have overcome the world.

John 14:27: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you: not as the world giveth...

Micah 5:5: And this Man shall be the Peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land...

The greater we see Christ is our Peace the less it will matter if you have quietness or trouble in the world. When you have Christ in the perfection of His righteousness, the completeness of His salvation then Christ is our Peace in the presence of God.

RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE AND JOY IN SPIRIT

When we begin in the faith we do not realize how much we think righteousness, peace and joy is in the outward form. So he takes his hand off in order to let us be disappointed by our sin. He let faithful Abraham say his wife was his sister to save himself. He let faithful Moses smite the rock twice and call Israel a bunch of rebels. He let David sin grievous sin and run for a whole year. But just when we think we would not do what someone else has done, Christ's lets us do it. Or he shows us we are already doing much worse than others.

Then he recovers us and graciously brings his child into an experimental possession of him as our Peace in spirit. We might know better than observing touch not, taste not and handle not; we may know those things are not our righteousness, and peace and joy. But he shows us more clearly how much we, indeed, do look on the outward form. By this fall Christ makes us know in greater, clearer, way that his "kingdom is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom 14: 17). He will not let us have peace, righteousness and joy in our flesh. Christ will make us have no confidence in our flesh. He will make us worship in spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus (Php 3:3).

By the Holy Ghost we are made to experience with greater clarity what we are in ourselves — wretched, corrupt, vile, and hell-deserving. By this, in greater clarity, he makes us loath ourselves. He makes us loath our sins more. He makes us loath this sin dead world more.

It is greater revelation of Jesus' beauty, blessedness, and bounty that teaches us all things. The greater the revelation of our Substitute suffering soul agony in the Garden of Gethsemane—for my sin and my salvation—the greater the weeping in my spirit over my sin and more easily the Spirit mortifies my flesh.

The greater the revelation of Christ on the cross—wounded, bleeding, dying for me—the greater an increase of love to one another as he loved us.

The greater revelation of how thoroughly Christ blotted out our sins and how perfectly the Father remembers our sins no more for his sake—the greater will be our forgiveness even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you.

The greater the revelation of his everlasting love that could be quenched—not by my transgression in Adam, not by my personal vile deeds while dead in sins, not by my wicked imaginations now which make every good deed wicked—the greater we experience his longsuffering, mercy, grace, forgiveness, and the greater will be ours to our fallen brethren.

THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

We start out believing Christ is the Head of his church. We believe Christ is the Captain of our salvation. But by-and-by Christ sends trouble. He shows us greater things. We find that we depended far too much on our own wisdom and strength and not on his alone.

I had been under the faithful preaching of the gospel for about 17 years when the Lord let me become a fool in this regard. Faithful men told me to wait on the Lord. But I would not. I would not because Christ let me do what I was determined in my heart I would do. Oh, I certainly thought I was doing it for God's glory as we always do, though that was certainly not the case. But Christ let me fall to teach me the church is in Christ's hand. He grew me in the knowledge that Christ is the Head of the church not me—and he did it by painful experience.

Ephesians 1: 22: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Our all-wise, all-sovereign Savior makes us experience that the kingdom and church of God is founded on our immutable sovereign Savior so it can never be moved. He shows us this in clearer revelation by letting us be moved until we almost fall away. But by this he makes us know by experience that the victory of the Church is complete in the triumphs of the Captain of her salvation. He is the Commander of the elect armies. Christ adds to the church daily such as be saved. He preserves us by his power. Christ is the Conqueror over the world, sin, Satan, death, and hell—as well as our sinful flesh. We are just privileged by his grace to be enlisted in his army. So...

2 Chronicles 20:15...Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.

He left us in this body of death to teach us he is All. He teaches us this by experience by leading us through this wilderness united to a bunch of sinners who are brethren in Christ. He

promises “you shall see greater things than these.” He has shown me greater things than I saw 37 years ago. But all the greater things are concerning Christ and his fulness. I may not be nearly as great a sinner outwardly as I was then. Though I am still plenty a sinner outwardly. But the fact is I know now that I am a far greater sinner than I knew then. He has shown me a greater revelation of my dead, rebel flesh than I knew before. I see now sin is in everything I do and think. But I also know him to be a far greater Savior than my sin. I know him to be a greater Savior than I did when I first began. By his grace, I hope when the waves rage, Christ has made me to know with a little more clarity that my strength is to sit still and wait on him to do what he determined before to be done. All will be well. And all is well with my soul.

Right now is Christ all your Salvation and all your Provision in this world? Do you see you have no ability? If so then he promises “*you shall greater things than this hereafter.*” With every passing day Christ will show us more and more that our salvation is entirely of Christ alone: every need in this world and for the world to come is from his full provision. Wait on him. In the great hereafter we shall see how truly our only union with heaven is Christ our Mediator, our Master, our God, our King, our Savior, our Prophet, our Priest. We shall see face to face in person and know all the greater things even as he now knows us!

Amen!