

The Church - Part 2

by Les Wheeldon

The church must be governed by Christ through the agency of the Holy Ghost, and not by human power or tradition, in order to be a living and vibrant body of believers.

Duration: 1:06:13

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 1:20

Topics: "Church"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of personal surrender to Christ and yielding everything to Him. They highlight the contrast between churches that constantly plead for money and the Church of Christ, where monetary appeals are out of place because Christ is the head. The speaker shares their personal experience of knowing Christ intimately and emphasizes that the greatest thing one can know is that Christ becomes their personal head. They also discuss the significance of being baptized in the Holy Spirit and the need for churches to be governed by Christ through the agency of the Holy Ghost. The sermon concludes with the reminder that each generation must seek the will of Christ and walk in His plan for the church.

Transcript

Well, we continue with our subject of the church, and I want to read a verse from Ephesians chapter 1. And you'll know that Ephesians is one of the great books on the subject of the church. And here we read in verse 20, let's read from verse 20. God, through the apostle, showing that he wanted the people to know the great power of God which works in us.

According to the mighty power, verse 20, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. And set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. Far above all principality and power and might and dominion.

And every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that world which is to come. And he has put all things under his feet. And given him to be the head over all things to the church.

Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. What a description of the church. And we can read also in chapter 5 of Ephesians that, in verse 23, The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church.

Christ is the head of the church and he is the saviour of the body. And this truth, this very simple truth of the headship of the body. Christ is the head of the body.

Now that's our subject tonight. And to be a church, we have to know Christ as our head. That's obvious really, isn't it? To be a living church, we must know that Christ is our head.

And unless we know that, in some measure, we are not a living church. We may be a church that has had an experience or has had a past. But we are only a church by virtue of the fact that we are his body, not our own.

Very simple, isn't it? Now, as I said last week, we were talking about the mixture in church history. One of the things that you find is that people are puzzled about the church. You know that I go to North London quite often.

And once in one of the meetings there, a man came into the meeting. He sat through the meeting, heard the preaching and he was very happy. But he picked me up on one thing at the end.

We had a little time for questions and answers and he picked me up on one thing. He said, I noticed, he said, that throughout the whole evening you have prayed, you have sung, you have preached, you have done all these things, but you have never made the sign of the cross over. And he said, why? Why have you never made the sign of the cross? He said, in our church the priest always makes the sign of the cross over the congregation at the beginning of the meeting when he prays.

And he talked about this. And there is another man who comes to the meetings there, who always asks, or often, he is not asking me so much now because he is beginning to understand, but many times he asks me, why this? Why do they do this in the churches? And he is referring to the Greek Orthodox Church. And you know that when you look out into the churches tonight, and we can see the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and so on.

I start with those two because one of the puzzling things is that these churches are the oldest churches that people know, commonly. And so you look at these churches, and that is the oldest church we know in our village, the Anglican Church. And so that church carries more weight than certainly this little upstart church called the Fractal Pentecostal Church, which has only been here for about 70 years.

Well, what about Epsom Christian Fellowship then, which has only been here 25 years? Who are they? And then more to that, look at that little house group over here just starting. That's nothing. Now let's go to the real church.

This is being here, even the building alone is a thousand years old sometimes, even older. And you can go round and you can see buildings that are old, and then you find the traditions going back. Well, when we look at church history, one of the facts of church history is that there is a prophecy.

And the prophecy is that there shall be a falling away. This prophecy of the falling away was quite clear and strong in the Apostles. It comes at least twice in the New Testament.

Paul prophesied that after the Apostles there would be a falling away. And this happened. Within a hundred years after the Apostles, there began to arise new practices, not in the whole church, but in different places there were new practices.

For example, there was the baptism of infants goes back to perhaps the beginning of the 2nd century. And other practices, even the practice of communion, which is blessed by the priest and he does something to it, that goes back to the 2nd century A.D. Did I say B.C. a moment ago? A.D. 2nd century A.D. These are very old practices, but of course they began then, but they were universally known within the church. And of course in the first church, the first churches, they were totally unknown.

Now these practices began to grow up and within the 2nd century you have people who are beginning to say that the bishops are very important and beginning to exalt the office of elders and particularly the bishops. And then you come into the 4th century, 313, 312 I think it was, Constantine was converted. Constantine was converted without the agency of the Holy Spirit.

We don't know what happened, but Constantine did not become a real Christian. He was converted, apparently, the story goes, he saw this sign in the sky as he was on his way to conquer his opponent to the emperor and he saw this sign of the cross and he said, Would this sign conquer? And it is true that politically it was very clever, because there were so many Christians in the Roman Empire, that because he made Christianity legal in 313 A.D., he united all the Christians behind him and he became the emperor. And then he began to work in close conjunction with the church.

The emperor was the first person to call the council to decide on doctrine in the church. He was the emperor. Isn't this Tony Blair who said, Look I've had enough of this gobbling in the churches, let's have a bit of order, I'll call a meeting.

Not the Archbishop of Canterbury, not pastors, but Tony Blair. Constantine called his first council, the Nicene Council, to decide on these great questions. It was held, called, by Constantine.

And so you have this beginning of the state power being fed into the church Then, of course, you know that Constantine moved his capital over to Constantinople. That's why we get to call it Constantinople. Constantine had his centre in the east of the empire.

And various things happened, but then what happened was the power of the Bishop of Rome grew and grew, and eventually the emperors moved out completely. They were lost. The empire was destroyed in about 450 A.D. Then, slowly, the power of the Bishop of Rome became greater and greater.

Now that is one instance of the power of a Bishop. His power became greater and greater and greater. But still what we have there is the power of men to rule the church without knowing Christ as their head.

So when we trace back traditions, when you look around you, you can trace back traditions to two beginnings. The first one is believers who go back and trace their spiritual heritage to God through the Holy Spirit. And every person who receives the power of the Holy Spirit traces their spiritual heritage back direct to God and has the same experience and lineage and authority and communion and fellowship as the Apostles on the day of Pentecost.

But there is another lineage that can be traced back which is only through men. And it begins in time in places like, well, Rome. But not only Rome.

One of the tragedies of churches is that churches are, you can find churches governed by Christ through the Holy Spirit and then you find churches governed by men. And that's the confusing thing. When you look back in history, when people ask you a question like, what about these things? What you're pointing to is the fact that the majority of the church traditions you see in the older churches started after the

Apostolic Era.

Very few church traditions that you see actually started with the Apostles. Very, very few. And what you have now is that in every generation people have to discover that first living connection to Christ.

Our head. Now we may now pour scorn on these things like the Catholics. One of the things you must be aware of is the depth of prejudice between Protestants and Catholics.

It's a startling and powerful thing. And one of the interesting things is that I am not a Protestant, and I'm not a Catholic. I'm a Christian.

And this is a small thing, but you go to a community like Northern Ireland, it's a very powerful thing. And you may say, well, Northern Ireland? Equally, the south of Ireland. It's not just the north, it's the south.

If you become a Christian in the south of Ireland and leave the Catholic Church, you will be instantly branded a Protestant. I remember once going on door to door, and I knocked at this door, and a lady said, in the conversation, she said, Are you a Christian? The lady said, No! I am not a Christian, I'm a Catholic. Well there you go, these things happen.

But the thing is, although we can hear it, the thing is, what you must be aware of is, don't get drawn in to the whole line of prejudice. You are not to be prejudiced against Catholics, or Protestants. You may have thought you were a Protestant.

You are a Christian. These are small things, I suppose, in one way. But now you see, you can jump through church history from Constantine to the Reformation.

The interesting thing about the Reformation is that the Reformation, in its establishment of churches, was not always accompanied with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. But some of the great Reformers were not actually tracing their lineage back to Pentecost. They were just changing their centre from one man-made tradition to another more biblical, but still not governed by Christ through the Holy Ghost.

Now that may shock you, but when you come into the, look at the work of the Reformers, you can look at things like Calvinism. Now I am not a Calvinist for many reasons. And I don't believe I should ever be a Calvinist.

Now you may say, wait a moment, don't you believe in the sovereignty of God? And I think, well, yes, but that wasn't... Calvin didn't invent the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. That came from... Well, it comes from the fact that God is sovereign. And everybody in the Scripture knew that.

Every writer of the Scripture knew that God was so great. Of course it comes from the Scripture, but Calvin stressed it and emphasised it. But that doesn't mean that everything that Calvin said was right, because he knew one thing.

And one of the things you find, for example, with Calvin is that he he believed this this idea that the Church really should govern society. And he became completely mixed up in this idea of the government of society by the Church. Therefore it was completely logical because of the way he governed Geneva that anybody who did not believe the truth of God according to the Scripture he interpreted it as well was a heretic, of course, but more than that a criminal against the state because the state and the Church would become one.

Geneva was a strange mixture, just like the papacy. And so it was logical that when a man came along who did not, who was a heretic it was the logic of Calvin's theories that service should be burned at the stake. And Calvin sanctioned the burning of a heretic in Calvinist Geneva.

Completely consistent because of his misunderstanding of the whole role of the Church within society. And you can look at this and one of the things you must realise is that when you look at churches wherever they come from face their origin back to their beginning and you have to ask did it begin with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit? If not, you will find the sticky hand of man on it. And you have to watch that.

The sticky hand of man is dangerous. We can get on our high horse and look at these things now in our luxury of looking back on history but what I'm coming to is the fact that our churches must be governed by Christ through the agency of the Holy Ghost. If not, whatever happens we are not representing Biblical Christianity.

We must be in living relationship with Christ through the Holy Ghost. And remember that Christ had a plan for this church if the church will discover it. Now we walk in that plan and I trust you're walking in it but each generation when I talk about generation I'm not just talking about the years of 40 I'm talking also about every time that we come to the end of something we seem to sense we need something new.

We have to ask ourselves what is the next step? One of the things we have to ask ourselves is what is the will of Christ? Can he communicate it to us? How will he communicate it to us? And it is these basic simple truths that make us a living church. You are only connected to the line of truth because, not because of traditions you have because of people in your past did something but because you yourselves know the headship of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Wonderful.

Now, let me show you another scripture and this is in 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and here we read that verse 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body whether we are Jews or Gentiles whether we are slaves or free and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. Now, here membership of the body is directly linked with the baptism with the Holy Spirit. This should already show you something very clearly about the truth that the body of Christ is not a group of believers the church is not a group of believers holding fast great truths and preaching them.

That is not the church No. It is a body of people it is that, but it is not that without the Holy Ghost. The defense of truth with human power well, it doesn't make it anything.

What makes it commendable, it's wonderful it's what the reformers fought for but what makes this the church is the Holy Spirit communicating the headship of Jesus Christ through to us. This is one of the mistakes made that people say our church, our country used to be more Christian and we refer to the oath of the Queen on her throne. The oath of the Queen on her throne is irrelevant because it does not make this Christian more or less Christian.

It cannot because the thing that makes us Christian his church, his people is not an image of state it's the work of God, the Holy Ghost in the hearts of people. And one of the dangers is you see when Constantine said this is now a Christian empire that's what he said of Rome it was the end of the church it broke the power of the church. You say, how? Because suddenly it became popular to be in the church.

This is one of the things you find. Wasn't our country more Christian some years ago? It was certainly more popular some years ago for a young man in a rich family to be a member of the clergy. You've seen

this, what's it called Sense and Sensibility and these wonderful Jane Austen very popular things.

One of the themes going through them it was a popular thing for a young man to be a member of the clergy whether he was a Christian or not. And this is the tragedy of it that one of the things is that state religion and state powers imposing on the nation Christian ideals it's wonderful in one sense for the morality of the nation but it does not build a church. And who can say whether a generation is more Christian or less Christian? Some of the places of the greatest growth of Christianity in this world are places where Christianity has been most persecuted.

These are vital things in the end because we can get caught up on bandwagon saying we want to this is one of the things that movements begin to go back and look at things of the powers or we're going to take the kingdom we're going to take the kingdom. We are not going to take Britain and make it a Christian country. This is an era that comes in this is a kind of triumphalism.

We are going to take the land. What is going to happen is that God is going to pour out his spirit and build his church. Even in the teeth of fiercest opposition he will build his church.

Even in the face of the most awful decline of standards he will build his church. In the fiercest opposition when men are put in prison and are burnt and executed he will build his church but he will not do it because we occupy places of political power. Sometimes those things are the greatest hindrance.

And this is why some of the psalms that have come in over recent times they are actually harking back to a truth that is not found in the New Testament. Christ rules over all already. You cannot increase his lordship.

He decides who is prime minister. He decides the heartbeat of Tony Blair and Bill Clinton and all the rest of them. Jesus Christ is lord over all.

He is sovereign. Now you think I am a Calvinist. He is absolutely sovereign.

Nobody can breathe a breath without Jesus Christ saying so. Alright, now you think I am contradicting myself. I am like a real Calvinist now.

Well I believe in the sovereignty of God. But you see what you have got to discover is the direct living link. In other words, spiritually you have got to put your fingers in the plug.

You have got to put your fingers into the plug. Spiritually, not literally. If there were no children here I would really be in trouble.

If there were children here. Do you understand? Don't give that tape to a child. There is an age limit on it now.

But the thing is, this is the thing that the church must be connected to the power. Otherwise it ceases to be the church. And remember that at all costs this is the very central life of the church that you are connected to Christ.

Now take this foundational truth that Christ must be your head. How is he the head of the church? Oh he governs the church through the elders. No he doesn't.

They rule the church. That's what the Bible says. The Bible is not afraid to use the word rule.

Those that have the rule over you are the elders. We may mention eldership at some point. But they don't lord it over God's flock, do they? And when we want to know God's will for the church we don't say the elders tell us what the will of God is for the flock.

We ask God. We want God to tell the church. Now the elders have the final say because they are appointed of the Holy Spirit not even of the church.

The Bible speaks of the elders being appointed by the Holy Ghost. Acts chapter 20. The Holy Spirit has made you overseers over God's church.

Wonderful truth. The church confirms it. All these things.

So they are appointed to rule. But remember this. They may have the last say in a lot of things but their say is confirmatory.

They are confirming the mind of Christ. They are not inventing it for Him. You know there's one of those hymns which I used to think, what did Wesley mean when he said that I may think, feel, and feel for thee.

And I think, well, Christ doesn't want me to think for Him. He can think all right Himself. I couldn't work it out with Him.

Then the credit dropped. All my thoughts may be in the service of Christ. Not that I may think for Him.

I don't know if you may have sung it wrongly. But you don't think for Christ. He is your you are yielding all your thoughts to Him.

So that your thoughts are not in your own employ and service but they are in the service and employ of Christ. Now this is the most this is one of the foundational truths of the church that Christ must be the head. How does He rule then in His church? How is He the head? It's not a hierarchy.

That's how the state is governed. I've never met Tony Blair but he's our ruler. He rules over us.

And the way he touches my life is always indirectly. Tony Blair touches me indirectly. When I get a tax bill Tony Blair has never signed the request.

He's never visited me at my door saying I need your money now. Not even Gordon Brown. It's always come through somebody at Tolworth.

Tolworth Tower Tax Office. That's where my tax papers are held. And I get a tax return.

It's some official. I've forgotten what it is. I'm sorry to say.

There you go. It's all these things. They all represent I get this on Her Majesty's not Secret Service on Her Majesty's service.

You get a little wince with you. That comes out of it. You get your tax bill.

There you go. But they come through. But the lordship of Christ does not come to you by that method.

If the mind of Christ is only made known to you through elders and counsellors then you've been so short. How is Christ our head? Now this is the vital central truth that He must be the personal head of every

member of the church male and female. Now you'll say well what does it say there that the head of the woman is the man? And the head of the man is Christ and the head of Christ is God.

That's true. That's the ordering of God for families. But it does not mean that I rule over the spiritual life of my wife.

In all matters of authority that need to be decided I may have occasion to overrule the decisions. And no, that is... I cannot accept that. We can't do that.

That may... But I cannot have dominion over the thoughts of my wife. I am not powerful enough because I'm not God. I am not her head in all things.

Christ is her head. In the order of family I am her head. But in spiritual life Christ is directly her head.

He is the head of the church male and female. Every one of us is brought into direct contact and that's also true of children. When children are filled with the Holy Ghost Christ becomes their head.

You may say well they're still under their parents. Of course they are. And all kinds of things ensue from that.

But the truth is that they are brought into direct living contact with their head. Now Christ is the head of the church but he is not the head of Britain. What do you mean? Christ is head of the church but he is not king of the church.

Oh, what do you mean? Look, you think of the times when it is said that Christ is king of the church. Where have you read it? Why does Scripture make these distinctions? Why doesn't it say king or head whichever word you like to use? You shouldn't say that. The reason is because kings rule through delegated authority but a head doesn't.

You understand? The head has to be connected to the body. Otherwise it's not. A king can rule you know me, I've never I've seen the Queen I went up to the Epsom Derby I live in Epsom so I didn't go to bed.

But I went up just to look at the children and see the horses running and just look around and I saw the Queen I saw this lady in a blue dress I wasn't sure whether it was the Queen or the Queen Mother. But later on in the Epsom newspapers they had photos and I thought, oh yes, it was the Queen. So, about a week later I found out who I'd seen.

So I'd seen the Queen. But you know that once I heard somebody describing a vision they'd had of Jesus during their conversion they'd seen his splendour and all kinds of things and they were describing something that I had not seen in a visionary way. But when they'd described Jesus I thought, that was tremendous.

This man was talking about Jesus and his glory and his face shining and all this and I thought, that's wonderful. But I thought, you know it's funny I know him better than you. I don't know him through a vision but I know him in my heart.

What thrills me is that I know you're talking about the one I know but I know him better than you've just met him for the first time you've seen his glory you've seen his dazzling brightness but I know his gentleness his love his persistence his continuance his forgiveness his mercy I know him. And that's what thrilled me because I could confirm yes, that's Jesus we were talking about my Lord, my Saviour my head!

And it's strange that people get caught up on these great things visions and things like this and they may be true but the greatest thing you can ever know is that Christ becomes your personal head your head over you isn't that amazing that Christ can be your head not just your you know that the he's the hundreds in a line of connections going back to Christ what an awful thought it would be you know we have our elders meeting confirming them once a year wouldn't it be terrible if we had to wait a year before we got our instructions and even then they wouldn't be that clear I don't think we wouldn't always come back with a great degree of clarity but the truth is that you can find the knowledge of God in your own life and this is it here this is a tremendous wonderful powerful truth that

by one spirit we are all baptised into one body and so he brings out this truth that you become a member of that body through the baptism of the Holy Ghost now this tells you what happens in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the weakness of a church may be the fact that people have given up looking for this you know some people speak the baptism of the Holy Spirit and they go it's too hard it isn't hard to receive the Holy Spirit incredibly easy it cost Jesus everything it was a very very costly thing to make it easy but it is still the truth that there is a door closed to you to receive the Holy Spirit you cannot receive the Holy Spirit it's impossible to unless on these terms that which makes you a member of his body and if you won't receive the Holy Ghost on those terms you won't

receive it now you may say well it hasn't been preached to me like that well it doesn't have to be preached to you like that but it is still the truth that the headship of Christ goes deeper than the ruling of the powers that touch your life in this nation you know that you are ruled by Tony Blair I've told you this and you can be one of the best citizens of this nation keeping all the rules and paying all your taxes and doing everything that you are required to do and still not know or love Tony Blair it's perfectly right and there are people who believe they can be perfect members of the church reading their bible regularly praying for people reading the missionary newsletters and doing all the going to all the meetings and that's what makes them good members of the church and it is not

so because the only thing that makes you a member of the church is not church going it's not bible reading it's the fact that you know and love Jesus Christ and you are in fellowship with him by the power of the Holy Spirit and this is the great mix that occurs that churches start growing and being built on a membership that is not of the Holy Ghost by one spirit but we are all made members of one body we are all baptised into one body and there is no other way there is no other way infant baptism makes people members of churches but not members of Jesus Christ what makes you a member of this church your membership role is meaningless not saying whether you should or should not have well that's your decision but it doesn't mean anything it doesn't mean it can't mean anything it may be

useful for various purposes and if you regard that as being right for those purposes fine use the membership role but don't build on it I'm a member now who says you are? well the church elders have accepted me as a member I've gone through the acceptance procedure I've gone through this I've gone through that meaningless unless you are baptised with the Holy Spirit you are not a member of his body unless he is your head and you see as I say the thing is that people believe that this is all to do with submission to Jesus that he'd be my king and it's not that he is the king of all things and he's the king and you can know his various things but we're not talking about kingship we're talking about headship and when you bow so deeply in your being that your thoughts are renewed your mind is

renewed your will your affections everything about you is changed that is the baptism of the Holy Spirit and this is the wonder that the baptism in the Spirit renews and refreshes my thoughts my mind and this is

why he says we have the mind of Christ he didn't say we're to try and have the mind of Christ he says we have the mind of Christ because he's our head we have to walk in that and let it be our work but it is the truth that we we cannot we cannot seek unity even because if we are baptised in the Spirit we are one you cannot make unity you are one by the Holy Spirit or you are not at all and this is one of the things about churches together and all these things you know that when you meet a person from whatever church they come if they are filled with the Holy Spirit you are

fellowship, you are one but you can sit in committees for years and years and your unity will rise sometimes and break down others the truth is that unity is not something that we can create into church like that except by the dynamic of the Holy Spirit happens by the dynamic of the Holy Spirit and so what we've got to ask first of all who is your head? who is directing your personal thoughts and life and feelings and affections? what happens, what we're talking about is a change of authority in your life it's a change of what place you live in and the baptism in the Holy Spirit it brings you under the headship it doesn't bring you into a distant rule it brings you under the headship and that's why when you are to be baptized with the Spirit one of the greatest dimensions of it is

submission absolute surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ of yourself in all your being to Jesus and that's what makes a church a church is a company of people entirely surrendered to the headship of Christ it's not a bureaucratic submission to our rulers it's an entire subjection of my whole being to Him and when I do that something takes place a change the inflooding of the Holy Spirit my life changes the authority of my life changes my thoughts all have a new power I have come into a totally new dimension of life I'm His body He indwells me and that's what makes a church that's the wonder of the church so when you trace your origins back you must know that your personal origins go back to a personal Pentecost that you discovered it that you knew it that you knew this entire surrender of

your whole being and you've yielded everything to Him you see this is the thing that when you look at how churches, or I know churches where they're always pleading for money it's a constant theme money, we need money for this and one of the things about the church of Christ is that because He's the head a monetary appeal is completely out of place I'm not saying that information is out of place information may be necessary to communicate things but the thing is appeals and oh dear we're not doing very well financially this church oh dear we're having a bit of difficulty meeting our this is the truth is that when you are His people this is as much your concern as your own weekly bills you know one of the things that travelling in Cameroon Blasius and I were travelling in Cameroon Blasius

said to me did you notice that we drove past these houses in Cameroon and there was this beautiful house and another beautiful house a row of them big bungalows and big walls around them and beautifully tended and kept with lawns and flowers and shrubs and so we were down there and then nestled in between them we suddenly saw a church broken down not painted, untended you just look at that and think oh dear that's the house of a poor man and then after it more big houses just think of it all the things that men need for their houses straight away there's money there now bring in the needs of the church we need this and immediately think oh dear sad isn't it that should be the case it just shows that something is radically wrong in the very centre of things this is not the church building

but all that goes on through the activities of the body of Christ they are met innocently totally that's one of the ways you can tell whether the Holy Ghost is ruling in the company of people money isn't an issue one of the indications that the church is going down from its glory is money starts to be an issue money problems we can't get enough money you know who's going to pay twenty pounds towards the next tea

bag we'd better buy a tea bag who's going to pay it you've got twenty pounds in your pocket making this why are you asking everybody why don't you ask somebody a treasurer for that give it if you've got it all kinds of things you go to churches I've been to churches in Africa where you can just see the riches of generosity liberation money being poured into tracts not buildings

not vehicles but money being poured into reaching out to lost souls I knew a church which had an annual budget of about oh dear how much was it about a hundred thousand pounds just for tracts tracts are the most budget I've seen in the UK in local churches not surprising it's a quickly grown church you know that you we haven't touched money now but money in the church is a wonderful subject as well but of course in a way it's already covered by this very fact that if he's your head your money is his my money is not Tony Blair's I'll give him as little as possible I'll fight him all the way that's why I pay an accountant a hundred pounds a year I give him a hundred pounds I give him all my money please give him as little as possible legally, always legally I'm willing to pay all that I

have to because I want to know every means by which to reduce it but some people are like that with the church some people are like that with Christ but he's not your head and he won't be until you yield to him on these matters he may have been, I don't know but the thing is that this is the truth the wonder of the entire surrender to him that's when the baptism in the Holy Spirit comes the baptism in the Holy Spirit comes with entire surrender of your moral life your mental life your money your home, everything if the police came to my door on behalf of Tony Blair I would refuse them entry unless they had a warrant don't worry, I'm not a criminal I'm not a criminal the state has no right to enter my home not without a warrant don't worry, I wouldn't have any reason to I'd let them in

they can search my home but when somebody comes to your door from Christ they don't need a warrant they're family hospitality is not a wall, I don't know how I feel about it your home is not your own absolute surrender the church grows with the dynamic of lives laid down this is what you find in the early church when they all said, none of them said the things they would possess were their own, that's not mine it's God's it belongs to God it's his and this is one of the things that disappears through the baptism in the Holy Spirit this grip of ownership it's mine not anymore it's his it's his and he can do with it what he likes oh dear Lord, what are you going to do with it can I control it, can I have a say in it no, no, it's mine I will do with it as I please and He'll bless you with

the use of it so this is the vital thing, this is what this is what was lost by when these churches started right when Constantine was converted all the trouble and they said, we'll have a big meeting to decide about this he didn't belong to God many of the reformers they took the people back to Scripture but not to the baptism of the Spirit, and that's where they failed not all, I'm not saying all the reformers failed, you know we have a great debt to the reformation but you know we have a great debt to God for all that he's done but you know that when you look at what Calvin did to Servetus you know what was said by believers, who were not part of his church they were true believers they said how can this be the Spirit of Christ people lamented these awful things that took place they

said this is not the body of Christ one of them said is it Christ who burns a heritage what a rebuke to Calvin that rebuke was not made three generations later when things had developed, that was made by his contemporaries this is not the Spirit of Christ but often these great big institutions Calvin and Luther and all these greats they become so big take on a power of their own and overshadow the real believers I'm not saying Calvin wasn't a real believer don't misunderstand me I leave him to the Lord you can judge him, you can discern him if that's the right word, yourself but I'm pointing out to you the place where he

departed from New Testament truth and where Christians in his day you'll find this throughout every age you'll find this happening again and again that churches become

prominent, well that was a great move wasn't it but it wasn't unless it was infused and filled and motivated through the power of the Holy Spirit that's what makes the great move we haven't really begun to look at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but what makes a church a church is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on one person is enough really to make a church then you have an outpouring whether it's a great revival or not is not always the key, but that it happens lives are changed you know that I sometimes think this, that when I come to a meeting I know that nobody wants to hear me speak, they may think they do but they don't because I know I don't want to hear men speak in a church, I want to hear God speak in a church and I know that no preacher's name will last a second beyond,

not among the people of God not a second beyond the point where he speaks for himself, you start speaking for yourself people won't listen to you, not in the church of Jesus Christ, this is why when we come together, the greatness is not who is speaking among men, it's this, that the voice is heard of the Spirit in the church now when you look at this Christ is the head of the church this is the foundation of all it's the foundation of our birth it's the foundation of our ongoing each individual believer must tend his relationship with Christ above all else that he know his head personally the power of the church is linked directly to the individual power of each believer with Christ, you can want a powerful preacher to come and bring something, but the truth is that it's the gathering of

believers who are in direct living ongoing communion with Christ that makes the power of the church the power to convert souls lies here the power to convict people of sin of righteousness and judgment lies here you can never accuse the church of failing you have to be a living part of the church and that's where you have to look never look outside to accuse others look only to this, that you yourself bring the breath of the Spirit to every meeting you go to this is true of prayer meetings it's true of all kinds of meetings, where you lift up your voice to pray is it because we can hear the voice of the Spirit in your prayer or is it just needs I've been to prayer meetings where I've been swamped with needs and I've heard men talk about problems folks who've got to pray and I've heard

voices lifted in duty to pray for this sick one in duty to pray for the nation in duty to pray for this and I thought nothing will come of this you may think I'm harsh but I believe nothing will come of praying that is not spiritual it's useless if you call on the Lord to save you and fill you with the Holy Ghost, answer that prayer but I assure you that will be a prayer that is in the whole working of the Holy Ghost already, but you pray just out of duty and you pray just for something you've thought of something you can you've got to get out of that realm, you've got to get into the realm of the Spirit of Christ the power of the Church lies here that we know this greatness of the person of the Spirit joining us to glorify Christ shall I tell you this is not what we're coming to tonight,

this is just the Headship of Christ but the thing is this, that the person of the Holy Spirit is amongst us as the chief servant you know when you go to a meal at a restaurant and you're served by the head waiter I have a friend who went to he went to Singapore and it was a business, and he went to one of the most expensive hotels in Singapore I don't know how much his meal cost he didn't pay for it, so it was alright he sat down at his table, and he had one waiter at the table can you believe it I suppose labour's quite cheap over there but it wasn't very nice because the waiter came there and stood there watched him eat I don't know if he knew I can't remember who it was no one knew watched him eat and he got really embarrassed you know the power of a servant is somebody who stands in

the background and watches you but you don't notice they're there you just sort of suddenly, your glass is empty and they're there you put your plate and knife and fork together and it's gone you didn't notice the Holy Spirit is the chief servant in this respect here we are looking at Christ serving Christ doing his will and all around us is the Holy Ghost, providing everything we need but you see this is the first thing, you have to be baptised in the Holy Ghost, you have to surrender everything and that place of absolute surrender is the life of the church because it's then called something else it's called waiting on God the church is brought into life with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, it continues in life through the habit of waiting on God one of the things that I've lamented is I

go around churches I know so few churches where waiting on God is a habit why? because people find the silence boring and they benefit and they love to have a song or a prayer or a word just something to keep the thing going and my heart aches because they're sacrificing the best for the expedient that just gets through this meeting whereas if they'd wait on God for the moving of the Holy Spirit they might find the death, that's boredom boredom is death to all your desire for entertainment if you're bored I hope you get bored to death to the point where you die and you say oh Lord I don't want to be entertained by somebody, I want to get through to reality because when you get beyond that the Holy Spirit comes through you'll forget time you'll be carried away you'll wonder where you are

but that's also the key, people say the church lives by its prayer meeting this is a key, which is true, but you remember it's the prayer in the Holy Ghost that is the life of the church not prayer you can go to monasteries, I went I was taken to a monastery when I was in France this time, somebody took me to a monastery not to put me there I would hate to live there I've lived the silence from time to time but I wouldn't like it all the time it was unnatural something strange about it something not healthy but they pray all the time they live for prayer religious prayer you've got to find the place of surrender and you've got to keep it and you've got to live in it and you've got to rediscover this again and again because remember that God is wanting to speak amongst his people and if I

were to describe waiting on God, I would describe it with this, it is the development of your hearing above all other faculties shall I tell you the chief faculty of the church often, sadly it's its mouth that is the shame of the church if I describe through Jesus Christ and his chief faculty I think you would agree with me after a moment's reflection his chief faculty was his hearing he was a listener and the type of Christ in the Old Testament, one of the many types of Christ is Samuel speak Lord for your servant here and it is spoken of Samuel an Old Testament saint but not one word fell to the ground isn't that wonderful and it is true Samuel it is a million times more true of Jesus nothing he said was spoken of empty air no prayer was unheard nothing about him was vain or empty

everything every word every look because he was a listener stop the listening may as well stop the speaking the church that doesn't listen has got nothing to say same with the preacher the preacher that doesn't listen to God has got nothing to say he can read a scripture all his life but if he doesn't listen while he reads and listen while he prays he's got nothing to say the church falls down always when it puts other things into place we need more preachers send them to Bible school send our young men to Bible school they'll come back as our preachers the death of the church I've seen it so many places people go to Bible school they want a career down in the church put them as pastors they've got to be men of God or they will kill the church they've got to be men who hear God knowing

the Bible is not enough you've got to know God let's pray now if he's your head your heart is filled with life you've got the breath of God in you you're alive you know him and you know how to get through to him you

know the place of communion I hope that's not a past thing I hope it's a present reality this is the life of the church but if you don't know it you can be filled with the Holy Spirit in absolute surrender right now as we're sitting here together you can be filled with the Holy Ghost

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