

Visions and Revelations

Message 10: The Apostle Peter (1)

Note: This is a lightly edited transcript meant to aid saints in personal and small group fellowship and pursuing.

Well brothers, now we will continue the matter of visions and revelations, especially using Peter as a pattern. The Lord constituted him, a common emotional man, but eventually, he became a man possessed by a vision. As he testified himself at the end, “I saw a vision – there was glory, everything was saturated with glory, and in the midst of the glory there was a glorious person, Christ.” This is very impressive. This shows that vision is a crucial matter to every Christian. Actually, if I can say this, no Christian could tell you, “I don't see a vision.” If he or she does not see a vision, they couldn't be saved. Salvation comes from the first vision, which included revelation. I see a vision of salvation. In this vision I have the revelation of Jesus as my savior. He died for me and his blood cleansed me from all of my sins. Now in this vision I see another revelation. I am poor. I am a sinful man. My sin needs to be cleansed. I need the blood of Jesus to wash my sins away. Maybe at the same time I see another vision. I live in the corrupted world. Everything surrounding me is corrupted. All kinds of things are corrupted and I must come out of it.

You know brothers, usually when we say you need a vision or you need a revelation, we will take it superstitiously as something so high and so marvelous. Actually, maybe we can say the first five examples were miraculous things. In other words, how could they happen? But it happened. Now in the New Testament, it's a little bit different. It's the age of grace. It's the age of life. It's the age of the dispensing of life in grace. It's because of this that we could be saved. How? Through God coming to us. We don't see God but for some reason we have a kind of spiritual understanding, “Lord you are my savior. I am a sinner and you saved me. I receive you as my savior and your blood cleanses me from all of my sins. Lord save me so I can become a real Christian – I can receive salvation.” What is salvation? That will take you a lifetime to experience, but in the initial prayer you didn't pray the word salvation, but the word “save”. Save me. Not one Christian becomes a Christian without using the word “save me.” You have said it. I have said it. We have all said it. “Oh save me.” That's our basic vision. With this vision, we have the understanding that Christ is the savior. With this vision we have the understanding that I am a sinner. With this vision we understand that outside of Jesus Christ's salvation and his saving power, we have no hope – we will go to Hell. Lord save us. Now, these together become more revelation. This revelation is called the revelation of Jesus and his salvation. I see Jesus. I see the salvation of Jesus, He's the savior, He died for me, I am a sinner, I live in sin, I grow up in sin, my person is constituted with sins, but God has mercy. You know brothers, we should be very happy. When we talk about visions and revelations, they're not something far away that we

cannot approach. We all have it already! Do you have a vision? Yes! What is that? Jesus is my savior! Do you have another vision? Yes! What is that? I am a sinner. Do you have a revelation? Yes! When I see Jesus, and when I see myself, and then put together, it becomes a picture. That is the revelation of Jesus. In revelations there are visions.

Peter had the same experience. He got saved, but when he got saved is actually not that clear. The first time he saw the Lord, the Lord said, “you are Simon and you will be called Cephas”. That must have somewhat impressed Peter. He followed the Lord quickly, but then he disappeared. The Lord then came to his place again and called him. This time, he really saw the Lord. You know what he did? He saw another vision. He saw that Jesus wasn’t just the savior, He was the Lord. So he says, “Lord, depart from me.” In this revelation, he also said, “I’m a sinner. Depart from me. I’m a sinner.” I’m happy the Lord’s response to him was, “From now on you shall gain man. You’re no longer a fisherman – you will be a fisher of man.” Now you will preach the gospel. This means there is a vision, there’s a revelation – the vision of Christ I see, the vision that I am a sinner, and then together I see a revelation. This revelation brings me to Christ.

In the beginning, it was so unclear. So what do we have at the beginning? I go to the meetings because that’s what I have and know. I got saved. I want to pray. I want to read the bible. I want to go to the meetings. I want to be with the brothers. This are all what I want. But do you realize God keeps on unveiling to you more and more. Look at Peter. The first time the Lord spoke to him, “You shall be called Cephas.” You shall be called a particular piece of stone, a useful stone. The second time he saw the Lord, his vision was expanded. He said, “You are the Lord!” You are the Lord. He didn’t say, “Lord save me!” but, “Lord depart from me.” It’s very interesting. I never heard a prayer like that, “Lord depart from me.” Maybe this is a unique prayer by Peter in church history. Everyone’s prayer is “Lord save me, be with me, bless me.” But Peter’s prayer was, “Lord depart from me.” Why? “I’m a sinner!” When I see who you are and when I see who I am, we totally do not match. But the Lord told him, “From now on you will be a fisherman, but for man not for fish. You will be a follower of me.” Do you see that a vision will always lead you to Christ himself? With Christ you will also receive some commitment that causes you to have a heavenly walk. So usually we say, “Do you have a vision?” If you have a vision, you see Christ. When we say I do have a vision, I really see Christ. Then my second question is, “So what?”

So I give you seven or eight items for you to say I see Christ. For instance you say, “I see visions and I see revelations.” These revelations and visions help me to know more and more who this Christ is. Christ is God, God bearing full responsible for me. He’s responsible for everything I do. He’s in charge. More than that, I see Christ as the man. In his humanity, he fully understands my needs, my weaknesses, my sensations, all the emotions that go through me, and even my disposition. I’m a man, but Christ is the real man, with his rich humanity out of the divine

attributes. This humanity of Jesus becomes everything to us in our daily walk. So Christians have Christ as God responsible for them. Christians also have Christ as God walking with them. Wherever I am or whenever I have great suffering, he's there. If I'm extremely joyful, he's there. If I have an extremely hard time, he's there. I cried out to him, "Lord, where are you?!" He's still there. Not as God alone, but also as a man. He tells us, "I understand you. I understand your difficulty. I understand your frustration. I understand your agony. I understand your sufferings." This is all because I am the Christ. When I see a vision, that vision brings me to something so subjective. Not only do I say, "I see Christ, praise the Lord, Christ is in the heavens!" No, Christ takes care of me all my life. Christ walks with me and more than that, this marvelous Christ has the all-inclusive death of Christ.

Not only is Christ God. Not only is Christ a man. Thirdly, the all-inclusive death of Christ terminated the fallen element in the old creation. Do you know the man A.B. Simpson? A.B. Simpson realized exactly what I am saying here. Christ's death is the all-inclusive death, even terminating all the things of the fallen element. Simpson was supposed to die at a very young age, so he saw the death of Christ. Eventually he enjoyed the power of resurrection. He lived until his nineties. You know brother, all the songs that he wrote were regarding the cross, regarding Christ, and the resurrection with Christ. Why? Because to him, Christ is longer just a vision. I see Christ. I see a vision, I see the death of Christ. I don't just see Christ as doctrine, I see the death of Christ as an application.

More than that, there is not only the death, but also the resurrection of Christ in power. The power of resurrection causes us to be empowered and to pursue diligently. How can we follow the Lord? We are weak. But once we see his resurrection, in his resurrection, we also enjoy the power of his resurrection. That's why Paul said, "I know him and the power of His resurrection. Therefore I pursue, I forsake everything, I want to gain Christ!"

You know brothers, when I say visions lead you to Christ, don't just say that. Say the vision leads me to Christ as my God. He controls my life. He takes care of all the things in my life. The vision of Christ leads me to God the son as a man. As a man, He was filled with sympathy, fully understood our human weaknesses and our human needs. Then I see Christ as the one who died an all-inclusive death on the cross so that all the things of the fallen world would be terminated in him. I can partake of that. Christ died, I died. Christ died on the cross, I also died on the cross. I died 2000 years ago. No longer do I live, but now Christ lives in me because I am crucified with Christ. Now you see, when I say visions lead you to Christ, it is not a doctrine – it is very practical. He is Christ as God, Christ as man, Christ as the all-inclusive death. More than that, Christ is in resurrection and also has the power of resurrection. That power of resurrection causes us to pursue. We like to pursue Christ, and to gain Christ.

Eventually, more than that, he has a transcending ascension. He ascended, and his transcending ascension made him the Lord of heaven and the earth, and brought forth a divine heavenly realm. Christ as God, Christ as man, Christ as the inclusive death, Christ as the power of resurrection, Christ eventually has the transcending ascension. In this ascension, he is sitting on the throne. The whole globe is under his government and He is there carrying out God's economy. But more than that, he brings us all to a realm where he is in the heavenlies. Where are we? In the realm also in the heavenlies. That's why Paul says, we are sitting with him in the heavenlies. You know what we do in the heavenlies? If we say praise the Lord I am in the heavenlies, so what? I am in the realm and that realm is a heavenly realm, it's a spiritual realm, it's a divine realm, it's a mystical realm. It's a heavenly, divine, mystical, life, spirit realm. In this realm, it's a realm of Spirit. Just like the air surrounding us. Do you know that the Greek word for the air and spirit are the same? Just like the air surrounding us, now the Spirit is surrounding us.

Think about yourself. God takes care of you. Praise the Lord. God understands you. Christ takes care of you. Christ understands you. Christ terminates all the negative things in you and with you. And more than that, Christ resurrected, and therefore you are resurrected with him. More than that, Christ is now transcended in the heavenlies. In the heavenlies where is he? He is the Lord of lords, and the King of kings. More than that, he produced a realm for us to live in. Where am I now? We can say I'm in my physical body, I'm in the U.S, I'm in China, I'm in Taiwan, I'm in a certain country in Africa. No, this is true physically but spiritually, all the Christians are in the heavenly realm, the divine realm, a realm of the Spirit! This realm is a realm of the Spirit. You have to say, this is so marvelous. Where am I? I am in the Spirit. And spirit is a realm for me. Eastward, westward, northward, and southward – all the Spirit. Upward, downward, all the Spirit. The Spirit fully surrounds me.

What will happen in this realm saturated by the Spirit? This realm causes us to be born in him. We are born in Christ. We are born in a realm. When we were born, we were born in the Spirit, in the Spiritual realm. The moment you say, "Lord Jesus, I receive you as my Savior!" Who comes in? The Spirit comes in. Now, the Spirit comes in and also brings you into a spiritual realm. So I'm born in that realm, in Spirit. Praise the Lord, more than that, I can also grow in this realm. In this realm I grow, I live, I walk and then I even mature in this realm. All of my life's operations are in this realm. In this realm, all of the things God is doing become our operation. Eventually we become one with God and incorporated with God in this realm. One with God, but to what extent? To the extent that God and I are one. I am incorporated with God in this realm! Now when I say, you are brought to Christ. How marvelous is this Christ. Now we have to go real fast.

Revelation also unveils the truth to you. When I say I have a revelation, that revelation brings you to Christ. Revelations bring you to the truth of Christ, because Christ said "I am the truth" (John 14:6). When you have Christ, you have the truth. Now that you have the truth unveiled it

needs to bring forth the elevation of truth. We need to be elevated more and more. When I first got saved, I could declare “Hallelujah I am saved!” but that was it. I needed to be elevated. Your truth needs to be elevated. So with the unveiling you have the initial truth: you have salvation, you love the lord, you love the meetings, you love the church life. But the elevation of truth enables us to see we have a living with the Lord. You do not just enjoy him, but you have a living with him, you are able to fight the good fight and to gain the righteous crown. My life is totally different. What your living is based on has a lot to do with what you know. When the truth is unveiled to you more, then you are elevated higher and higher.

No vision is for itself. Both visions and revelations are for bringing us to Christ. The more visions you have, the more of the Lord you have. Visions are different from miracles. Miracles end with miraculous things. In other words, if I get sick and God gives a miracle then I am healed. In that case, the miracle ends when I am healed. Now, if this can become something real then the miracle’s end is “*the Lord* healed me.” So what I stress is not the healing, but I stress the Lord: “*The Lord* healed me.” Visions, on the other hand, reveal Christ and conclude in Christ.

Now we come to Peter’s life and how Peter can be constituted to become a person of visions and revelations. Number one: There is a question of all questions from the Lord. The Lord asks many questions. Do you love me? We say yes. Do you care for my interest? We say yes. Are you my servant? We say yes. Are you following me? We say yes. Do you love to be my child? We say we are most happy to be your child. But then the Lord asks you, “Tell me, who am I?” All of a sudden we get caught. It is easy for us to say “Yes, yes, yes,” until the Lord asks the question: “Who do you say that I am?” If the Lord asks you, “Who do you say I am?”, all of a sudden I think many of us would be caught. Many would say “He’s my savior, he’s my lover, he’s my this and that.” The Lord would not be happy with this answer. “Who do *you* say that I am?” This question was for the 12 apostles. Except for Judas, all eleven apostles were consecrated and following Jesus. They enjoyed the provision of the Lord Jesus, they saw His living out of human virtues, they saw His wisdom and power in all His living and walking. In other words, they knew everything about Jesus. But for some reason when the Lord says, “Who do you say that I am” all of a sudden it seems they were caught. They could not answer. Just like some elders (sorry, elders), full timers (sorry, full timers), leading ones (sorry, leading ones) in the church today. They enjoy the Lord Presence, they are spiritual men, they are good brothers, they enjoy the work because they serve and are fed by elevation of the truth. They have every day, but unconsciously they live a noble religious life yet lose Christ as the focus. I go to meetings to gain Christ, but I like to go to meetings and forget about gaining Christ. I read the Bible to gain Christ. But I like to read the Bible and forget about gaining Christ. I like to labor in preaching the gospel to gain Christ, but I end up preaching the gospel and forget about gaining Christ. Christ is not the focus.

You know, it's very interesting, many times a father tells his children, "I'm your dad," and the mother says, "I'm your mom". You see, when I was a child and I heard this, I was frustrated. I know you are my mom. But you know what your father and mother would say? "I give you food, I give you lodging, I give you clothing, I give you spare money, I give you good education, I took good care of you. You enjoy all these things, but do you know who I am? I'm your dad," or "I'm your mom." You know for some reason we like to testify about all the food we have, how it is so good, but forget about the dad. We testify how the house we have is so good, but forget about the dad. Then whatever provision we have was so good, yet forget about dad. We enjoy all these, yet forget about the provider. This is why many times the father or the mother likes to say, "I'm your father, I'm your mother". They just remind you: have a focus, have a focus. You should love the food I cook, but love me more. You should enjoy my provision, but enjoy me more. You should have all this--whatever I bless, you take it--but remember the blesser. The Lord desires the same thing. You enjoy all the things from me, but can you put me in the right place?

When the Lord asks, "Who do you see that I am" (Matt 16:15), He's waiting for them to answer, "You are the Son of God. You are the Christ." But for some reason, they cannot. It's surprising. You know many could not understand. Matthew couldn't--but then again, he became a disciple late. But John should know; Andrew should know. They both heard the heavenly voice, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I'm well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). They heard it, and they heard from John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Andrew even went to Peter and told him, "I have met the Messiah"--in other words, I know I have seen Christ (John 1:41). But for some reason when the Lord says, "Whom do you say that I am?" they are silent. John should at least say, "You are the Son of God. In you God is well pleased." That's at least what he should say. Andrew should even say, "You are the Messiah. I testify about that already to my brother, Peter." But for some reason they are all silent.

Too often we live a Christian life serving the Lord faithfully. For some reason we forget the Lord we serve. We serve the Lord, but we forget the Lord we serve. We love the Lord but forget the Lord we love. Love becomes an issue, and not the Lord. I hope you can say, "I love Jesus so much," but things happen. You still love the Lord, but you take your own way. It is just like a young man and a young girl who are dating. They love one another very much, but one day the young boy tells the girl, "I'm not going to marry you. I enjoy your love, and you know how much I love you, but I'm not going to marry you." Or one day the girl tells the boy, "I'm not going to marry you. I don't belong to you, but my love belongs to you." What kind of joke is this? But this happens, right? In human culture, in human living, this kind of thing happens. Do you realize often you say, "I love you, Lord" and you stress the *love*. Or you say, "I'm with you Lord," but you stress the *with*. Or, "I serve you Lord," and you stress *serve*. You are able to--and try to--do a lot, but where is Christ? So when Christ asks, "Who do you say I am?" John is suddenly mind-blocked. It should be so clear! John should have said "You are the Son of God. In

you God is well pleased.” Andrew should’ve come up, “No. I know you are the Messiah!” For some reason they both failed, and all the rest failed. Eventually, Peter came in and said, “You are Christ, the Son of the living God.”

What’s the difference between Messiah and Christ? Messiah is the Old Testament word, “the Messiah Priest” means “Anointed Priest.” “Messiah” means the “Anointed One,” which stresses on the peace between God and man. In the New Testament, the same word for “Messiah” in Greek is “Christ.” The word “Christ” denotes the one who carries out God’s economy and performs all the divine operations. Praise the Lord for this! Peter came up and said, “You are Christ, the son of living God.” This is a high revelation. In a way, what Peter experienced was the same as the other eleven apostles. They all experienced the same things, right? He was with them. Peter may have even had *less* experience. Why less? Because there was a time, maybe close to one year, when Peter was apart from the Lord. He was at his own home, working as the little boss of a group of fisherman. But, because of God the Father’s revelation to Peter, all the divinity he saw the Lord live out, all the sweet teachings he heard from the Lord, and all the miracles he experienced the Lord do in his wisdom, were made alive. As God, He lived out the divinity, as man, He ministered all these sweet things, and as the God-man He also performed miracles to heal all kinds of needs. Here it was not merely a teaching, but the Christ in God’s plan. It was not merely a miracle, but the Christ in operation. It was not merely a kind of living, but the manifestation of the Christ as God himself. Therefore, Peter rose and testified, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:16). Let me ask you, how could this happen? In principle it’s impossible. All eleven--of course, Judas possibly didn’t even care, but all eleven of the apostles really cared. All of a sudden, they were caught. I believe at that moment, there was a divine vision rendered to Peter. He saw something. He saw a picture. This picture included God testifying “this is Christ.” It included how He teaches, how He healed all kinds of people, how He lived His proper laboring life as the Son of Man. All of a sudden, all these things were made alive.

We can talk about, “I heard the voice. God declared, ‘This is my beloved son in whom I’m well pleased.’” We know it. “We heard Him teaching, ‘Blessed are the pure, for he shall see God.’” We know it. We saw how He takes care of the lepers, how He takes care of the sick and all kinds of needs. You know it, but it’s not *alive* to you. Today you go to conferences and you hear messages. Many times, do you realize, you will be impressed with many things, but they are not made alive to you? If they are not made alive to you, they cannot be a revelation or a vision.

Peter saw a picture. If I can portray that picture, it is like a big field, a big garden. The garden is filled with all kinds of riches. They were already there, but in that particular moment they were all made alive. All made alive! Oh look at the tree! Oh look at the flower! Oh, look at the fruit! Oh, look at the things growing in the garden! All of a sudden the whole garden is saturated with life. Looks like the birds are singing, the bees, the butterflies--everything was so beautiful, so

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harmonious operating together. I saw a picture. This picture is not a garden. This picture is a *lively* garden. I saw Christ. I saw His teaching, I saw His doing, I saw how He performed miracles, I heard God declare Him. I saw all of this. But, let me tell you, at this moment I realized they are alive. If they all are alive then the one who does them is Christ. He is the Son of the living God. So, brothers, a picture, a living picture, a picture that's alive, can bring you into all the riches you know. All the conferences, all the trainings, all the things I heard, all the Bible which I had read, all the spiritual books which I had read, all of a sudden, one day, by the Lord's mercy they were made alive. At that time you can say, "I see Christ." That's why Peter boldly declared, "You are the Christ." Not "the Messiah," focusing on man's need in the Old Testament, but "the Christ," focusing on God's desire in the New Testament.

Peter's declaration testified how all he saw, all he heard, all he followed were now a picture made alive in him! You know, brothers, we need to tell the Lord, "Lord, give me a picture, and make this picture alive. I don't want to be in religion, in dead doctrines. I want to be in living truth, in living spirit, in living revelations, so I see Christ, I see he's the living Son of God." Praise the Lord for this.