

Great Truths From Ephesians - Part 3

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding what God has done for us in Christ and the need for balance in the Christian life, as well as the importance of every member in the church and the need to preserve the unity of the spirit.

Duration: 1:00:57

Scripture: Psalm 4:4, Ephesians 4:26, Ephesians 5:18, Ephesians 5:22

Topics: "Ephesians"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of unity in the church, using the analogy of a well-coordinated piano player. He highlights the areas in which believers are united and encourages them to grow in unity. The speaker also discusses the gifts that God gives to His church, emphasizing that every believer has a role to fulfill. He warns against wasting time on unproductive activities and encourages the study of Ephesians chapters one to three to combat discouragement and self-condemnation. The sermon concludes with a call to treat others as God has treated us and to meditate on God's treatment of us.

Transcript

In the study on Great Truths in Ephesians, we've looked in our last two studies on the first part of this, and that is the first three chapters deal with what God has done for us in Christ. And that is the foundation for what we do, how we live on earth and what we are to do for Him. And what I've been repeatedly saying in the last two sessions is that if we don't lay a foundation for a building, the building is not going to stand.

And if we have problems with cracks in the walls, it's because of a fault in the foundation. Many Christians try to deal with a crack in the wall in the second floor or the third floor, and it doesn't solve the problem because the whole problem is with the foundation. People can go along being Christians and live very happily for ten years and all of a sudden they have a problem.

Or in a marriage they have a problem. Always the problem is in the foundation. And that is, if we don't have a clear understanding of what God has done for us in Christ and the position He has placed us in Christ, which is the foundation, some day or the other in our life we're going to have some problems.

So it's very important that we take some time to lay that foundation, and that's what I tried to do in the last two sessions, to understand what God has done for us in Christ. It's not only that He's redeemed us, He's blessed us with every blessing of the Holy Spirit in the heavenly places in Christ. It's our duty now to lay

hold of those blessings, lay hold of that power that's available to us, and then live the way God wants us to live.

So the first three chapters deal with that foundation. There are no commands or exhortations in those first three chapters. It's an amazing passage of the New Testament.

It's very difficult to find any three consecutive chapters in the New Testament, epistles or Gospels, where you have no command at all. No exhortation, no commandment. In that sense, the first three chapters of Ephesians are unique.

It's only, right from the first verse to the last verse, it's only describing what God has done for us, the position He's brought us to in Christ. And I would encourage all of you to study those three chapters. You can never get condemned when you read those chapters.

Those of you who have a problem with discouragement, self-condemnation, et cetera, what you need to do is read Ephesians chapters one to three. It doesn't take long. There's not a single commandment there.

You can never feel guilty about anything. You can just totally get excited by the time you come to the end as to what God has done for you. So, from there, we move on in chapter four.

It says here, therefore, it's based on this word, therefore, indicates in view of all that as we've considered in the first three chapters, how are we supposed to live? A spiritual man is a balanced man. One of the great things we see in Scripture is balance. And a lot of immaturity is due to imbalance.

A lot of false teaching comes out of imbalance. Throughout Scripture, the Bible speaks about being balanced. It's not enough to love God.

We must also love our fellow believer. It's not enough to love our fellow believers. We must love God first.

It's not enough to have the fruit of the Holy Spirit. We also need the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are not enough.

We need fruit as well. The glory of God was seen in Jesus Christ, not only full of grace, but full of truth. We need truth, but we also need grace.

We certainly need grace, but it's useless without truth. So, it's this balance that we see in Scripture, Ephesians chapters one to three, what God has done for us, and Ephesians four to six, what we need to do for God, how we got to live on earth. And throughout Scripture, we can see this.

And a lot of problems arise when we're not balanced. It's like the two legs God's given us. God's given us two legs, and we see that principle throughout truth in Scripture.

And when we have both legs, and they're both the same length, we're stable. Consider the matter of knowledge and life, doctrine and life. Is doctrine important? Certainly.

But useless without life. And we can't emphasize life and say doctrine is unimportant. Paul told Timothy, take heed to your life and to your teaching.

So I just mentioned these different examples, how throughout Scripture, you find God gives us two legs for truth to stand on. And here is one of those. So is Ephesians one to three more important, or four to six

more important? That's like asking whether your left leg is more important or your right.

We need both. So there are Christians who major on what God has done for us. They're always thinking, well, God's placed me in Christ, and I'm okay, and I'm okay, he's done this, he's done this.

And you look at their earthly lives, you wouldn't believe that God's done anything for them. The way they live. And then there are others who are the other extreme, who want to please God.

They're striving, striving, striving, like all the people in false religions, condemning themselves, feeling guilty, and never achieving what God wants them to achieve. Their problem is they've got the other leg. We need both.

So if you want to grow spiritually, you need Ephesians one to three, and you need Ephesians four to six. Therefore, because of all that God has done, this is how we must walk. Ephesians four, verse one.

Walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called. That calling is what was described in the previous three chapters. So I want to go on now to Ephesians four, two.

With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love. And in the Living Bible it paraphrases as, making allowance for one another's faults because of your love. Our spiritual growth and our relationship with God is always tested by our relationship with our fellow human beings.

The Apostle John, towards the end of his life when he wrote his letter, he says, don't say that you love God if you can't love your brother. Because our love for God is tested by our love for our fellow believers. Our attitude to other people shows us whether our relationship with God is right.

How do you know that God's done this wonderful thing for you in chapter three? Well, you will make allowance, verse two of chapter four, for other people's faults because of your love. Because God made a lot of allowance for your faults because of his love. It's not because you deserve it.

And it's not because the other person deserves it that you forgive him or show allowance for his faults. It's because God's been good to you. And the more we bask in the sunshine of God's love, it's easier to make allowance for other people's faults.

And there's something more I want to say along this, which has really helped me. You know, we all, all human beings, have a great lust. Now, I'm not talking about sex, that's also there.

And I'm not talking about money, the craze for money, that's also there. It's another lust. The lust to pass judgment on other people.

Have you found that within yourself? It's there. If you haven't seen it, just ask God to show it to you. It's as strong as sexual lust and the lust for earthly possessions.

And if you don't deal with it, the thing is, sexual lust, when it goes outside the boundaries, we recognize it as evil. The lust for money, when it goes outside boundaries, we recognize it as evil. But when it comes to judging others, there is a boundary as well.

We're not called to judge people outside our boundaries. In other words, if you're a father, you certainly need to judge and pass judgment when your children have a fight with each other. Or if you're an elder in

a church, your boundary is the people in your church.

But you don't have to judge somebody else's children. They're outside your boundary. You don't have to, if you're not an elder, you don't even have to judge people in the church.

You don't have a responsibility for that. But this lust within us is so uncontrollable that we're always passing judgments, our opinions. And that shows we haven't got the right foundation.

There's a crack, not on the second floor, on the very first floor, there's a crack. We need to deal with that. Get the foundation right.

And what is that? Think of how good God has been to you. You see, we judge other people according to our standards. And we don't recognize that perhaps they haven't got light on that matter yet.

A lot of judgment of husband and wife towards each other is just because of this reason. Think, consider for a moment, if Almighty God judged us according to the light He has, where would we stand? The wonderful thing about God is that He judges us according to the light we have. In other words, when He sees, spiritually speaking, when He sees one of His children in the first grade, He doesn't give him problems in calculus and trigonometry and things like that.

He knows He can't handle that. The Bible says God does not allow us to be tested beyond our ability. And He does not judge us concerning areas over which we don't have light yet.

The Christian life is a life of growth and as we grow we get more and more understanding of God's ways and we discover areas in our life that are sinful which we never even thought were sinful earlier. And God is so merciful and gracious, He always judges us by first of all considering where we are spiritually. Are you in the first grade? Well, you'll be judged at that level.

Someone else who's in the fifth grade, God judges him by a much higher standard than He judges you. And someone who stands up here to preach, boy, God's going to judge him by the highest standard of all. The Bible says that in James chapter 3 verse 1, My brethren, don't become many teachers because God will judge you by a higher standard.

The more you stand up to teach other people, it doesn't have to be here, it could be a Bible study class that you lead. And if you have a great desire to be a leader, remember this, that's great. You want to bless God's people but remember God will judge you by a higher standard.

Now what this verse is saying is, you deal with other people the same way. When you see somebody doing something wrong according to your understanding, make allowance for that by considering the possibility that that person is not at the same grade as you are. He hasn't reached that level, she hasn't reached that level.

And you can allow for it. And this has blessed me so much that when I see something, someone doing something which for me is absolute sin, I say to myself, well that's sin for me. But it may not be sin for that person yet.

Because he or she hasn't come to that place of understanding where that is a sin. Now if you want scriptural support for this, I want to show you in Romans in chapter 14. Romans 14, it says here, when it talks about dealing with other people, Romans 14 is a great chapter.

And I've always said that a church that does not practice Romans 14 will end as a cult. And if you don't practice Romans 14 in your life, you're going to be cultistic and judgmental in your attitude of other people. Our relationships with others is described very clearly in Romans 14 the way it should be.

And it says in the last few verses of Romans 14, 22. The faith that you have, have as your conviction before God. And you're happy if you don't condemn yourself in what you approve.

But if you're doubtful about something, then you condemn yourself. Because whatever is not from faith is sin. Now in that chapter, what he's trying to say is, there's certain things which may be right for you.

But God's given more light to the other person, it's not right for him. So if I, for me, if I were to do something, it would be wrong. But the other person does the same thing.

He hasn't got light on it yet, God does not judge him, neither should I. That's basically what he's saying in Ephesians 4. Make allowance for other people because you, of your love. Allow for the possibility that that person doesn't know yet that that is wrong. Do you realize how many innocent people we have condemned throughout our life? People whom Almighty God says they are innocent.

But we have judged them, we have declared them guilty. You've declared your wife guilty when God Almighty has called her innocent. You've declared your husband guilty when God Almighty calls him innocent.

It's all a question of light, according to the light we have. In a school, a teacher does not give an examination paper, a question paper, that's above the level at which that student is. That's basically what it's saying here in Matthew, in Ephesians 4 and verse 1. Another paraphrase puts it like this.

Alert at noticing differences and quick at mending fences. It goes on from there. Therefore, this is where we begin.

First of all, in relationships. If God's dealt with you like this, deal with others like that. As God received you, receive others.

God didn't wait till you were perfect, don't wait for other people to be perfect. God accepted you just as you are. Accept your wife, your husband, your brother, sister, just as they are.

God helps you to improve, you help them to improve. The whole principle of the Christian life is, as God has treated you, treat other people. That's why we need to meditate much on how God has treated us.

If you don't think much about that, you're going to be very hard on other people. All those who are hard on others are the ones who have forgotten how God dealt with them. Ephesians chapter 4. He goes on to say here, Preserve the unity of the spirit.

In verse 3, in the bond of peace, or as another paraphrase says, Until we are all moving rhythmically and easily with each other. God wants the church to be exactly like the human body. This is one of the wonderful truths described here in Ephesians.

That the church, the church means the people who are born again, are connected to Jesus Christ as the head, and are to move together just as rhythmically, as easily as our body moves. Watch a person playing the piano. The eyes, the ears, the fingers, the feet, all move so wonderfully.

And this is exactly God's goal for this church, and for every church, where people move together. And it is to reach this goal that God gives us these exhortations in Ephesians chapter 4. Preserve the unity of the spirit. In chapter 4, in verse 4-6, he speaks about the areas in which we are at one.

There are so many areas, he says, in which we are one, and therefore we should be growing up in unity. And I want to say a few words now about the gifts that God gives to His church. And that's spoken in verse 7-16.

God wants every person who is His child to fulfill a function in the church. Just like in the human body, every part of this body has got a function. The eyes, the ears, the tongue, and even the invisible parts which are within, like the heart and the liver and the kidney.

Some Christians, because they are not visible, because they don't stand up in front, feel that their function is unimportant. Now I want to say to you, you may discover in eternity, that if you fulfill that function faithfully, even if you never stood in the pulpit, your function was more important. I believe that.

I know very clearly when people pray for me, it makes a difference when I speak. And since now many people do pray for me, I find it so much easier than in the early days when I didn't have so many people praying for me. It makes a tremendous difference.

Now think of this, do you think that those people who are unseen, some here, some in different places who pray for me, are not fulfilling a function? They are fulfilling a very vital function right now. I may be getting the credit, and you think it's all coming forth from me. It's not.

I'm part of a body. I'm just the tongue. And there's a heart pumping, pumping, pumping, pumping, pumping.

Imagine physically, how could your tongue speak if your heart stopped pumping? It's exactly like that. So if God's not given you the ability to speak in the pulpit, don't ever think that your function in the body is unimportant. Not at all.

Every part of Christ's body has a function. It doesn't matter who you are. You may say, well, I'm a little finger.

Well, we don't use the little finger very often, but I'm sure we don't want to cut it off. It's got some function. Well, you may say, well, I'm not even a little finger, I'm just a little nail.

Well, what do you do with that? Do you know when you feel scratchy, the thing you use most is your nails. And I tell you, there are certain brothers who've got this tremendous ability to help other people who are itching somewhere, to bless them, and to encourage them, and to deliver them from that problem. Which the tongue can't do.

It's the nails that do it. What I'm trying to say is every single part of the body has got a function. And don't ever devalue yourself and say, well, I don't have the ability to speak.

That's not the only ability God wants in the church. Thank God more people don't have the ability to speak. But if you have the ability to pray and support those who have those public functions, it's very, very important.

And that is the whole section from verse 7 to 16. He starts with saying, some of the important, the leading gifts God's given in the church are apostles, verse 11. There are very few of them.

Prophets, very few. Evangelists, proportionately very few. Pastors and teachers, proportionately very few.

Ninety-nine percent of Christians don't fit into any of these gifts. Ninety-nine percent of believers, ninety-nine percent of you folks sitting here, are not apostles, not prophets, not pastors, evangelists, or teachers. But does it mean you have no function? He goes on to say, the function of all these leading gifts is to equip the saints, and that applies to all of us.

The purpose with which God gives people these gifts of teaching and pastoring and prophecy, etc., is to equip all the other members of the body so that, this is a very important verse, and I believe a misunderstanding here has caused so much loss in the body of Christ. Now I want to labor on this point a little. These gifts are given to equip the saints to build the body of Christ.

I want you to look at Ephesians 4, verse 11 and 12. Here is how many people misread it. As though the apostles and prophets are to build the body of Christ.

No! It says here, the apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastors and teachers, verse 12, are to equip the saints who are to do the work of service for the building of the body of Christ. So do you know who builds Christ's body today? It's the saints. Every single one of us are to do our part for the building of the body of Christ.

And it speaks here in verse 16 about the importance of joints. It speaks here that the whole body is fitted together, Ephesians 4, verse 16, by that which every joint supplies. We need to understand the importance of joints.

In one single arm, there are so many joints. There's a joint at the shoulder, there's a joint at the elbow, there's a joint at the wrist, and the fingers have got, this has got two joints, this has got three joints. Look at the number of joints there are in these fingers alone.

And they move without making any noise. People who have arthritis would appreciate that. That they, you know, we don't appreciate the fact that our joints move so smoothly, so freely.

And all, your arm would be useless if the joints didn't function properly. And that's the main thing stressed here. You can have a strong upper arm and a strong lower arm, but if the joint is not functioning, imagine what you do with a hand that's stiff like this, that can't be bent.

Here's a good brother, the upper arm speaks of a very strong brother, and another very strong brother, but they can't work together. That's the joints. They can't fellowship with each other.

A very spiritual husband and another spiritual wife, but they can't get along with each other. That's the joint. You know where the problem is in Christianity today? We've got so many strong brothers and sisters who know so much of the Bible, the problem is with the joints that are not functioning.

They're not able to relate to one another. It's far better to have a weak brother and another weak brother who work together. Far better.

What's the use having a giant of a man whose joints are all stiff, like this? I'd rather have a little boy whose arms are weak. He can do a lot more for me than a man whose joints are stiff, who can't bend his knees

and he can't bend his arms, he's useless. This is the work the devil has done in the church.

He's got everybody trying to become strong on their own. The test is, can you relate to others? Can you work with your wife? Can you work with your husband? Can you work with that brother? Can you work with your sister? Otherwise, let me say this, you're pretty useless to the body of Christ. In fact, you can be a hindrance.

A stiff person who can't work with another person is a hindrance to the body of Christ. That's why I believe, and I've always said in all of our churches in India, that the most valuable person in the church is not the one who can preach the best. No.

The most valuable person in the church is the one who can build fellowship between people. If you can build fellowship, if you can get people to work together, you're the most valuable person in the body of Christ. The most valuable person in the church is the one who can get people to work together.

That which every joint supplies. So it doesn't matter if you're not a great strong brother or a great gifted teacher. Can you bring fellowship between people? Can you work in fellowship with others? Even if you're a weak person, you can fulfill a function.

Because that makes the body grow up. Further, he goes on to speak about different aspects of our Christian life in verses 17 to 32. He speaks in verse 26 about not getting angry.

Anger is another problem which most Christians struggle with, many of them throughout their whole life. And I want to say there's a solution to it. If the gospel, the good news of the gospel, could not deal with the serious problem of anger in my life, it wouldn't be good news at all.

Anger is a very serious problem for many people. I mean, if a doctor can only treat coughs and colds, but can't deal with serious problems, serious sicknesses in a person's life, what's the use of that doctor? And if the good news can only help me overcome little weaknesses here and there, but not deal with my fundamental problem of anger that disturbs my relationship at home, and disturbs my relationship with other people, I say it's not good news at all. Or, we haven't heard the good news properly.

Now here's what the Bible says in verse 26. It's a verse that can be easily misunderstood. Be angry, but don't sin.

That teaches me, if you read it slowly, clearly, there is an anger that is not sinful, and there is an anger that is sinful. How to discover which anger is sinful and which anger is not sinful? Whenever we have a doubt about God's Word, we've got to do exactly what we do when we don't understand a word in the English language. Supposing you're reading the newspaper, or a magazine, or a book, and you come across a word that you don't know the meaning of, where do you go? You go for a dictionary.

God's given us a dictionary. The Word made flesh. That's Jesus.

Our dictionary is not a book. Our dictionary is a person. Do you want to learn the meaning of humility? Don't go to Webster.

Go to Jesus. Because Webster's definition is not what the Bible speaks about humility. It'll give you a wrong definition.

Jesus said in Matthew 11, verse 29, Learn from me, for I am humble. He's saying, you want to learn humility? Come to me. You want to learn gentleness? Jesus said, learn from me, for I am gentle.

If you don't go to the dictionary often enough, in English, you won't improve your English. And if you don't go to Jesus often enough to understand the meaning of these biblical words, like humility and gentleness, you'll never become humble or gentle. See, a lot of us, when we come to Scripture, we're trying to understand it according to Webster's definition.

And that's why we don't grow. Jesus said, learn from me. So when you come to a word like, be angry and don't sin, let's go to the dictionary.

Let's find out, when was Jesus angry, and when was He not angry? And then you get the answer. There you discover the anger that is sinful, and the anger that's not sinful. This is very important, because I'm sure you're all paying attention very well now, because I'm sure anger is a problem for most of you.

Okay, when was Jesus angry, and when was He not angry? When they spat on His face, He wasn't angry. When they called Him the Prince of Devils, He wasn't angry. You know what He said when somebody called Him, Beelzebul, Prince of Devils? He said, have you spoken a word against the Son of Man? It's forgiven.

That was His attitude. When they killed Him, He wasn't angry. He said, Father, forgive them.

They don't know what they're doing. Whenever people did anything to Him, they insulted Him in numerous ways. They told Him He had a demon.

They called Him all types of names. They hurt Him physically, emotionally. He never once got angry.

Well, you say He was the Son of God. True. But He came to earth, and He did not use His powers as the Son of God.

He lived on earth as a man, and He lived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and He never got angry when people insulted Him. You know why? Because He was secure in the fact that His Father in Heaven loved Him. The more secure we are in the fact that God loves me, it won't make a difference what people call me.

I can prove that to you. If 10,000 people call you a prophet, will you become a prophet? If 100,000 people call you a prophet, will you become a prophet? You know the answer. No.

If 100,000 people call you a devil, will you become a devil? No. What people call us doesn't make any difference. But if you're insecure, then you get all worked up.

Jesus was perfectly secure in the love of the Father. It's like these people who travel to the moon. You know the atmosphere in the moon is such that if you're exposed to it, you'll die.

They don't have oxygen there. So when people travel up to the moon, they have to have a special type of suit. Absolutely airtight.

And in that suit, within that, they are breathing earth's atmosphere. That is oxygen. And so even though they are walking on the moon, they are not breathing the moon's atmosphere.

They are breathing inside this suit, space suit, the atmosphere of earth. That's the picture of a Christian. When we are born again, God puts us in another atmosphere, the atmosphere of heaven.

And even though I live on earth, I find myself secure in God's love that surrounds me, the oxygen of heaven, that the atmosphere of earth, all the hatred and the bitterness and all, just doesn't affect me. This is the secret of the Christian life. This is how Jesus lived.

This is why he could not get angry when people disturbed him. I want to tell you, all anger and bitterness and hitting back in the way somebody talks to us is because you've opened up your space suit and started breathing the filthy atmosphere of this earth. Imagine what would happen to an astronaut if he opened up his suit when he was walking on the moon.

He'd die. He wouldn't be so foolish. And so Jesus, whenever people said anything or did anything about him personally, he was never angry.

Now let's look at the examples where he was angry. There is a place where it says in Mark chapter 2 very clearly, I don't know whether you've seen this, it says there that Jesus looked at certain people with anger. It says in Mark in chapter 3 and verse 5, he had just gone into a synagogue and there he saw a man with a withered hand and he wanted to heal that man.

But these Pharisees were so cruel, they were more concerned about keeping their rules that on the Sabbath you don't do any work than healing this man who's had a withered hand for so many years. And Jesus looked at these Pharisees who were hindering this man from being healed with anger. It says in verse 5, he looked around at them with anger because he was so grieved at the hardness of their heart and he couldn't care less what they thought about him.

He healed that man. Where was Jesus angry? He was angry when he saw people exploiting others. When he saw people ruling over others in the name of religion, making all types of laws for others that bound those poor people.

He was angry and he's the same today. He's angry wherever he sees people exploiting others who are weaker than them. Where people who are religious leaders control others, exploit them financially, take money out of poor people to live in grand style themselves.

Jesus is angry even today. Wherever people exploit others, that's where he's angry. When it concerned himself that they exploited him, it was okay.

But if they exploited some other poor person, God's got a great concern for the poor and the weak and the helpless. And anyone who exploits them, God's going to be very angry with them. That's the place where we need to be angry too.

Take another example where Jesus is angry. You're familiar with that one. He came into the temple and he saw people, listen to this, making money in the name of religion in the temple.

He got angry. He got so angry he made a whip and chased them all out of the temple. These are the two instances where we see Jesus is angry.

It always concerned the glory of God, but the temple was being exploited for personal gain. Do you think people are not exploiting religion to make money for themselves today? There's plenty of it. And I want to

say Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

He's angry. And when you see that type of thing happening and poor people being exploited and swindled by preachers who are living with millions exploiting these poor people, if you're not angry, you're not like Jesus Christ. If you are like Christ, you'll be angry at that.

So now we come back to Ephesians 4 and verse 26. We understand a little more because we've gone to the dictionary. The dictionary tells us what is righteous anger and what is unrighteous anger.

Very often, we get angry because somebody hurt us and we call it righteous anger. That's a falsehood. That's because we want to justify our anger.

Now if you keep on justifying your anger, God will say, OK, you'll live with it. And that's the reason why we never overcome it. Because we've always got a good excuse for our anger.

Yeah, I was angry because of this and because of that. But God says, OK, you stay there. But if you go to God and say, Lord, that was not righteous.

That was absolutely unrighteous of me to get angry. That was wrong. That was evil.

That was unchristlike. If you had gone to God every time like that, you would have got victory over your anger ages ago. That's what I did.

I would refuse to justify myself. I'd say, Lord, that was wrong. It was wrong for me to be angry there.

100% wrong because it did not concern the glory of God. It did not concern poor people being exploited. It was just me that got hurt.

I go to the dictionary and I find that anger is unrighteous. Because I look at Jesus and I see that doesn't come under the category of being angry without sin. And when I faced up to that very clearly, God saw my honesty.

And I tell you, God loves honest people. And He set me free. He can do that for you.

Now I want to say one more thing. A bit of practical advice. The Bible is very practical.

I don't know whether you know that this verse in Ephesians 4.26 is a quotation from the Old Testament. And whenever you, if you are a serious Bible student, whenever you see a verse like that, you go back to the Old Testament. Now I want to show you this Old Testament verse which is quoted here.

Turn in your Bibles please to Psalm 4. This is a very important verse because this is what is quoted in Ephesians 4. In Psalm 4 verse 4 Psalm 4 verse 4 it says tremble with anger but don't sin. The meaning there is in the original Hebrew in the margin of my Bible it says with anger but don't sin. This is the verse quoted in Ephesians chapter 4. Be angry but don't sin.

Paul is quoting from Psalm 4 verse 4. Tremble with anger but don't sin. What should you do when you tremble with anger? He says go and lie down on your bed for a few minutes and meditate in your heart. Isn't that practical advice? You get all worked up about something go to your bedroom and lie down there for a little while and be still.

And think of God's goodness to you. When you got over that get up from your bed. You try that next time and see if it doesn't work.

It really does. Turn back to Ephesians 4 and I want to tell you something more here about anger. In Ephesians 4 verse 26 it says here don't let the sun set on your anger.

Now in those days when scripture was written sunset when it got dark was usually the time people went to bed. Nowadays with electricity we go to bed much later. But in the villages in India still when it gets dark people go to bed.

And they get up much early too because the sun rises. So when it says don't let the sun go down on your anger what it's saying is don't ever go to bed angry. Don't ever go to bed with something unsettled in your heart against somebody else.

Did you get upset with someone? Okay. Before you go to bed settle that with that person. Go and ask forgiveness.

Otherwise your relationship with God is not going to be right. Jesus said if you're angry with someone and you said something that hurt that person and then you come to God and pray God will not listen to your prayer until you go and settle that matter with that person. Jesus said leave your gift there.

He's not even going to accept your offering. Go to that person settle that matter and then come to God. If we followed this principle always you'd get over your anger quickly.

I can give you a foolproof prescription that always works. The next time you get angry with someone maybe you didn't want to. It happens often that we don't want to get angry and we lose control of ourselves.

We don't have control over our anger. We lost our temper. We said something usually to someone at home or someone at work and pretty soon you realize it.

I think most of us have a conscience that tells us you did something wrong. You know what you should do? First of all ask the Lord to forgive you. Say Lord I violated a law of yours.

I hurt another one of a human being whom you created. Please forgive me. And then and this is the more difficult part it's easier to go to God than to go to a human being and ask forgiveness.

You know that. Go to that person and say I'm sorry. Please forgive me.

That was my fault. Okay. Six hours later you get angry again.

With the same person. Something happens. Do the same thing.

Go to God. Say Lord I slipped up again. And go to that person and say I didn't want to get angry but I'm sorry I got upset.

You do that a few days and I tell you you'll be cured permanently. Believe me. You will be cured.

Especially if you do the second part regularly. Go to the other person and ask forgiveness each time. So we don't do that.

Don't let the sun set on your anger. Now I tell you it's possible. I conducted a wedding of a couple in our church about twenty years ago or so.

And I remember about a couple of years back this brother came to me and said brother Zach you remember you gave me an exhortation at our wedding. I said I don't remember what it was. What was it? He said you told us the day we got married don't ever go to bed without settling everything with each other.

You'll make mistakes. We may get upset with each other. We're human.

But don't go to bed without settling it. Every day. Make that a rule in your life.

And he said brother Zach I don't remember how many years it was then when he told me this. 17-18 years we've been married. And I want to tell you brother Zach I followed that exhortation every day of my married life.

I was so thrilled. I tell you that's a greater miracle than raising the dead. For a married couple to come and say for 15 years we never went to bed without settling matters with each other.

Boy heaven must be rejoicing over such couples. Now that's the first step to overcoming anger. But if you're not even willing to take that first step of making sure we settle things before we go to bed don't ever hope to go to the next step.

You can't go to college before you've finished your 12th grade. You know that. And so you've got to take the first step.

God sees whether you're humble enough to say I'm sorry that was my mistake. Let's settle matters before we go to bed. I tell you, I prophesy you will overcome anger in your life.

It's true. But God has to see whether you take that first step. You see settling matters before you go to bed is not God's highest.

Jesus didn't live at that level. He didn't get upset every day and settle matters before you went to bed. Our standard is to be like Jesus.

But the Lord's given us a first step towards that. If you can't take two steps at a time, take one step. Settle matters before you go to bed.

And then the day will come when like it says in verse 31 look where you finally reach in verse 31. Where all wrath and all anger is put away from you permanently. Boy! What a life that is! But you'll never get there to verse 31 till you take that first step in verse 26.

The Bible is intensely practical. But now it's up to you. It's up to you from today onwards.

You can't plead ignorance from today of God's word. Settle matters before you go to bed. The Bible speaks further.

One little word in verse 30. Don't grieve the Holy Spirit. You know, I like that.

God's not angry with His children but He's sad. You know, a judge may be angry if you do something wrong. A policeman could be angry.

But a good father or mother is sad. And here it says don't grieve the Holy Spirit or I think the message translation has it don't break God's heart. I love that.

Don't break God's heart by the way you live. You call yourself His child and get upset and don't set it right, do things wrong. Don't break God's heart.

He's not saying don't get God angry at you. He's saying don't break His heart. That should challenge us more than hearing God's angry with you.

Moving on to chapter 5. In chapter 5 I just want to, I don't have time to go through the whole thing but I just want to say one thing here about verse 15 and 16. Ephesians chapter 5 verse 15 and 16 it says here understand what the will of God is and make the most of your time. Verse 17 sorry 16 and 17.

Make the most of your time. Verse 16 chapter 5 verse 16 and 17 understanding what the will of the Lord is. Make the most of your time.

I said earlier that in many areas we're different. Somebody has a gift of speaking and somebody doesn't have a gift of speaking. That's fine.

But there's one area where all of us you know what that is? God's given each of us 24 hours every day. Nobody has 25 and nobody has 23. We all have exactly the same gift in the area of time.

What you do with your 24 hours is up to you. What I do with my 24 hours is up to me. Here's the command which says God has got a plan for your life.

Make the most of your time to fulfill that will. If you are gripped by the fact that God's got a plan for your life you really want to ensure that you don't waste any of your time in unnecessary things. There are lots of things that we could accomplish in our life if we took that exhortation seriously.

I believe one of the evils of television is not just the dirty programs that come over it but the more subtle thing is the amount of time that is wasted in watching good programs. Time that could have been spent. I'm not saying it's wrong to watch all of that.

All I say is we need some sense of priority in our life. The reason for a lot of shallowness in many Christians today is because they don't take time to read God's word to spend time with the Lord. And you know what takes away the time of many Christians? Clean good TV programs.

Be careful of that. Make the most of your time because God's got a plan for your life and if you don't understand that you're going to come to the end of life and discover that you've missed out on a lot of things that God wanted to do in you and through you in your earthly life. I don't want to get to heaven like that.

I don't want to get to heaven and hear the Lord tell me well I want to do such a lot through you my son but you were watching television all the time I could hardly speak to you. I hope he doesn't have to tell you that. I wanted to teach you so much from your word but you had no time to read my word.

I remember once when I had to go to hospital for a little surgery minor surgery and I prayed to God many times that God would heal me without surgery and he didn't. Well I got into a hospital and I lay there in bed and the Lord said I could have healed you but I didn't. I want you to lie in this hospital bed for a few days because you've been running around so much I hardly get time to talk to you and now you've got to lie

down here with your face up looking at me the whole time and I said thank you Lord and I lay there for 10 days and I tell you what God spoke to me those days was some of the most significant things I've ever heard in my whole life.

Sometimes God does that. We're so busy. Now don't wait till he puts you in a hospital bed.

Say Lord I want to take some time every day to listen to you. You think that's wasted time? Remember when Jesus said man cannot live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth. Take a decision today.

I keep saying this everywhere I go. Take a decision to spend some time every day even if it means getting up 5 minutes earlier or going to bed 5 minutes later just to have a little time with God. I'm not saying it should be only 5 minutes it depends how much time you have but it should be at least 5 minutes when you say Lord I want to be still.

I want to shut out everything from my mind now and listen to what you have to say to me. You may find a tremendous difference in your life in your married life in your work a lot of things get done much more quickly because you spend a little time with God. In the beginning God.

That's how the Bible begins. First 4 words in the Bible. In the beginning God.

That's how your day should begin. Make the most of your time. Further it goes on in chapter 5 verse 18 says Be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians chapter 5 verse 18 Be filled with God's Holy Spirit. A very important exhortation that leads into a life of thanksgiving and praise and that leads into a godly home life. In chapter 5 verse 22 onwards up to chapter 6 verse 9 that whole section is coming out of a life where you are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

So I look at it like this. Now a lot of people have this bad habit of taking verses out of context. When you read a verse all by itself in the Bible you won't understand it's meaning.

It's like if somebody wrote you a letter and you just read line number 6 on page number 8. What are you going to understand out of line number 6 on page number 8? That's how a lot of people read the Bible. They read one verse. Ephesians 5 verse 18.

Be filled with the Spirit. What does it mean? Brother, read the whole letter. Read the whole passage.

Be filled with the Spirit and that will lead on to your wives and husbands living properly at home and that will lead on your children and parents living properly at home, chapter 6 and to servants and masters relating properly to one another. That's how I've seen it in my own life. A lot of people talk about being filled with the Holy Spirit today.

I say I want to know how you live at home. If it doesn't change your life at home, brother, it must be some other spirit, not Holy Spirit. And there are lots of spirits operating in the world today.

How in the world can a man have a fight with his wife and then go get along with God and speak in tongues and say I had a wonderful time with God? That's a lot of garbage. That's not Christianity. He cannot have a wonderful time with God if he hasn't settled matters with his wife.

And a lot of this is going on today. It's a deception. That's why I say, whatever tongues that is, that's another spirit.

There is a genuine gift of speaking in tongues. I've spoken in tongues for 30 years and I praise God for it. It's been a great, helpful gift for me in my private life.

But, it's changed my home life being filled with the Holy Spirit. It's changed my relationship with my wife, with my children. It's changed my relationship with my co-workers in my church.

That's how I know it's the Holy Spirit. So, here it says be filled with the Holy Spirit. It goes on to say live in a life of thanksgiving and wives and husbands relate properly to one another.

I want to say something here about headship and submission. Not a popular subject nowadays for many people to listen to, but it's here. The husband, verse 23, is the head of the wife.

The wife must submit to the husband. I want to explain what this means, because there's a lot of misunderstanding of it. The husband is not supposed to be a tyrant or a dictator, but the head.

Okay. What does this head do? It does things like commanding the hands to do certain things, true, but think of another aspect. If I get a little injury on my hand, a small, even a mosquito bite, immediately the head is aware of it.

Here a mosquito comes and sits on my left hand. Immediately the head tells the right hand knock it off. It wasn't this hand that told the other hand that.

No, it was the head. It didn't even take one second for the head to know a mosquito has come and biting this left hand. Immediately it tells the right hand to knock it off.

And it does it. So what does head shake mean? Head shake means to be sensitive when your wife gets hurt. Is that how you understand head shake? That's how Jesus is.

He feels. Do you remember that time when the Apostle Paul, before he became the Apostle Paul, was going around persecuting Christians all over, killing them, hurting them. On the road to Damascus he was suddenly stopped, and a voice from heaven said, why are you persecuting me? Paul said, persecuting you? Who are you? I'm Jesus.

I'm the head of this body of mine is on earth and you've been troubling my body. That's head shake. When you feel and if husbands had this type of head shake, can you imagine what type of relationship there would be in a home? And a wife would gladly submit to a husband like this, right? I believe so.

It goes on to speak about children and parents in chapter 6, verse 1 to 4. It's only the Holy Spirit that can help you and me to be the type of father we should be. The type of understanding, firm, compassionate, strict father that God is. In the Holy Spirit is God himself.

And if he comes and fills me, he'll make me a father like God. Kind, loving, encouraging, compassionate, firm, strict, disciplined. Disciplining the children.

And in the same way it says servants and masters, verse 5 to 9. Our relationships with people who work under us. In conclusion, it says finally, remember, this whole thing is going to be attacked by Satan. And that's why that last section in Ephesians deals with our fight against Satan.

Remember, be filled with the Holy Spirit. Here's your home life. And then finally, standing against Satan.

Isn't it interesting that home life is sandwiched between the command to be filled with the Holy Spirit and the command to stand against Satan. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit to live like this at home. And home is the place where Satan is going to attack the most.

So we need to stand against him and overcome him. Put on the armor of God, it says, and be strong in the Lord. And stand firm against Satan.

You know, this is something which in the Old Testament they could not accomplish. There's no such thing as fighting Satan in the Old Testament. This is a New Testament concept.

Once the Holy Spirit comes within us, He shows us something that was not true in Old Testament times. That Satan was defeated on the cross. And that's why we can have victory in our home life.

I want to say to you in Jesus' name, Satan can have no foothold in your home if you give Jesus the right place in your home. If you follow these simple principles that we've just read in His Word, Satan will not be able to put one foot in your home. He won't be able to get a hold of your children.

He won't be able to come between husband and wife and bring a separation or a division. This is the life of triumph that we can live if we find our position in Christ and say, Lord, by the power of the Holy Spirit, I'm going to live this life. And one last word, God is always on your side against Satan.

God bless you. Let's pray.

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