

God's Purpose in the Church

by Paul Ravenhill

God's purpose in the church is to create a habitation of God through the Spirit, where believers can grow and mature in their faith.

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Scripture: Ephesians 2:21

Topics: "Church", "God's Purpose", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Paul Ravenhill emphasizes God's purpose in the church, highlighting that it is meant to be a habitation of God through the Spirit. He discusses the importance of revelation and spiritual growth, warning against a childish church that seeks signs and wisdom rather than the true essence of Christ. Ravenhill calls for unity in the body of Christ and the need for spiritual maturity, urging believers to move beyond mere knowledge to a deeper participation in God's creative power. He stresses that the church is not just a gathering but a community of called-out individuals who are to manifest God's wisdom and presence in the world.

Transcript

It's kind of a hint, but the message is going to be short tonight. The reading is from Ephesians 2, 3, and 4. These past months that I've been here, as I said last time I spoke, I'll soon be leaving you again. We've talked on a lot of themes, and we never really touched the theme which is maybe closest to the center of what I would like to share.

For different reasons, we can't get into that, but I want to just touch briefly a little bit on it. Tonight, God's purpose in the church. Start reading there in Ephesians 2 chapter verse 21.

Says, in whom, speaking of Jesus, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. For this cause, I, Paul, prisoner of Jesus Christ, for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of grace of God which you've given me, to you you would, how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore in a few words, whereby when you read ye may understand my knowledge and the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of man, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel. Whereof I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God, given unto me by

the effectual working of his power, and to me, whom less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

Let's skip over the next section, start with chapter 4. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness and long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirits in the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called, in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Wherefore, he saith, when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto man. Now that he ascended, what is it, but that he first also descended first into the low parts of the earth. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that he might fill all things.

And he gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God and to a perfect man and to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of doctrine by the slight of man and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up unto him in all things which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working and the measure of every part maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

As I said, we got a short time apparently and this is one of those nights that I'd like to take my time. Okay. Did you hear that Jacob? He said take my time.

Last time Jacob was here and he said something afterward. I won't tell you what he said. Okay.

Let's start out then with introducing this thing. Isaiah the prophet in the Old Testament, the greatest of the prophets, the one who had the clearest prophetic vision, the one whose spirit was able to transcend in a greater measure than any of the other prophets. The time, the circumstances which surrounded him spoke of God's purpose in creation.

He said when God created the earth, he created it not in vain. Another translation says not to lie waste. He goes on to say that he creates it to be inhabited or to be possessed.

We live in a day when the earth is desert. The word in vain means once again to lie waste or to be a desert place. There are a lot of desert places physically around the face of the earth, thousands upon thousands of miles of desert, places where no seeds can grow, no trees can bear the fruit, no crops can be planted.

And in the spiritual world, we have a condition where that which God has created. God as he is in the least of his works, as he is in the natural, so also is in the spiritual, he created with a purpose. He created a world, a spiritual world, not in vain.

He created a spiritual world where there are no waste parts, no wasted lives, no wasted days, no wasted people, no wasted places. God has a plan which is all-inclusive and there is a purpose. He formed, once again, a natural world to be inhabited.

He formed a spiritual world to be inhabited or to be possessed. Just as Israel walked into the promised land, God said, wherever the sole of your foot shall tread, that land will be given unto you. They had to step, but once they stepped, it was theirs.

Spiritually speaking, there are lands which we have to possess. Once we enter in, they are ours. From there on out, it's just a question of developing that which God has given us.

Now, we live in a day of, if we can say it this way, a childish church. I'm sure that it's true what Dr. Tozer said that someday, and I'm sure it's probably happening now, maybe I'm even one of them, people are coming from third world countries to tell us a little bit of what the church is as they've seen it, because it's different than the church as we see it here. Once again, as I've said before, I get culture shock when I come back to the church.

Spiritual culture shock, not natural culture shock because, you know, there are nicer cars up here than there are in South America. We've got more advanced technology, which is true, but spiritual culture shock because more and more as the church is being mechanized and as the mechanics of the spiritual things are multiplying, the essence of life is receding, and there's very little revelation. There's very little communion.

I said we live in a childish church. I think one of the hallmarks of a child is that ability to imagine things and even take the real world and look at it in a way which is totally different than the reality which we see as adults. Children float.

They live in a fairy world. They live in a world of things which are unreal. You know, they can look out of the window and we see a dog and they see an elephant.

We see a kid running down the street, they see Superman. And, you know, those of you fathers know what I'm talking about. Many times the child will come just convinced of something, but it, you know, it's true, but it didn't really happen.

And we get this same type thing in the church. Lots of things which are true, but they don't really exist. We live in, once again, a childish world in this sense which so much of our theories, so much of the doctrine which everybody salutes and honors and states and steadfastly defends, is not really the way it is in the Word of God.

As I said, I think a couple of weeks ago when I was here last, someday we're going to face this book again. We're going to see it for what it is. God could not have given us a revelation any more, any better prepared to minister to our needs.

The problem is not here. Even the problem is not here, the problem is down here. And our world, once again, is childish in its lack of reality.

It's childish in its aim, so much selfishness. Once again, what is the child? He lives in a self-centered world. Everything that I see, everything that I like, everything that hurts me, what am I going to get out of things, how is everything going to affect me, this is the childish mentality.

And there is no spiritual growth apart from the Spirit of God. There is no spiritual growth without revelation. We live in a day of so much teaching, and I don't want to not teaching, but I do want to, how can I say, warn, give a warning, that it's a very dangerous thing to rely on teaching.

Paul writing to what I imagine was one of the greatest of the New Testament church, the church in Corinth, in his very first chapter, let me look over there and I'll read it just the way it is here. In his very first chapter writes to them, and he tries to put the gospel in focus. Many times as Paul does, interrupts his writing, comes with a cameo which illustrates what it's all about, and he says here, 1 Corinthians first chapter, verse 22, the Jews require a sign, or demand a sign.

The Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified. Unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called. This is a call that we talked about two weeks ago, the calling of God.

This is where it's all at. Without this there is no such thing as Christianity. Without the operation of the Spirit, without the drawing of the Spirit, without the leaving behind of a world and entering into a new world, there is no such a thing as a Christian.

Once again, the church is not a building. The church is not a group of people gathered together to quote praise and worship. The church is not a group of people gathered together to hear a teaching.

The church, and the word the New Testament uses throughout the church, is a group of called out people. People who have heard, as it was said there of the follower, one of the followers of Saint Francis, have heard another voice, have caught another vision. It's not transmitted through any other way than the Spirit of God.

Once again, it's not transmitted through words. It's not transmitted through the knowledge of words, through the teaching of words. They are called out because, well, maybe we can't illustrate any better than I think the illustration we used last time.

Like that little bird that hears somehow deep within itself, in an unconscious awareness, here's the call of a distant climate and migrates, leaving the cold, flying out there to a new, not only a new horizon, but a new world. Leaving a world which is dying to find a world which is living. This is what Christianity is all about.

God calls us to leave a world which is dying, to leave a structure, even a religious structure. What happened in the time of Jesus? There was a religious structure which had died, was totally dead. And yet Paul says here then, getting back to our thought, the Greeks, the Jews, require a sign.

The Greeks seek after wisdom. There's a Jew and there's a Greek within each one of us, even the Mexicans. You know, we complicate things too much.

Basically, I think the world can be divided this way. There is a Jewish world. This is the religious world.

There is a Greek world. This is the intellectual world. And in some lives, one part has the preponderance and in other lives, the other part carries more weight.

There's some people that are always looking after the signs. They're always looking for the signs and wonders, miracles, earth-shaking events, you know, the presence of the Lord. This reminds me, hearing of a pastor, the pulpit on wheels, and he'd get excited and he'd slam that thing and he'd go staring across the

thing.

And the guy that used to drive his truck, he was a campaigner out there. He'd said, you know, that was the power of the Spirit. He said the water never even fell over.

Well, you know. Yeah. You know, there are a lot of signs which are not really relevant.

I had a friend in South America, and they tend to be very cynical in Argentina. This is in Argentina. Somebody asked him about a message that was given in a meeting, an inspired message.

He said, was that God or was that not God? And he said, it doesn't matter. In other words, it was true, but it was on such a low level. Let's not spend all our time figuring, is it God or isn't it God? You see what I mean? Let me illustrate it.

We get a lot of prophecy. It says, thus saith the Lord, ye are my people, I love you. Right.

Well, is it God or isn't it God? Well, it doesn't really matter. Not giving us anything new. Now, I'm not saying there's not a time when that'll come and lift us up to heaven.

Fine. But I mean, lots of times people tune in on a very low wavelength. Paul talks about learning to prophesy.

You know, we never hear anything about that. We need to learn to prophesy because a lot of people never get the cart out of first gear. So they don't go very far and they don't go very fast and they don't make much of an impact in the prophecy.

And so on in all the other gifts and callings of the Spirit of God. Once again, we got a very childish church. Reminds me of somebody having a dream or a vision about a certain church that was full of babies, full of babies.

You know, we got a lot of churches which are full of babies. And it's not a question of getting more babies. The baby is only born to grow up.

You know, if babies were born to be babies, I think parents would think twice about, you know, ordering the stork to bring more babies. Because that's not what it's all about. It's a very, very sad thing.

Remember once years ago going into an institution and they had, I don't know, babies, adults, whatever they were, that had not grown up. You know, in 20 years of age and they had not grown. A terribly sad, heart-rending thing.

And yet we have it in the church. And Paul is trying to say growth does not come through seeking after the signs, neither does it come through seeking after knowledge. I guess we're all so proud of our knowledge.

Somebody said once that there's nothing that we'd rather give than advice. You know, we all know what's wrong with Dick and Mary and Henry and everybody else. And if they'd only come to us, we could straighten out everything.

We could even help Billy Graham if he'd come here, couldn't we? I mean, be honest, we could, couldn't we? Right? The Jews seek after signs. The Greeks seek after wisdom. And there's always that tendency within us to start going one route or start going the other.

And Paul says in the center of it all, we preach. The word means proclaim. We proclaim the work of a Savior that came to earth and died.

We proclaim power, which is not a power to perform signs. You know, electricity was not invented just to give flashing light effects and work some electric organ like a circus, was it? It can do that, but it wasn't for that. The power of God was given us to operate in the purpose of God, not to put on a show in any way, shape, or form.

And so Paul says the church then is a building framed together, growing for a habitation of God. As I said before, we're going to meet this book again. We're going to meet every truth of this book again.

We need to understand what it's all about. For a habitation of God, and here it is, through the Spirit. Through the Spirit.

It cannot be separated from the Spirit. It cannot be through the signs. It cannot be through the teaching.

Once again, there is a teaching which is of the Spirit of God. But we get so much into that teaching which is explanation and not illumination, not revelation. When Jesus came, He taught, but it was illumination.

He was opening up a new world. They left saying, never man spoke like this, man. We've never, ever, ever heard anything like this.

We've never imagined that in our writings, in the law, in the prophets, in the Psalms, that this was included. We never could have guessed that that meant this. And just as it was with the Old Testament, so it is today with the New Testament.

And Paul talks about the purpose there, and then he, chapter 3, starts talking about the process. He says it's through a gift. He takes it first personally, his personal gift.

The dispensation of the grace of God which is given. And you follow it down all through this chapter, and go over into the next chapter, and he talks about that which is given, that which God gave to the church, that which was given to man. Then he starts defining the gift.

Verse 3 there, given, and he says how that's by, and here he's explaining what it's all about, by revelation. He made known unto me the mystery. It starts with spiritual knowledge, starts with revelation.

There is no church without revelation. There is no church without the impartation of the gift of God. And it'd be a very long process to try and bring this all together, and we're just kind of touching on it, and you have to go home and think about it.

This is the way that God works. This is the process of the Spirit. Firstly, he comes with revelation, comes with an unveiling.

He says he made known unto me the mystery. Verse 5, he says that which in other ages was not made known. In verse 9, he says to make all man see or know what is the fellowship.

In other words, there's a mystery which had been hidden. God has revealed to his own, and now desires to spread that knowledge of himself in this earth. Heaven knows it.

God desires that earth might know it, even desires that hell might know it. Verse 10, to the intent that now unto the principalities, verse 9, make all men see. Verse 10, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God.

God wants to show who he is. God wants to manifest himself. Revival is a manifestation of God.

A living church is a place of the presence of God. That church, once again, the end of chapter 2, that church which is a habitation of God through the Spirit, where God is, there always must necessarily be a revelation of himself. There's no such thing as a hidden God.

There's no such thing, as we've said before, as cold truth. There's no such thing as a ministering merely to the mind. I think anybody, if these missionaries start coming from the third world, they've been promised long enough, if they start coming, we're going to see that there's one thing they're going to emphasize time after time, and it's going to be this reality of the working of the life, the working of the Spirit of God, the impartation of the gift of God.

The only thing that sets the church apart from the rest of mankind is this. That which I have, that which I am, that which I can do, we've seen it all. We've known it all.

We've heard it all. Once again, as Tozer said, we've heard so much of that preaching which is an explanation of the obvious. We take the word and we say it again and we say it backwards and then we enlarge it a little bit.

We talk about love, and love means that we have that sweet feeling one toward the other, and it means that we do not have negative feelings one toward the other, and it means that in all times, at all circumstances, this is love. And we go on explaining the obvious. If that's all there is to it, it's a poor church.

And it lifts up that side of our personality which seeks after knowledge, yet it starves our spirits. Paul here in verse 6 says, the revelation was given that there might be a participation. It is now revealed, he said, verse 6, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.

This is what it's all about. This is what it's all about. God desires to somehow plant inside, seal inside, mark inside, brand inside his truth.

Cause us to be centered in this to the exclusion of all else. God's people have always been fanatics. God's people have always been free from whatever the world would think or the prevailing world would think.

The prevailing theological currents. God's people have always, as somebody said, taught the language of this world with a foreign accent. They've always sounded like they don't quite belong here.

You know, it didn't just happen that Abram, who was the first man called of God, was a pilgrim. And moved through country after country, hundreds and thousands of miles journey throughout his life. Stopping a little while here and a little while there, but always moving on.

It didn't just happen that the second one in succession also lived out his days in attempt. It didn't just happen that the third one in succession lived out his days in attempts and journeyed from country to country. As we said before, the first mention of things in the Bible are vitally important.

They're pointing the way that God is saying, this is the way all my children are. They're free. They don't belong here.

They don't live here. They move through this world. You know, I'm surprised I look back in church history and read the story of some of the great men of God.

How much, even geographically, they move from place to place. In times when there was no transport like there is now, you look at the life of the Apostle Paul, and you look at Wesley and Whitefield, and you look at some of these people. Moving, moving, moving, moving, constantly going, as it were, around the earth like Isaiah.

Crying out, earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. And then they go to another place and they cry out again. Earth, hear the word of the Lord.

This is the message. This is the salvation. This is the way it is.

And then they're moving on and moving on and moving on. And human personality, and 20th century Christianity also, tends to build a nest, you know, and then we put on a second floor, and then we build a porch on the nest, and then we build a basketball court out back of the nest, and then we build a swimming pool inside the nest. You know, in the spirit shall we do this? The church, you know, the importance of the church, and of course the church should be a worthy building.

The church should have its Christian education wing and the pastor's office should be really nice, and he should have a bunch of stuff that the missionaries sent him from around the world hanging on the wall, so people can see his interest in missions. You know, and this is, this is what it's all about. And so he sits back in his lazy boy, and he looks, oh yes Lord bless Tom out there in New Guinea.

I look at that headdress, and I remember poor old Tom out there, and I look at that thing from Africa, and I remember Mary Jones. You know, revelation sets us free. Without revelation everything is obligation, nothing else.

Everything is hard, everything is uphill, everything is difficult. Everything is done from a sense of duty or a sense of condemnation. I remember a friend of mine went into Brazil to a missions community, and the Lord gave him a message.

And it's kind of a long story, but anyway, it just happened that somehow events moved that way, so that he came in to visit, and he had to preach that night. The Lord gave him a message, and as he preached and talked to the people after, in that missions community there's so much frustration among the missionaries, because they're doing things out of a sense of duty. They're not doing it out of a sense of love, there's no vision, there's no sense of calling.

They're lacking in the elements which will give life. Everything's heavy, the sense of death covering it all. It's not only the mission fields of the world that are places of death, places of darkness.

But as we heard more and more, the enemy is, as it were, moving over the face of the earth. There is no such thing as a static condition in the spiritual. We're either going on or we're going back.

A church, a nation, is either going on from glory to glory or going back from one level of bondage, from one level of darkness, from one level of condemnation to another. Chapter four, Paul takes it out of the

personal, brings it across, applies it to them. First he talks about his personal gift, now he's talking about the universal gift given to the church.

He says, verse seven, to every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. When God gave Jesus Christ, when God gave his Son, Jesus brought the fullness. Jesus brought the essence of all that heaven is.

And Paul explains it a little bit in the next verse, the gift of Christ. Wherefore, when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. You know, I don't know if we ever really think about the dimension of his triumph, about the work of the cross, about those three days of which we read so little, just little glimpses in the scripture.

When he descended, as it says here, descended into the lowest parts of the earth. We live on this earth, the lowest parts of the earth apart from everything else symbolically. The lowest conditions, the lowest levels of experience, of feeling, of darkness, that man has ever tried.

So that Jesus went through the very depths. Yet beyond that, it's not only the depths of man's world, I believe it's also the depths of the enemy's world. Went that place where the enemy holds court, walked into that place of darkness where there'd never ever, ever been one glimmer of light.

Where there'd never been anything except death upon death, the lower parts. You know, the people that explore the sea tell us as they descend, the pressure of the water increases until it reaches proportions which are unimaginable. The amount of pressure that there is there in the depths of the ocean in one square inch is unbelievable.

And I believe spiritually speaking when Jesus went into the depths, it's not just a little bit beyond our experience or a little bit beyond our comprehension. This is the depths of everything evil, everything twisted, every hurt that there ever was against the throne of God, the kingdom of heaven. He descended to the lowest parts.

And I like to think of him there, once again carrying on his shoulders the fullness of heavenly life, heavenly authority, heaven's grace, heaven's power. Walking there in those depths of darkness, saying to the enemy, Satan, you have no more power. Saying to death, death, you have no more power.

Sickness, you have no more power. Condemnation, darkness, confusion, you have no more power. John says, I saw him.

The one who had been dead and is alive again, he said he had the keys. He had the keys. The keys of hell and of death.

The keys to every part of that lowest realm of experience. It's been said before, the gospel is power. Paul says it here.

The power, the power of the gospel. This is what the church must move into if it's going to be the church. Once again, if there is revelation, leading us into participation, that participation must be real.

Many times in South America, I've noticed people, they seem to mistake somehow a mental ascent for a real spiritual appropriation. But we do the same thing up here. We ascent with our mind, yes that's true.

You know, even when we say, yeah that really touched me, that really shook me, that really really made an impact. And yet, unless we attain to the essence of that which we have heard, it's in vain. His word is spirit, His word is life.

When He gives us His word, He gives us His own creative power. He would take us from the place where we are and bring us into His realm. This is what participation is all about.

If it doesn't mean this, it doesn't mean a thing. He led captivity captive. Romans there says about the measure of evil and the measure of the gift, it says, is much more.

The gift He gave is to overcome all evil. Time after time, this is impressed upon me as I look look at Paraguay, Bolivia, different mission fields in South America, tremendous oppression. That the gift of God and the power of God is sufficient to go to the uttermost, to reach to the uttermost, to work in the uttermost conditions.

His power is able to go into once again the desert places and bring life. And this is what it's all about, and this is the part of the church. The church is to participate in the creative power of God.

Led captivity captive, took away the power, took away the keys and gave gifts unto men. He said He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, some teachers. We don't need to get into this except to say this, that I believe the call is still valid, and I believe if we had our eyes, spiritual eyes and spiritual ears open even out of the midst of us, God would form these type ministries.

An apostle is not, you know, like a virtuoso pianist that comes around once every hundred years. There should always be apostles in the church. There should always be prophets in the church.

There should always be pastors, and this is not our 20th century pastor, you know, who's the church administrator. Pastors, as Paul was a pastor, bearing their burdens, carrying their hurts, crying for their souls. Pastors and teachers.

He said He gave them for the perfecting of the saints, till we all come, the next verse, to the unity of the faith. The next verse, that we be hands forth, no more children. I don't want to die young, spiritually speaking.

That we be no more children. Tossed to and fro. How many are not tossed to and fro? How many can say, you know, I live above it all? Because that's what it's talking about.

With every wind of doctrine, just hearing about a church the other day up there in New Jersey, and apparently a real nice church, man of God pastoring it, and all of a sudden somebody opened up a, quote, prosperity church about 30 miles away. And his church, somehow or other, got caught in the breeze and the leaves started falling off the tree, and he lost a lot of people. Carried about by every wind of doctrine.

Carried about. We don't know. You know, I've seen this operate, and when it operates, unless you know that you know that you know, it's very easy to get carried away.

Very easy to get carried away by somebody that has real spiritual authority and faith and grace in certain areas, and in this area is wrong. I've noticed going into churches, somebody be up teaching the Word, and they give a statement which is right, and they give another statement which is right, and they be knocking down church tradition right, right, and left, and then they give another statement which is totally wrong, and

knock down, you know, 300 years of tradition. Everybody says yes, yes, yes, yes.

Well, wait a minute. Here he was wrong. I don't know.

It seems like either we accept people just the way they are, or we reject them totally. You know, we can't do that spiritually. We can't do that.

Judge all things. Measure all things. Consider all things.

Search all things. This is life. You know, sometimes God will speak through the worst of people.

He'll give us the Word we need. Maybe the guy's message is wrong. His exegesis is wrong.

The whole thing's mistaken. He'll give us a Word. One, maybe one little sentence in there that'll be life, because we went to the church, and above all, it is the house of God.

If sometimes he still speaks through donkeys like he did to Balaam, well, fine. You know, but on the other hand, just because somebody's got it all together here, and they preach with real authority, and they say this is the way it is, it doesn't mean it's got to be that way. Unwoe to us if we don't discern.

I remember my father saying about a man that used to go to his church 45 years ago, I guess now, and he'd pray, Lord, teach us what is flesh and what is spirit. Teach us the difference. What does Jeremiah say there? He talks about, I can find it here, there.

Yes, right. Thus saith the Lord, if thou wilt return and bring thee again, or if thou wilt repent, another verse says, and if thou take forth the precious from the vial, then shalt thou be as my mouth. If thou shalt take forth the precious from the vial, then shalt thou be as my mouth.

God's saying that's the way it is in this earth. The gold is always mixed with the dross. The silver is never found pure.

The church, God ministers through men and so many times their own minds and their own ideas and their own biases get involved. We got to separate it. We got to divide it.

But know that God has put his people for the perfecting of the saints. It ends up here saying, but speaking the truth in love. Heard somebody speak on this many, many years ago.

The margin here says being sincere, but apparently in Greek what it actually means is, as it were, truthing it. It's a verb form coming out of this. Truth, not speaking the truth, but truthing or living truth, expressing truth in love, living in harmony, living in agreement, living in perfect, a perfect response to that which is of God.

Being in tune, maybe would be the easiest way to say it. Being in tune with the things of God. Once again, not anything else, that which is of God and God alone.

Being in tune with the things of God, we grow. And we grow up into him, which is the head, even Christ. And we end up where we started, the habitation of God through the Spirit.

Growing up in him. God has given gifts. I think one thing the church needs to find again are the gifts of God.

And I'm not talking about those, what we call the gifts of the Spirit that people run after. I'm talking about the gift of revelation, the gift of reality, the gift of life, the gift of discernment, the gift of being taken out of the childish realm where it's all, you know, what I feel. I've been in churches where people have been dancing and, you know, you go in there and if it's a new church, they don't know who you are and they're talking one to another.

Wow, wasn't that something last week? Yeah, sure was. Boy, we are really the, you know, is that the church? You know, fine if you want to dance, fine. But do we come to church to dance? You know, or somebody else said, Mom, wasn't that heavy? You know, the teaching.

Heard somebody say, you know, I go and he said, Oh, I got to get away. I got to drive the car. I got to think about it.

You know, well, I know who the teacher is. Yeah, wow. Sure, it'll blow your mind, but it won't blow your spirit.

It won't blow your spirit if you're discerning it spiritually. You see what I mean? Because we can take, I remember a man of God I knew years ago. He told about preaching the law of God and really laying it on.

He said, you know, there was tremendous conviction in those meetings, tremendous conviction. We can convict people. We start talking about things.

We start talking about the reality and the hidden sins and, you know, all of this and the things that we're not doing that we should be doing. There'll be tremendous conviction, but is there life? Is there life? He came to give life. He came to give it with abundance.

He came not that we might follow the signs. He came not that we might follow the knowledge. He came that we might grow up unto him.

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