

# Secure in God's love and building fellowship

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of unity in the body of Christ, comparing believers to bricks in a building or members of a body, stressing the need for fellowship and working together. It highlights the significance of being built into the church, like bricks in a building, for security and growth. The message also touches on the need to fight spiritual battles together and to maintain unity of the spirit while awaiting complete unity of faith in Christ.*

**Scripture:** Ephesians 4:3, Ephesians 4:16, Ephesians 2:20, Ephesians 6:12, Ephesians 4:13

**Topics:** "Unity in the Body of Christ", "Fellowship and Collaboration"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Heavenly Father, as we bow before you, another day, we want you to speak to our hearts according to our need. It was your great purpose, Lord Jesus, when you came to earth to build your church. There's a burning, shining light for you on this earth.

Help us to be that few though we are in number. In every place that you've placed us, give us the power of your Holy Spirit to do that. And speak to our hearts this morning, this afternoon, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Okay, good to see you folks in Brisbane as well. Praise the Lord. Okay, today I want to turn to Ephesians.

Ephesians is one of the most spiritual books, books, letters of Paul. And if you want to know the reason why it is that, perhaps we should turn to 1 Corinthians first and then I'll go to Ephesians. In 1 Corinthians chapter three, 1 Corinthians three, he says, "Brethren, I could not speak to you as to spiritual men, "but like infants in Christ, I gave you milk to drink." You know, you can't put meat in the mouth of a newborn baby, it'll choke to death.

So he was saying spiritually, when a person's like a baby, he can only drink milk. And what is that milk? That he tells us in 1 Corinthians two, verse two. I determined not to do anything among you except Christ and him crucified.

That is milk. What is that? Jesus died for your sins. You have accepted him as your savior, but you have not grown.

You know how babies constantly dirty their diapers? They can throw up, they can drool from their mouth and make themselves dirty, even when they crawl on the ground. That is a baby, constantly getting dirty, constantly spoiling the diapers. That's a picture of a believer.

He's got life, but he doesn't know how to keep himself clean. And so all he can hear is, thank God, Jesus died for my sins. Of course, till the end of my life, I'll keep on sinning.

For anyone to say that spiritually, it's like saying, I'm gonna keep on dirtying my diapers for the rest of my life, but mommy will come and clean me, even though I'm 25 years old. That's a baby. There are people who are physically, mentally challenged, who are constantly in bed, who need diapers, even when they're 25 years old.

The Corinthians were like that. But Paul says in 1 Corinthians two, verse six, 1 Corinthians two, six, but we do speak wisdom. That means we go beyond milk.

We go beyond just Christ died for your sins and forgives you among those who are mature. Verse seven, we speak God's wisdom in a mystery hidden by God from the ages. Verse nine, which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, which has not entered in the heart of man, what God has prepared, the amazing thing verse nine, which God has prepared for those who love him, but God has revealed them to us through the Holy Spirit.

So when a person hungers and thirsts, you know, in physical life, a normal baby, it drinks milk and gradually grows up and becomes strong and is able to eat solid food. In the spiritual life, if a person hungers and thirsts for the power of the Holy Spirit and for holiness in his life, he will grow. If he does not have a hunger and thirst for the power of the Holy Spirit and to live a holy life, he'd be like a baby that's not eating and drinking, that remains like that and gradually becomes mentally challenged and retarded.

So that is why I say Ephesians, let's turn to Ephesians, is the most spiritual letter of all because what we read in Corinthians that we speak wisdom to the mature, to those who don't want to remain babies. To the Corinthians, he could only write baby stuff. And by the way, in case you didn't know, the only book in the New Testament, the only epistle of Paul in the New Testament where he talks about speaking in tongues and all those supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit is in Corinthians, in 1 Corinthians.

And that's written to babies. So don't think that speaking in tongues and spiritual gifts are meant for mature believers. That there can be babies who exercise all that who are not mature.

In Ephesians, he talks about some other things which are far more important. And when you're a baby, you're more occupied with toys and rattles that make noise and things like that. A mature person is more interested in, not in a toy car, but a real car.

And a mature person is not playing around with gifts to impress others. In Ephesians, we read about mature things. And that's what builds fellowship.

He couldn't tell the Corinthians about how to build fellowship. He could tell them a lot of elementary things because those guys were taking each other to court and not even sharing their food with each other when they break bread together. So many things.

He even had to teach them about the fact that we will be resurrected from the dead and we'll be changed. Immature Christians were like that. But to the Ephesians, he says so much, which is so much more spiritual.

There he talks about fellowship, building the body of Christ. He doesn't explain all that to the Corinthians. So if we are at the level of babies, we'd be satisfied with just the forgiveness of sins.

But if we are growing up, one mark of growing up is we're interested in fellowship. Now, let me tell you something of my experience with people who listen to me on the internet. We have 1000 messages on YouTube.

And there are many people around the world who listen to it. Some of them, believe it or not, every single day of the year, they listen to a message. And I have seen some, a number of these believers when I go to different places, who tell me, Brother Jack, we're so blessed by listening to your message.

And it's true. But when I find that they are not part of a local church, which is building a body, I find they don't grow because they haven't understood fellowship. They think Christianity is an individual thing.

I live a holy life. I walk with God. And I want to hear messages that challenge me.

I can't get along with my wife. That's okay. It doesn't matter.

I can't get along with other brothers and sisters. That doesn't matter. So I'll never be a part of a church because it's too inconvenient.

I'd like to just be by myself and visit different churches at different times. And I'll keep on listening to Brother Jack on the internet. They get a lot of head knowledge.

But let me tell you this, I've seen this with so many people. Some of them have listened to me for 25 years. And I see them spiritually in the kindergarten.

Why? How can they listen to me for 25 years and be in the kindergarten? Knowledge is increased like anything. But they've not become mature for one reason. They have not valued fellowship.

They were like Old Testament people. In the Old Testament also, some people had tremendous knowledge. Those priests and scribes had tremendous knowledge.

But they didn't become spiritual. They were the ones who killed Jesus. So it's very important for all of you to remember that you can sit at home and not go to a church meeting, not go to a conference like this.

And you can watch it online. It's just too much of inconvenience to go regular to a conference or things like that. I can sit at home and watch the whole thing.

And you can do that. And there are some people probably watching this online and who will watch it online in the days to come. They get the facts, but the presence of God, which comes through the presence of believers coming together in the name of Jesus, they cannot experience that.

You cannot experience the presence of Jesus Christ through the internet. There's no technology that will ever be discovered that will bring the presence of God through the internet. You can get messages through the internet, communication, information.

But Jesus said, where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst. That comes when there are people in fellowship. The principle is not two or three.

When people come together who love Jesus, Jesus is in the midst. How do you reproduce that on the internet by sitting in your couch at home and listening to it? It is impossible. So now if you're sick or something and you can't travel, that's another thing.

But if you have the opportunity to go for fellowship and you don't choose it, I'll tell you even after many, many years, you will not grow spiritually. And I've got living proof of that in many people whom I know. But they're listening to me regularly.

They have listened to three messages a week and their head is oozing with new covenant knowledge, but they don't even have a clue that they're not growing spiritually. You see, it's like people I've heard who go to see a doctor and say, doctor, I'm having some terrible pain in my stomach. And the doctor gives them a scan, an MRI scan or something like that, and then shows them the report and says, listen, you've got cancer.

And it's not first degree or second degree, it's fourth degree cancer. It's pretty serious. And I don't know whether you'll ever come through it.

You're on the way to the grave. And he says, doctor, but I've felt perfectly fine all these days. One of the, this is one of those amazing things about cancer that sometimes it can progress so much before you discover it.

So if there's a slightest suspicion of it, people would go for a checkup. That's how it is. You know, a person can keep on listening to messages and think that he's growing spiritually because he's growing in knowledge.

He doesn't realize that man is body, soul and spirit. Soul is our mind. Spirit is in our heart, our conscience.

And there's a lot of difference between soul and spirit. And there's a lot of difference between accumulating knowledge in the mind and God ministering to our heart through the Holy Spirit. See, that's where fellowship becomes very, very important.

And that's why we need to take Ephesians seriously. Let me show you one more verse before we get to Ephesians. Hebrews chapter 10.

Hebrews 10, this is all connected with Ephesians, but I want to give you this introduction. Hebrews 10 speaks about our being able to enter into the most holy place, which was covered with a veil in the Old Testament showing that God could not enter man's spirit until Jesus died on the cross. And the way into the spirit was open through the veil being rent in the temple.

And it says here in Hebrews 10, 19, so brethren, now we have boldness to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus and by the rent veil. The way into the most holy place, the new and living way it's called is through the rent veil, which is his flesh, not his body, please read carefully. His flesh was rent, not his body.

His body was pierced. His body was not torn into two. The veil did not represent the body of Jesus Christ.

That's the wrong understanding because his body was not torn. His body was only pierced in five points, two legs, two hands and the side. But his flesh, that is his self-will.

Flesh is another phrase for self-will. Where Jesus had, you know that, in Gethsemane he said, not my will, but thine. That is the self-will, which is called flesh, which was torn.

It was torn every single day of his 30 years. When the father told him in Nazareth as a little boy, you must submit to Joseph and Mary, even though they are imperfect, even though they don't know 1% of what you know, Jesus, I'm asking you to submit to them. Is it easy to submit to an authority that is imperfect? Is it easy to submit to an authority who knows 1% of what you know of God? But God told Jesus to do that, not for one or two days, but 30 years.

Now you ask any little child, even your own children, if it is easy for them to obey daddy and mommy, even though you are good parents. Not easy. Imagine how it is when you have to obey parents who lived under the old covenant and who didn't even have the light of the new covenant.

Joseph and Mary were not perfect people. They remember they were old covenant believers. They made mistakes.

And Jesus grew up in that home and he did not despise them. Amazing. A lot of so-called believers despised their parents.

Jesus did not despise Joseph and Mary, but submitted to them. And there his self-will was torn. There were things he wanted to do, but Joseph and Mary said, Jesus is going to do this, and he had to deny his own will and do that.

I've often used an example. When Jesus was, say, playing some game, whatever was the equivalent of cricket those days in Nazareth. I mean, everywhere it's a bat and a ball, whether it's baseball or cricket or anything, there must've been a bat and a ball way back in Nazareth, 2000 years ago.

And you know, the important thing is not when you're fielding, the important thing is when you're batting. So here comes the Jesus team is batting now, and it's time for Jesus' turn to bat. And he takes the bat and goes to the crease or to the wickets.

And immediately his mother nearby says, hey, Jesus, come, I want your help. What does he do? What does the average boy today do? I know what the average boy today does. Wait, mommy, I'll come in five minutes.

Five minutes means 45 minutes, by the way. And, but what do you think Jesus did? All the others heard mommy calling Jesus. He dropped the bat.

Okay, mommy, I'm coming. And he was teased by the other boys. Hey, Jesus, what are you doing? You're mama's boy.

Come on, be a man. He was not bothered by that teasing. He denied his will.

Every boy wants to bat when his turn comes. But he obeyed his, that's an example of how his selfhood was torn. That's one example.

And it was torn for 33 years. And so that when he died on the cross and he said it's finished, it was not just that the sins of man were finished, but every temptation, temptation means to do your own will. Basically, every temptation is to do your own will.

What Adam and Eve were tempted to in the Garden of Eden was to do their own will and not God's will. And that's what we are always tempted to. Every temptation you face, do your own will.

Speak up and get angry. Look at that woman in lust, your own will. It's when you deny your own will that you walk the way of holiness.

And Jesus denied his own will every single moment for 33 and a half years. And the veil was torn. And it said, that's the meaning of Hebrews 10, 20.

But then he says, now we can draw near, verse 22, Hebrews 10, 22. Have a look at that verse. We can draw near with the full assurance of faith and hold fast to the confession of our hope.

Now we can come up to there and say, this is wonderful. And it's just an individual life. I'm walking this way of self-denial.

But then he goes on to say, don't stop there. You, verse 24, you've got to stimulate other people to good works. God has called you to be a blessing to others, not just to yourself.

And listen to this wonderful verse, verse 25. Never forget it. Don't forsake the assembling together, as is the habit of some, but meet together and encourage one another.

And you must do that even more as you see the coming of Christ becoming near. So as you approach the coming of Christ, it says you should meet with one another more often than even once a week. It doesn't mean a meeting.

You could just probably meet with one believer, one-on-one. But he says, don't forsake the assembling together. Why does it say that after this individual entering into the most holy place? Because you can be so taken up with the individual Christian life that you can say, this is it.

And the Holy Spirit's saying, this is not it. This is part of it. The rest of it is meeting together with others.

And he says here in verse 25, some people have this bad habit. Don't be included in that number in verse 25. Some people have this bad habit of not assembling together.

They think we can meet on our own. We just listen to the message at home. Very, very dangerous.

So now we can go to Ephesians. You gotta got a good grounding in Ephesians to start Ephesians. Sometimes when I want to start, I have an introduction of 20 minutes, but that's very important to lay a foundation.

You know, the foundation is strong. The building is strong. So what I was trying to do is lay a foundation for the importance of fellowship.

Now Ephesians, the letter of Ephesians is divided into two equal parts. Paul's thinking was very systematic. Romans is a very systematic presentation of the gospel.

Ephesians also has got two parts. The first three chapters and the second three chapters. And let me tell you what it is.

The first three chapters is what God has done for us. The next three chapters are what we've got to do for God. Basically it's that.

And so in the first three chapters, there are no commandments, no exhortations, nothing that you're supposed to do. It's everything about what God has done for us. And the last three chapters is full of what we are supposed to do in response to what God has done for us.

So we can say the first three chapters are the foundation. The foundation is not what we do for God, but what God has done for us. So if you don't begin your Christian life by having a clear understanding of what God has done for you, you're building without a foundation.

No wonder your Christian life becomes shaky. Many people whose Christian lives are shaky later on after 10 years and all they begin to shake is because they never laid a proper foundation. Think if you were building a house and you didn't bother about laying a good foundation.

After some time, the house begins to shake and the storm comes and collapses. That's how many believers even lose their faith. So foundation is very important.

And in chapters one to three, it tells us what God has done for us. I don't have time to go through the whole thing, read it on your own, but I'll show you a couple of verses. First of all, Ephesians 1.3. Look at this.

This is part of the foundation. God has blessed us with every blessing of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual blessing means blessing of the Holy Spirit.

Every blessing of the Holy Spirit, God has already blessed us in the heavenly places in Christ. That doesn't mean it is yours. Actually, it means it is yours potentially.

What does that mean? To use an example, your father has put a billion dollars, not million, but billion, a billion dollars into your bank account. But you don't have one cent of it because you haven't gone to the bank and drawn that money. You follow what I mean? It's potentially yours, but not actually yours.

It'll become actually yours when you go to the bank or to an ATM and draw that money out as much as you want. There's a billion dollars there. You can live as a wealthy person.

Spiritually, that's the picture. Every blessing of the Holy Spirit in the heavenly places in Christ is already been put to your account. How much of it will you get what you go in the name of Jesus to the father and say, I want this.

Lord, you said it's written in my bank account, Romans 6.14, sin will not rule over me. That's more than a million dollars. I wanna claim it.

Lord, this particular habit of mine is ruling over me, but you promised me victory. Romans 6.14, give it to me. You've been struggling, struggling on your own to overcome that habit, and you've never been able to do it.

Now, why not give up and ask God to help you? You know, in the Old Testament, rather, when Jesus saw the 5,000 men and other women and children, he asked the disciples, how shall we feed them? And they began to calculate, how much resources do we have? And they said, it's gonna cost a lot of money to feed these people. And Jesus said, that's because you're counting on your own resources. If you trust me, five loaves is enough to fish.

So the examples there are to show us that if you trust in your own resources, you'll never be able to meet the need. Trust in the Lord, and the need is more than met because that 12 baskets full at the end of it. You will overflow with blessing.

So every blessing of the Holy Spirit, you need a gift of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps you're not bold enough to witness for Christ. I was like that as a young Christian.

I had accepted the Lord. I would go to the meeting and testify in the meeting, but I was not bold to be a witness for Christ among unbelievers. And I said, Lord, I know the reason for this is I'm not filled with the Holy Spirit.

I'm born again. I'm sure I'm gonna heaven, but I'm ashamed to witness for you among unbelievers. Why is that? You are not ashamed to hang on the cross for me.

Why am I ashamed to be a witness for you among unbelievers? I want to, but I'm not able to. I get all tongue tied and shy and afraid. I knew what I needed, the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

So I began to pray. I didn't go to any meeting because I've seen enough hollow, empty meetings when just people make a lot of noise and nothing happens. I didn't want to get anybody to lay hands on my head because I never would let a man lay hands on my head unless I have absolute confidence that that is a man of God.

Let me tell you something that happened in Australia many years ago when I came there. This is more than 20 years ago. There was a sister not in our church who came to one of the meetings and said, Brother Zach, I want you to pray for me.

I said, what happened? He said, there was an American preacher who came here for some public meeting and asked those who wanted the power of the Holy Spirit to come forward. And I went forward and he laid hands on my head. And my life has become all confusion ever since.

I said, did you know that man? Did you know whether he's a godly man? He said, no, I just went to his meetings. I said, you should never let a person lay hands on your head whom you don't know is a really godly man. Anyway, I said, there's nothing that the devil does that Jesus cannot undo.

Jesus can undo everything the devil does. So I said, I'll pray for you right now. And since you don't know me well, I'm not even gonna lay hands on your head.

I can do that without laying hands on you. And I'll break that power which I put on your head or on your body by this strange person. And I prayed for her and I believe she was free.

So we have to be careful. There are blessings of the Holy Spirit. You can seek God, seek for it yourself.

Don't ever go to a person whom you don't trust and let him lay hands on your head. You gotta be absolutely sure the man's a godly man. So, but you don't need, there are not enough godly men around to

lay hands on everybody's head.

So God hasn't left us at the mercy of men. He himself is there. Jesus is there.

Many times I've gone to the Lord and said, Lord Jesus, please lay your nail pierced hand on my head and fill me. I need to be filled again and again and again. Every blessing of the Holy Spirit is mine.

It's yours. That is Ephesians 1.3. Next verse, verse four, Ephesians 1.4. Ephesians 1.3 is for powerful living and ministry. Ephesians 1, three rather.

Ephesians 1.4 is for security and assurance. Do you know when God knew your name? It says here, before the foundation of the world, he chose us in Christ to be holy and blameless before him. In love, he predestined us to be his children.

So when you think of God, it's very difficult to understand, but it is true that God can look into the future. He can tell you what's gonna happen tomorrow. He can tell you what's gonna happen next week.

He can, I mean, the birth of Christ was predicted hundreds of years before he was born. That he would be born in Bethlehem was predicted 600 years before he was born. That's just a few examples.

That he'd be crucified was predicted 700 years before he was born. And many things like that. So God knows everything about the future, but he sees it as if it is right now.

I mean, right now, God can see what's gonna happen a million years from now. So you go back into the past, before Genesis 1, verse 1. You know Genesis 1, verse 1, God created the heaven and the earth? Before that, what was there before that? The first verse in terms of time is not Genesis 1, 1. In terms of time, chronologically, the first verse is John 1, 1, which is, in the beginning was the word, Jesus Christ. And he was with God and he was God.

That's the first verse in terms of time. And the second verse in terms of time in the Bible is this one, Ephesians 1, 4. In the beginning, it was only God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But after that, from somewhere at that time, my name comes into the picture.

Imagine that, before Genesis 1, 1, Zach Poonen, your name, where? In God's mind. To me, it's a tremendous security to know that before Genesis 1, 1 happened, Zach Poonen was in God's mind. And you, if you're a born-again Christian, was in God's mind, Ephesians 1, 4 says that.

Before the foundation of the world, he chose us in Christ. Why did he choose me and not a hundred others or a thousand others? Because God looked into the future and saw that in 1959 AD, this young man would surrender his life to Christ. Oh, then I will choose him.

When did he choose me? Before he created the world. But I was gonna do that 6,000 years later. But he knew that before.

And he put my name in his book, in his book, in his mind. He chose me in Christ. Now, how does that help me? It helps me because, hey, I say, I'm not an accident.

You know, there are some parents who talk of their children as, oh, that was an accident. What an insult to call a child an accident. There is no child that's an accident.

I'll tell you, even if it's your 10th child, it's not an accident. God is the one who gives children as gift to his people. But what I say is, we are chosen before the worlds were created.

And once you realize that, you say, you're not just a social security number. You're not just an accident. You're not an accident.

You're not just a social security number. You are a precious child of God who was in God's mind before he created the heaven and earth. Can you imagine the security that brings to you? It certainly brings a lot of security to me.

He's not gonna carry me halfway across the river and say, I'm fed up of you and dump you. Do you think God would ever come to you and say, boy, I never knew you would be that bad. You think he'd ever say that? He chose you knowing that you would be, do all the foolish, stupid things you did.

I sometimes ask as a joke to husbands, you've been married 20 years now or five years. Having seen all the foolish, bad things your wife did, would you still have chosen her if you knew all that beforehand? Don't answer that question, please. But think of that.

I think some husbands may say, boy, if I knew all this beforehand, I may have chosen somebody else. But let me tell you another thing. That somebody else you chose may have been worse than the one you have right now.

It's because you don't know that person's inner life that you think she would be better. So the one God has chosen you is the best. I have a practice sometimes.

I go in some churches to some people and tell them, you know, brother, you got the best wife in the church. And then I go to somebody else and I tell them, you got the best wife in the church. And I say that to a number of people.

And then when they hear that I'm saying that to everybody, they say, hey, brother Zach, you're just fooling me. You went and told that to everybody. I said, that's right.

What I mean is you got the best wife for you, not for somebody else. That's what I meant. I'm not here to compare wives.

When I say you certainly got the best wife for you, for the type of person you are, you got the best wife. So God does that, makes that choice. And you got the best husband, by the way, too, which you deserve.

So God chose us before the worlds were created. He knew every foolish thing you'd ever do. And he still chose you.

Think of that. He knew every foolish, stupid thing you're ever gonna do and you're done. And he still chose you.

Otherwise, you wouldn't be here today. You know what security that brings into your life and my life? It doesn't make me, oh, then I can live as I like. Because if you live in sin, God knew that also and he probably didn't choose you then.

That's another thing. But what I say is this is not something to give you permission, ah, to live as you like. On the contrary, it is to bring such security to your life that you don't have anxiety about the future.

You don't have that anxiety about some sickness coming, some sudden death coming. Is there anything that God doesn't know? He chose you before the foundation of the world. So that's the security that we have in Ephesians 2. It says when we were dead in, Ephesians chapter 2, verse 1, when we were dead in sin, he raised us up and made us alive in Christ, verse 5, Ephesians 2, 5. And not only this, here is another truth which is, this is about the only place in scripture where it is written.

We know that when Jesus died, in some wonderful way, we died with him. And you can say, how can that be? I'll tell you how. Because he chose you in Christ before the worlds were created.

He placed you in his mind, potentially, in Christ when you were not even born. That's what we just saw in Ephesians 1, 4. So what happened when Christ died? You know what happened? You were in Christ, like we just saw, and you died with Christ before you were born. Because in God's mind, you were in Christ before the worlds were created.

When Christ died on the cross, you died with him. When he was buried, you were buried to that old creation, to that everything old that is in you, your sinful life, you died to it. When Jesus was raised up from the dead, God raised you up in Christ.

That's what we read in Ephesians 2, 6. And listen, here's the best part of it. When Christ ascended to heaven, Ephesians 2, 6, in Christ, spiritually, he took you up there. So even though your body's on earth, according to Ephesians 2, 6, you are spiritually in heaven.

To me, that's been a tremendous thing to realize that my body's on earth and I may suffer so many things on this body, but spiritually, I'm with Christ in the heavenly places. And therefore, my mind is more occupied, should be more occupied with the things of heaven than the things of earth. See, those of you who migrated from some other country to Australia, maybe you sold everything in your old country and moved to Australia.

Well, you don't have anything in your old country. You don't have any investments there. Everything is in Australia.

Your mind should be in Australia. Your mind should be, how can I develop here? Your mind is not in your old country. Isn't that right? You're not thinking of developing things in your old country where you migrated from.

It is something similar when we are really born again and we really realize that God raised us up as Christ and put us in heaven. If you're really like, if you understand that Ephesians 2, 6, you'll be thinking, boy, how can I accumulate wealth in heaven? None of you are thinking of how you can accumulate wealth in the country you migrated from. Why is that? Because that wealth is useless for you.

You're thinking of how you can accumulate wealth in Australia. Apply that to heaven. Ephesians 2, 6 says we are raised with Christ and in the heavenly places and in Colossians.

Turn with me to Colossians for a moment. Colossians chapter three, verse one and two. He says, you have been raised up with Christ, then keep seeking the things above.

Like I say, you are keeping seeking the things in Australia and not in your home country. He's saying the same thing here. If you are raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above where Christ is set at the right hand of God and set your mind on things above and not on things on the earth.

Now, because you live on the earth, you need to take care of your bodily needs and so many other things. You need to earn your living and take care of your family and all that. But he said, behind it all, my mind is primarily on heaven.

And I need to apply my mind to earthly things for the things I have to do. But once I finish that, my mind should switch back to heaven again. That's how the true Christian life is.

I live on earth. I'm heavenly minded, but my feet are on the earth and I live on this earth. But I don't live on earth with an earthly minded attitude.

That's what I mean. So if we understand this, then we see how God has chosen us and had a tremendous plan for us, blessed us with every spiritual blessing and all that. Then we are prepared to live the Christian life.

And you can go to Ephesians four. I don't have time to go through all of Ephesians one to three but you can read that, that's the foundation. And now we go to Ephesians four and the first word says, in view of all that I just told you in chapters one to three, I beseech you, walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you've been called.

What's your calling? A heavenly calling. Walk worthy of that manner. You know, there's a, in second Corinthians 5:21, we are called ambassadors for Christ.

Think of the ambassador of a very important country. Think of, I mean, Australia is a dignified country. If the Australian ambassador, say in some Asian or African country, how do you think he will conduct himself? Do you know that if he says something rude or bad, it gets published in the papers and who gets a bad name? Australia, because he's the Australian ambassador.

Or if the Australian ambassador in some countries caught doing something, cheating or doing something wrong, who gets a bad name? Australia, because he's the Australian ambassador in that country. You and I are the ambassadors of Jesus Christ on this earth, second Corinthians 5:21. That's the word used there.

We are ambassadors for Christ. So if you do something which dishonors the name of Christ in your place of work at home, you're bringing a bad name to Christ. It's so important.

You know, this is the example I often use when I talk about all these television evangelists who keep begging for money from Christians. Jesus never begged anybody for money for his work. And he did a more important work than anybody else today.

The apostle Paul never begged anybody for money for his work or for their own personal needs. That is how a true Christian is supposed to live. I mean, I've been in full-time Christian work for 52 years.

I've never sent out a prayer letter asking anybody for money. And I've never asked anybody to support me or my work or my ministry, never. Nobody's ever got a letter from me on that grounds.

If ever they get a letter from me, it's a letter encouraging them to follow the Lord. That's how Jesus and Paul lived. And why do I say that? Because it's undignified for an ambassador to beg for money.

Can you imagine the Australian ambassador in India or some very poor country getting up on television and saying, hey, we are going through a hard time in Australia, can you send us a few rupees to help us? Even 10 rupees will do. It's like asking for \$1. How many of you will give \$1 to help Australia do well? Boy,

that fellow will be fired from his job and taken back home if he ever appears on television like that.

But I tell Christians, supposing tomorrow in television, a man says, I'm an ambassador for Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God is going through a hard time, God's having a hard time financially. So will you please contribute \$10 or \$20? You gladly give it. You know why? Because you think the kingdom of God is so poor and wretched.

Australia and America and all are 10 times or a million times better than the kingdom of God. We disgrace the kingdom of God. That's what I've told many preachers.

You disgrace the kingdom of God by this type of begging. God is not a beggar and his servants should not be beggars. The ambassador of the kingdom of God should never be a beggar.

That's why I preach so much against it. Not because I hate these people, but because I feel the name of my savior is being dishonored by the way these people beg for money and keep on telling people, you gotta give, you gotta give. And very often, a lot of that money goes into their pockets for them to buy their private planes and build fancy houses.

This is how the name of Jesus is being dishonored, but the Bible says that. There will be a big religious structure called Babylon in the last days, which is just built with money, which is gonna bring dishonor to God's name. One day God will destroy the whole thing.

What we see today is Babylonian Christianity. It'll be destroyed by God one day. Jesus said the way to life is very narrow and very few people find it.

I'm never disturbed when a church is small. I'm disturbed when a church is impure or when a church begs for money. It may have 30,000 members, but it begs for money.

It is Babylon. Another church, like Jesus' church was 11 people. 11 people, how many is that? 11 people, but it was the best church on earth.

Can you believe that a church of 11 people can be the best church on earth? Jesus' church was that. So it's not numbers. Jesus didn't gather 10,000 people and build a church.

He gathered 11. In fact, when 10,000 people came, he mostly drove them away with a strong preaching till ultimately they were 11. So the main thing is purity and honoring God by the way we live.

So Ephesians 4, 1 says, walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you are called. And one part of that is building fellowship. And he says here, we must not be children, verse 14, tossed about.

Don't be like little children, like the Corinthians, always occupied with spiritual toys. Grow up to think of serious things and don't be tossed around with this doctrine, and that doctrine, the other doctrine. I met some people like that.

One day they believe this doctrine, then another doctrine, another doctrine. They're never established in the truth. And that's why I've encouraged all of you to get a copy of my commentary through the Bible and read three pages every day.

And I wanna tell you, I don't get any royalty from any of my books. I'm not promoting this for my sake. I get nothing out of it.

Every cent that we get out of selling that goes back to the next printing. We make zero money from it. So it's for the good of people that I say, read three pages a day of that book.

Get established in the truth. Otherwise you'll be tossed about in these days with so many winds of doctrine nowadays. Those who have taken me seriously have found the reality of that.

And then he says, it says, we must grow up. This is a very important verses in Ephesians 4, 15 and 16. Please read it carefully.

Ephesians 4, 15 and 16. Remember it's built on the foundation of chapters one to three. Speaking the truth in love, we grow up to the head that is Christ.

From the head, the whole body. This is a very important verse. Verse 16.

The whole body being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies according to the proper working of each individual part causes the growth of the body in the building up of itself in love. Basically, let me paraphrase that. You cannot grow alone.

You cannot grow alone. See my hand was not this long when I was a baby. You know that.

It was much smaller. How did it become so big? It did not grow alone. It could not grow alone.

It had to depend on the rest of the body for it to grow. My hand grew in length and strength because it was connected to the body. If it was cut off when I was a little baby and kept aside, it would be the same size today.

And individual Christians who do not live in a connection with the body remain spiritually dwarf. They're like dwarfs spiritually. Short and without any spiritual growth.

It says here, the body grows up as everyone is fitted, verse 16, fitted and held together. You must remember this verse. Fitted and held together by, there's a word used here called that which every joint supplies.

You know what a joint is? Think of your hand, how many joints there are. Just your arm. Here's a joint of the shoulder.

Here's a joint of the elbow. Here's a joint of the wrist. And each finger has got so many joints here.

One, two, three, just for the little finger. And each finger is like that. Think of the number of joints.

And it's because you have joints that you can bend your fingers, that you can bend your elbows, that you can lift and lower your arms. Joints. Think of, for example, if my, what happens? How do I bend my elbow? At this joint, the muscles on top say, I wanna pull.

And the muscles underneath say, okay, I yield. I yield to you, you pull. So the muscles on top pull and the muscles at the bottom yield.

And now the muscle at the bottom says, I wanna pull. And the muscle at the top yields. That's called fellowship.

They work together. And if you're in good health, you won't hear any creaking sound. It's absolutely silent.

In good fellowship, there's no noise. If you find a creaking sound, brother or sister, you've got arthritis. And you probably need to get some treatment.

And there's a lot of fellowship between believers which has got arthritis. They don't get along with each other. They try to fellowship with each other in the same church.

There's a lot of creaking and noise and creaming and all that. Sometimes between husband and wife too. You know how a husband and wife should fellowship? Like this.

One yields, the other pulls. The other pulls, the other yields. And no sound at all.

This is how it should be in a home. This is how it should be in a body. That's the meaning of 416.

That which every joint supplies. And there are many joints in the body. Between you and your wife, between you and your husband is a joint.

You see, for example, my upper arm is healthy and strong. And my lower arm, upper arm is healthy and strong. The lower arm is also healthy and strong.

But the joint doesn't work. How will it be? My hand will be like this all the time. And I'd always go around like this.

I can't bend it. Why? They're both strong. Two brothers who are strong.

Strong brother here, strong brother here. But the fellowship between them is not good. So they are useless.

Think if you had a hand which is like this all the time. Useless. It's the fellowship that makes it work.

Even if both brothers are weak. Fellowship makes it work. So what I want to say is, two brothers weak but in fellowship can do more than two strong brothers who can't have fellowship.

That's like a stiff arm. What can you do with it? Doesn't matter how many muscles there are, it's useless. I hope you learned a lesson there that joint is important.

Don't think that because you know so much of the Bible and you can do so much yourself that you can accomplish God's purpose. You'll discover when you stand before Jesus that you wasted your life. So don't forsake the assembling of yourself together.

Don't just sit together in a meeting. Build fellowship with the brothers and sisters whom God has placed you with in the body of Christ. That is the meaning of Ephesians 4.16. Then it says in Ephesians 4.16, the body will grow up in love.

It builds itself up. How does this body, how did this body grow from the time I was a child? It built itself up as it received food and exercise and it gradually, the workings of the body make it grow. The workings of the Holy Spirit are like that.

So it's very important to understand that in the new covenant, God has put us together in a body. Another picture used in the Bible in Ephesians is of a building. See in Ephesians 2, it says here, verse 20.

Ephesians 2, verse 20 and 21. We are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus being the cornerstone in whom the whole building fitted together grows into a holy temple in the Lord in whom you are also being built together into a dwelling of God. So one picture is the human body.

We are members of one body. Other picture is a building. These are all pictures, a building in which God dwells, the house of God.

And he says, each of you, like in India, we build houses with bricks and you are a brick and another person is a brick, but just being a brick, you don't become a house. It's along with other bricks that a house is built. And so it says the foundation is of course laid by the apostles and prophets and the cornerstone in the olden days, the way they built was they made a big cornerstone.

A cornerstone had to be perfect 90 degree angles in three dimensions, height, length, breadth, perfect 90 degrees. Then you could align all the bricks along the line of that cornerstone vertically and in two directions, all three directions. So that would be perfectly aligned.

So the cornerstone was very important. It had to be perfect 90 degrees in all directions. That's why Jesus called the cornerstone.

But then the bricks are built on top of that and we are joined together. Now I'll tell you how we build in India. In India, when you want to build a house somewhere, the first thing that happens is they get a truck to bring 10,000 bricks and dump it near that house, outside the house.

And then usually on the roadside, away from the main road. And then the masons come and start building. Now, if it takes a long time to build a house and the bricks are lying there, one amazing thing happens in India.

The bricks slowly start decreasing in number. And you know how that happens because there are other people building houses elsewhere and they come at night and take away some of these bricks. And so gradually, after a few weeks, you find hardly any bricks there.

And you don't have to wonder where they went. Just go around looking around if anybody else is building a house in the next street. This actually happens, believe it or not.

But if those bricks are built into the building, they can never be stolen because they are cemented. There's a security. So I find all these individual believers who hang around like individual bricks, don't want to be built with others, don't want to be built up in fellowship with others in a local church.

The devil can just pick them up whenever he wants. He just takes them here and there and destroys their lives. He steals them, but you can't steal a brick that's built into the building.

That's why I encourage all of you, get built into the building of God, the temple of God, which is the church. That's what God wants to do with all of you, whether you're a few or many. God wants to build you into that building.

And of course, you have a lot more freedom if you're in a pile of bricks. You can get up and walk away whenever you want, come back whenever you want. But if you're built into a building, you have less freedom.

You realize that, right? There's a brick above you, a brick underneath you, a brick to the left, a brick to the right, and you're cemented together with others, but you're more secure. The church is the most secure place on earth. You know, I sometimes think the church is like Noah's Ark.

Do you think it was very convenient to live in Noah's Ark? What do you think? With all the smell of the animals and their poop and everything lying around? And you got to live there, not just one or two days. Imagine living in such a cramped atmosphere for one year. Would you choose it? It was not, it was smelly.

There was no perfume in Noah's Ark. It was smelly and inconvenient, cramped and crowded. Wherever you turned, there's some animal or some crawling creature on the ground, and all these things were there.

But I'll tell you one thing. It may have been very, very inconvenient and smelly, but it was the safest place on earth at that time. Everybody else was destroyed when the flood came.

And when you look at the church, you can say, boy, the church is very inconvenient, it's pretty smelly, and all types of awkward people there, different from my culture, and some are not cultured, there are barbarians and cultured Greeks and uncultured barbarians all in the same church. And it's inconvenient and a lot of awkwardness, but I'll tell you, it's the safest place on earth. When the flood comes, that's the thing that's going to survive.

So build fellowship, value fellowship, very, very important. And I hope you will keep that in mind all your days. One last thing, in Ephesians 6, it speaks about fighting the devil.

Stan, put on the armor of God and fight against verse 12 to 18 about fighting the devil. You cannot fight the devil on your own, I'll tell you that. You need to have the body behind you.

Ephesians 6 is the only book that speaks about fighting the devil. It's written for spiritual people. It's written for those who've gone past Ephesians 4 and who are now one body who can fight the devil.

The question comes about disagreement. There's a word about disagreement in Ephesians 4. Please turn there. It says, one day when we grow up into the fullness of Christ, verse 13, Ephesians 4, 13, one day we will attain to the unity of the faith, the knowledge of the Son of God and a mature man.

That is in the future when Christ comes, when our understanding will be exactly aligned. We won't have the slightest disagreement in anything. We have grown up to the full mature Son of God level and the unity of the faith, which means 100% agreement in our faith.

That has not yet come. There may be small disagreements in our understanding today, but until then, what should we do? Verse three, until that day comes, verse three of Ephesians 4, be diligent, that means work hard, to keep the unity of the spirit. Don't worry if the unity of the faith has not yet come.

The unity of the spirit, we are one in Christ. You're in Christ, I'm in Christ. You and I may not agree on everything, but we are one in Christ.

That is the basis of unity in a family and that's the basis of unity in the church. It says here you may not agree on every point, but keep the unity of the spirit until you attain the unity of the faith one day when Christ comes back. So I'll close on that score and I pray that'll be true in Brisbane, in your church there in CFC Brisbane and in CFC Melbourne and in Perth and in Sydney and wherever else the Lord decides to start a fellowship.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, help us to be gripped by these truths, not just to understand them. Don't let any bird of the air come and take away the seed that is sown.

We pray the seed will sink into good ground and produce fruit to eternal life in all of us. Bless every brother and sister here, Lord. Help them to be assured that they were chosen before the foundation of the world.

Names are in the book of life and you've called us to preserve the unity of the spirit until we attain the unity of the faith. We pray these churches in all these places in Australia that you raised up will grow from strength to strength in days to come and they can glorify your name. And even if they are small in number, there'll be a bright shining light for you.

We pray in Jesus name, amen. Okay, thank you brothers and sisters.

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