









And is being added when there are festivals. When you are under testing, and when the cross is before you, and you have to decide whether you will take it or you will escape it. Only by really dedicate, give your life to the Lord.

You are able to take up the cross and follow the Lord. Many times there are strugglings. But finally, his love overcomes.

You are willing to let go yourself. That's consecration. Consecration is a way.

It goes in the way of the cross. So dear brothers and sisters, you find that the cross is a must to us. But there is more to it.

Because it is not just making you a model. Making you a monument. This is not God's purpose.

God's purpose is not just to make you a spiritual giant. To be admired by people. As a monument standing there.

God wants a body. He wants a house. Therefore you find that all these living stones have to be built together.

There is not only the work that needs to be done to each stone. Turn the raw material into useful material. But afterwards, you need to fit them together.

You need to fit them together. Build them together according to the design of God. So there is much more working of the cross needed.

Now we find that in the Old Testament times, we find that in the Old Testament times, God let his people out of Egypt. He brought them to Mount Sinai. And there he shared his heart.

Why did God deliver them? What was the reason behind it? God said, because I want to dwell among you. Build me a sanctuary that I may dwell in your midst. And you find that when God the people, to build him a sanctuary.

He showed Moses the design. But where are the materials? He called the people to offer his offering. You know the children of Israel, they were slaves in Egypt.

They owned no property. They did not even own their own lives. But when God delivered them out of Egypt, you remember God made them people in the world.

They spoiled all the riches of Egypt. They carried all the riches of Egypt out with them. And then God said, give me a heave offering.

Out of what I have given you. You give back to me out of love. Legally, all is God's.

But God will rather that his people will give willingly than lovingly. So they began to give. Gold, silver, iron, brass, and all these lilies and purple and scarlet.

And acacia woods and also other things. And precious stones. And oil.

All these things actually came from God. But out of the abundance they gave willingly to God. Now that is a figure of consecration.

After our Lord Jesus has come, he brings us to the very origin. And that is present our bodies living. The redeemed belongs to the Lord.

So it is but right for us to do it. Not your silver and gold. But yourself.

But after all these materials are given, much work has to be done. All these woods have to be cut. And all these clothes have to be weaved.

And all this gold has to be beaten. Everything has to be done so that it will take form. And you'll find all the furniture in the temple.

Now the same thing is true with Solomon's temple. David prepared much material for the house of God. Out of his affliction, he gave.

Out of his affection for the Lord, he gave out the Lord. He gave according to all his power. And everyone who is touched, they give.

And then we find the workmen had to come and work on these things. So dear brothers and sisters, not only individually the Lord has to do much work, but in putting us together we have to do it sincerely. So these three best practices is concerned with the eternal purpose of God.

Especially in this matter of the church. In the first three chapters maybe, we can say that it is a revelation of the church. How the church is the body of Christ.

In Ephesians chapter 1 verse 22, 23. Christ is head to the church which is his body. The fullness of him who fills all and in all.

And how the church is the new man. Neither Jews nor Gentiles. Because God has bring them into one new man.

The church is the house of God. The foundation and the cornerstone. The twelve apostles are the foundations and Christ is the cornerstone.

And it is the household of God. And brothers and sisters, we find that in the first three chapters, it tells us what the church is. Revelation.

Now, when there is revelation, we find the heading of that letter is Paul, apostle of Jesus Christ. As an apostle, he passed on the revelation that he had received. But then when it comes to the building of the church, we were once being captured by the enemy.

We were in captivity. He cannot do what he wants to do. He cannot go where he wants to go.

He has lost his freedom. He is under someone. And brothers and sisters, unless we take that position, there is no way to build a church.

So, are we willing to take that rightful place? Then the apostle Paul, the prisoner in the Lord says, in chapter 4 verse 1, I, the prisoner in the Lord, exhort you therefore to walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye have been called. Thank God we have been called. Now, what is our calling? The calling here does not refer to our individual calling.

It is an overall calling. All of us are called. We are all called into this.

Now, what is that calling according to Ephesians? That calling is we are called to be the body of Christ. Now, what calling that is? It is a holy calling, on high calling. It is a heavenly calling.

We are called to be the body of Christ. We are not just called to be saved. We are not just called that we may go to heaven.

We are called to be the very body of Christ. All the fullness of the head dwells in the body. All the riches of Christ dwell in the body.

And the glory of Christ manifested through that body. It is one with him. As the head is, so is the body.

Brothers and sisters, we are called to be the body of Christ. Now, since this is our calling, we shall walk worthy of our calling. Are we walking worthy of our calling? Are we walking worthy of our calling? Now, how can we walk worthy of our calling? With all loneliness and meekness, with long suffering, bearing with one another in love.

Now, these are the qualities, the character of our Lord Jesus. Because he is meek and lowly in heart. He calls us to yoke with him.

To learn of him. Because he is meek and lowly in heart. There is no resistance in him towards his Father.

That's meekness. He is lowly in heart. And that lowliness means there is no self in him.

That is what Christ is. And that is what we should be. It is his life in us.

It is his character in us. With that kind of attitude, we are able to be built together. How we are resistant to God.

You know, the Bible says Moses is the meekest of men. Now, that doesn't seem to be right. Because even all the artists, when they draw the picture of Moses, he was so majestic.

So strong. Powerful. And the Bible says he is the meekest of men.

Why? Because there is no resistance in him towards God. Absolute submission. Absolute obedience.

Brothers and sisters, how about us? Is there still resistance in us towards God? Are we ready at all times to obey? Are we lowly in heart? Selfless. Willing to take the lowest place because that's what we are. And then it says, with long suffering.

Long suffering. It means suffer long. Now, do you expect that? To be built into the body of Christ means long suffering.

You remember 1 Corinthians chapter 30. It is a chapter on love. But it is related to the church, the body of Christ.

And the first quality of love is love suffers long. How God suffers long with us. And the church, because it is a place of love, it is a place of long suffering.

Are you ready to suffer? And suffer long. If you are not ready, then don't try to be built into the church. No wonder there are people today who want to keep to themselves.

We can seek the Lord. The Lord and I and nobody else. It seems very spiritual.

But brothers and sisters, they are not built into the body of Christ. They miss the eternal purpose of God. And then it says, bearing with one another in love.

Now all these are the qualities of Christ. Only when we are standing in Christ, we are able to begin to be built up together. And the first thing is using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace.

Why? Because the body is one. As the head is one, the body is one. Therefore, we have to keep diligently the unity of the Spirit.

What is the unity of the Spirit? That unity has already been given. It has been given to all of us. So what we need is to keep it.

Diligently keep it. Why? Because it is so precious. You can easily lose it.

Now what is the unity of the Spirit? That has already been given to us. It is in the seven ones that follow. There is one body and one Spirit as ye have been also called in one hope of your calling.

The first three relates to God the Spirit. Because in one Spirit that is in one Holy Spirit, we have been baptized into one body. And we all drink of one Spirit.

So we have been baptized by the Holy Spirit in the Holy Spirit into one body. I think this is evident as soon as you believe in the Lord Jesus. Immediately you find there is not only a bond between you and God.

You find there is a bond between you and all the other children of God. Because we belong to each other. We are one body.

And we drink of one Spirit. The same Holy Spirit dwells in us. And teaches us and brings us to Christ.

And what is the hope of our calling? What is that hope? What is the hope of the body? Oh! The hope of the body is that the body is fully matured and become the bride of the Lamb. This is our blessed hope. And we have all these three.

And then it says One Lord, one faith, one baptism. That relates to God the Son. Our Lord Jesus is our Lord.

He is Lord to every one of us. And it is one faith. And that one faith means we believe He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

Because that is the faith that saves us. One baptism. It is not the manner of baptism.

It is the meaning of baptism. We have all been baptized into Christ. We belong to Christ.

All of us belong to Christ. And then God the Father. One God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in us all.

We have the same Father. So brothers and sisters, where is the unity of the Spirit? The unity of the Spirit is in the Triune God. In the world we have all differences and distinctions.

But in God we are one. In our Lord Jesus we are one. In the Holy Spirit we are one.

Let us keep diligently that unity. Do not allow anything to come in and break that unity. Whether it is national distinctions, because there is neither Jew nor Gentile.

Whether it is cultural difference, the civilized or the barbarians. There is no social difference. The bondman or the freeman in Christ Jesus, in the Holy Spirit, in God the Father, we are one.

And let this oneness surpasses all differences. We may have different ideas. We may have different interpretations of the Word of God.

We may have different experiences of the Son of God. But all these are secondary. The foundation is the unity of the Spirit.

So let us continue to fellowship with one another. Not because we have differences. Therefore we are divided.

And we do not belong to one another. Even become enemies to one another. Brothers and sisters, the cross must work in each one of us.

Cross out anything that will conflict with the unity of the Spirit. In spite of all the differences, let us be one. Let us continue to fellowship with one another.

And through fellowship, one day, we will arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God. The unity of the faith is different from one faith in verse four. One faith refers to the basic faith.

The faith that saves us. The faith refers to the whole truth of God. The faith that is once delivered to us.

Today, we may have different understanding, interpretation of our faith. But if we are willing to continue to fellowship with one another, not isolate one another. If we are willing to be humble and open to one another, until the Lord will lead us into the unity of the faith.

And save these two with the knowledge of the Son of God. And this refers to the experiential knowledge of the Son of God. And we will experience Christ together.

What you experience of Christ will help me. And what I have experienced of Christ will help you. Then we will grow up together.

Until we come to the full measure of the statue of Christ. And that's the time when the bridegroom will come to take his bride. So, brothers and sisters, there's much work of the cross in us corporately.

Are we willing to humble ourselves not only before God, but before one another? As our brother mentioned last night in Philippines, esteeming the others as more excellent than we are. Brothers and sisters, the cross is a must in the building of the church. Let us pray.

Dear Lord, we want to thank Thee because Thou knowest what we need most. Thou knowest that we need to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Thee. Thou knowest that we need to bear one another's cross.

So, Lord, we look to Thee for grace. Knowing that Thy grace is sufficient for us. We ask in Thy precious name.

Amen.

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