

Spiritual Positioning 1

In life in general, we know that positioning is important. For instance, when you buy a new bicycle, you have to take it to someone who can do a bike fit for you to ensure that when you cycle you are positioned correctly. This is to protect you from unnecessary injuries and to ensure you get the best out of your body and bike. In a similar way, we are all familiar with the saying, “you have to be present to win”. It sounds obvious, right? You have to position yourself in the correct place (i.e. enter the race and show up on race morning), and of course follow the rules, in order for “winning” (whatever that is in the instance) is a possibility. I remember a number of years ago watching one of our boys playing a soccer match. He was playing right wing. He got the ball quite near the back and passed it to a central player. He then stopped running and started walking. We shouted for him to run up and support his player who was alone. I could see by the set of his shoulders and the way he was walking, he didn’t believe they would score a goal, or that there was any point in him running up for support. And you know what? They didn’t score that goal. But the Holy Spirit spoke to me in that moment when we were shouting for him to run up and support his player...He said to me, “belief positions you aright for the next move”. Positioning. It’s so important.

Positioning. In the same way we need to be positioned correctly in life, in the spirit, we need to be constantly checking we are positioned aright for God’s next move. Positioned aright for the season we are in. In the same way poor positioning in the natural negatively impacts us, so poor positioning in the spirit impacts us. We need to position ourselves correctly. Let me say that again, we need to position ourselves correctly. We need to take responsibility for our spiritual positioning. We can’t be passive.

*Col 3:1-3 (NKJV) If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. [2] Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. [3] **For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.***

This is a spiritual truth. Yet how many of you know that a Christian can have whatever they want. We can walk before God in submission to His Word and

authority, or we can maintain a lifestyle with certain habitual sin. For example offense, unforgiveness and bitterness, which opens a door to the enemy for bitterness and other related issues. We become vulnerable and exposed. The spiritual truth remains, but how we are positioned in terms of that promise and how we are positioned spiritually is less than God's ideal. When we talk about positioning in war, what is one of the things that is of critical importance? Visibility. You do not want to be too visible to your enemy. You do not want to be positioned in such a manner that you are exposed and vulnerable. When we carry unforgiveness, bitterness, malice, offense, we are not completely hidden from the enemy and become vulnerable. We can become targets for him. We are exposed. Positioning is important.

Eph 2:4-6 (NKJV) But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, [5] even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), [6] and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

I am saved and forgiven. Redeemed from death. Found in Christ Jesus, seated in heavenly places. FB Meyer says: In the purpose of God we have been raised from the grave of sin and are seated with the risen Lord in the place of acceptance and victory. We were one with Christ when He lay in the grave and arose. In God's thought we have already taken our seat with the glorified Christ upon the throne; only the pity is that we do not believe this or act as if we had done so. All this is the gift of God's unmerited love. By grace have we been brought into this position, and by grace are we maintained in it.

That is the position God has bought and paid for us. That is where we are located. We need to walk in it. Like healing.

Spiritual positioning? I think you are beginning to understand what I am referring to by this. In using this term, I am referring to your heart disposition, the disposition of your spirit, how you show up in the spirit realm. We live and see and exist in the natural realm, but there is a spiritual realm with beings who can see. What do they see when they look at you? Can they see you or are you hidden in God? Are the demons attracted to your life because of certain habitual sin like anger, or lust, lying,

addictions or even violence? How are you positioned in terms of spiritual attributes and qualities?

I would like to give a couple of examples to help us understand that the spirit realm is real and not necessarily like the natural realm.

Hagar:

Gen 16:11 (AMP) And the Angel of the Lord continued, See now, you are with child and shall bear a son, and shall call his name Ishmael [God hears], because the Lord has heard and paid attention to your affliction.

Gen 16:11 (NKJV) And the Angel of the LORD said to her: "Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, Because the LORD has heard your affliction.

The Angel of the Lord declares that God heard and paid attention to Hagar's affliction. I find that fascinating. He heard her affliction. I wonder what He heard. Was it her prayer He heard? I am sure she must have prayed. Or was it something else He heard? He heard her affliction.

“Sound of violence”:

Several years ago, for two consecutive Sundays in a church my husband and I were pastoring, I heard this terrible clanging sound in Sunday morning corporate worship. It was extremely unpleasant to my ears. We had hired some musicians who were playing in the band and musically they were proficient on their instruments. Our vocalists could sing well in the natural. So, I knew the problem wasn't with our musicians and vocalists. Initially, I thought this terrible sound was a problem with the sound set up and system. When I spoke to my husband about this awful clanging sound, he couldn't hear what I was talking about. I tried to ignore it, thinking that the sound team really needed to work on the sound mix, and tried to focus on worship, putting it all down to a strange sound experience. The problem was it happened again the following Sunday during our church service. Again, my husband couldn't hear what I was talking about.

I then asked God what this sound was, and He spoke to me and said it was the “sound

of violence” coming from our corporate worship as a church. I began to research “violence” in the Bible and what it could be speaking of.

Maybe our hearts, our worship, have sounds in the spirit realm. Could it be that our lives carry a sound or characteristic in the spirit realm, and that violence and what it represents has certain characteristic in the spirit realm?

In the Bible, one’s characteristics are often likened to one’s dress. A metaphor of sorts. For example, speaking of wicked and proud men who do not acknowledge God the psalmist says:

Psa 73:6 (NKJV) Therefore pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them like a garment.

We also read that in the spirit realm violence can:

- Be heard – *“Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, neither wasting nor destruction within your borders; But you shall call your walls Salvation, And your gates Praise”*. (Isaiah 60:18).
- Cover like a garment – *“Therefore pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them like a garment”*. (Psalm 73:6)
- Be breathed out – *“Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and such as breathe out violence”* (Psalm 27:12).
- Be seen – *“Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues, For I have seen violence and strife in the city”* (Psalm 55:9).
- Be weighed – *“No, in heart you work wickedness; You weigh out the violence of your hands in the earth”* (Psalm 58:2).
- Be drunk like wine – *“For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence”* (Proverbs 4:17).
- Cover the mouth – *“Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but violence covers the mouth of the wicked”* (Proverbs 10:6) *“The mouth of the righteous is*

a well of life, but violence covers the mouth of the wicked “(Proverbs 10:11).

- Can be fed on – *“A man shall eat well by the fruit of his mouth, But the soul of the unfaithful feeds on violence”* (Proverbs 13:2).

The Hebrew words for violence are *chms* (unjust gain: cruel-ty, damage, false, injustice, oppressor, unrighteous, violence (against, done), violent (dealing), wrong. The other Hebrew word is *chamas* (to maltreat: - make bare, shake off, violate, do violence, take away violently, wrong, imagine wrongfully).

We weren't aware of this at the time in our church, but we soon discovered that one of our worship leaders who was involved every Sunday on vocals, had a problem with habitual lying and was being physically violent towards family members and a young woman in our church. It turned out that he would at times over-indulge in alcohol. One of the people on the sound desk also had violent episodes. Some of this physical violence was happening around the time I was hearing this clanging sound, and we discovered some time after this, there was worse physical violence which involved the police, specifically from one of these people.

The spirit realm is a whole world that is very real and connected to the world we see, hear, feel, and touch with our natural senses. My point is this, there are heart dispositions and spiritual positions that we can intentionally take that affect how we show up in the spirit realm.

Let's look at a few more examples from scripture:

Col 3:12-15 (NKJV) Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; [13] bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. [14] But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. [15] And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

We are being encouraged to put these on as if they were a garment. We have to do it. It is intentional.

I want to explore some of the ways we can position ourselves spiritually.

1. Thanksgiving

We read of thanksgiving being a gate opener into the presence of God. There is something about thanksgiving that opens things. It has an effect on the one giving thanks, and it also has other spiritual qualities and effects on the world around us. Why do we give thanks? Often we do it because of what a person has done for us, sacrificed for us, given to us, shared with us, spoken to us. It requires an awareness of that person, and knowing of what they are doing and saying and how they are. It requires relationship. It requires humility, an acknowledgement of one's own insufficiency and appreciation of the other.

A. It brings us into the Presence of our King

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name." (Psa 100:4, NKJV)

There is protocol in the Kingdom. There is protocol as we come before our great King. We are to put on thanksgiving. We are to place ourselves in a place of acknowledging Him.

God's gates are open to those who come with thanksgiving on their lips.

- What do you have to thank God for?
- Do you regularly give thanks to God for personal things He has done/said/given you?

As a parent, when one of my children says thank you, it certainly opens my heart and turns my disposition toward them.

B. It has a multiplier effect

Time and time again, we see Jesus positioning Himself in thanksgiving before a miracle.

*Mat 15:32-36 (NIV) Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "**I have compassion for these people**; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. **I do not want to send them away hungry**, or they may collapse on the way."*
[33] His disciples answered, "Where could we get enough bread in this remote place

*to feed such a crowd?" [34] "**How many loaves do you have?**" Jesus asked. "Seven," they replied, "and a few small fish." [35] He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. [36] Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and **when he had given thanks**, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people.*

I don't think this was just a religious saying of grace before a meal. A religious exercise. This must have been Jesus giving thanks in faith knowing His Father and being led by the compassion of His Father.

I am not suggesting thanksgiving is a formula. I am suggesting thanksgiving in faith, requires a spiritual heart disposition, a spiritual positioning in relation to God, and is a spiritual characteristic we can cultivate and wear on our lips and on our lives.

Heb 13:15 (AMP) Through Him (Jesus), therefore, let us constantly and at all times offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, which is the fruit of lips that thankfully acknowledge and confess and glorify His name. [Lev 7:12; Isa 57:19; Hos 14:2]

C. It unlocks new dimensions of healing

*"Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, **giving Him thanks**. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well." (Luk 17:11-19, NKJV)*

Luk 17:18-19 (TPT) They all refused to return to give thanks and give glory to God except you, a foreigner from Samaria?" [19] Then Jesus said to the healed man lying at his feet, "Arise and go. It was your faith that brought you salvation and healing."

This leper gave thanks in faith. His positioning in thanksgiving opened a door for his own “complete healing” or salvation.

Many translations say that his faith made him well. That word “well”, can also be translated “whole”. And many believe that it implies this leper received salvation as well as physical healing as depicted in TPT. Thanksgiving in faith unlocks greater dimensions of healing and salvation in our lives. When we are positioned in a place of faith and thanksgiving as a habit... how powerful could that be?

D. It brings life where there has been death

*"Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, **"Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.** And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."'" (Joh 11:39-44, NKJV)*

Jesus gave thanks because He knew He had been heard. He had prayed and knew God had heard and answered His prayer and life would be restored. Sometimes when we have prayed through a matter and are in a place of faith, we need to give thanks in faith that God hears and has heard. There is a time to move from supplicating to giving thanks in faith knowing that God has heard and will move. Jesus had obviously prayed. Jesus was in faith of what God was going to do. He positioned Himself in thanksgiving. Lazarus came back to life.

E. It results in God's peace

"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the

peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Php 4:4-7, NKJV)

I love the order specified above. Don't be anxious. Pray and ask God. And position yourself in thanksgiving. And the peace that guards hearts and minds will ensue. If you have prayed and thanked God and there is no peace, maybe continue in prayer, maybe you haven't prayed through the burden. Maybe you aren't yet in faith.

Remember some of the things God has done and give him thanks for those. Remind yourself of His nature. Continue to do what you are instructed to do until you have the breakthrough. Which brings me to the next point.

F. It helps us to see (to have God perspective)

The thing about thanksgiving is that we have to remember what God has done. Remembrance is important. When we remember what God has done, His faithfulness and miracles, deliverances and provision, protection and help, faith begins to rise for whatever our current situation is.

*"Oh, **give thanks** to the LORD! Call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; Talk of all His wondrous works! Glory in His holy name; Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD! Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face evermore! **Remember** His marvelous works which He has done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth," (Psa 105:1-5, NKJV)*

I love what Frederick Buechner says in His essay "A Room Called Remember":

There is a deeper need yet, I think, - not all the time, surely, but from time to time- to enter that still room within us all where the past lives on as part of the present,...The name of the room is remember - the room where with patience, with clarity, with quietness of heart, we remember consciously to remember..."

Frederick Buechner

There is power in remembering and remembering correctly. Our hearts become grateful, and our perspective is corrected. Faith begins to rise in our hearts as we remember what God has done, who He has been to us, how faithful He has been,

His miracles. As we look ahead, even though it may look impossible, we have an assurance, a peace, perspective, strength and courage to press on. It becomes easier to move into a position of thanksgiving. This is the power of remembrance and thanksgiving.

*"And Moses said to the people: **"Remember this day** in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for **by strength of hand the LORD brought you out** of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten."* (Exo 13:3, NKJV)

*So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before Baal Zephon. And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. **So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt?"*** (Exo 14:9-11, NKJV)

Like the Egyptians, we too tend to forget what the miracles God has performed and what God has done in our lives. Remembrance and thanksgiving keeps us positioned in belief and in the right place to continue to walk in all that God has for us.

*"Thus says the LORD: **"Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the LORD. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, And shall not see when good comes, But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, In a salt land which is not inhabited. "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit."*** (Jer 17:5-8, NKJV)

Thanksgiving helps to give us perspective. It helps us to see. It helps us to trust in the Lord. Which helps us to live in God's abundant blessings.

"Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name." (Psa 100:3-4, NKJV)

Thanksgiving helps us to acknowledge that we are not self-made. We are His. Every good thing has come from Him. It helps us trust in Him. Lift our eyes to Him. Which brings us into a place of faith. It helps us to be positioned in His Presence and in faith.

Conclusion:

Let's endeavour to position ourselves in thanksgiving. Remembering that:

- It brings us into the Presence of our King
- It has a multiplier effect
- It unlocks new dimensions of healing
- It brings life where there has been death
- It results in God's peace
- It helps us to see (to have God perspective)